



NEWS

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TOP VOLUNTEER AWARD FOR THE SILVER LINE'S MAUREEN

The Silver Line's Maureen Johnston has just been named 'IT Volunteer of the Year' at the Tech4Good Awards 2016.

Maureen offered to volunteer with The Silver Line for a few hours a week to help launch the Helpline in 2013 – almost three years later she's still there as fulltime, unpaid, Director of Information Systems.

During that time, Maureen has almost single-handedly established all of the IT, communications and telephone systems that support The Silver Line's volunteering activities across the country. Her work helps ensure volunteers and older people can enjoy regular friendship calls, for free, while keeping everyone safe.

The Silver Line Helpline currently receives around 10,000 calls a week, while a further 3,000 telephone calls and letters are exchanged each week between volunteers and lonely or isolated older people.

The Tech4Good Awards aim to recognise organisations and individuals who use digital technology to improve the lives of others across the UK and beyond.

Sophie Andrews, CEO of The Silver Line, said:

"We are all absolutely delighted that Maureen's been recognised for everything she has done for us – and is still doing. She continues to make a massive contribution to how The Silver Line supports lonely and isolated older people.

"Many people are amazed to discover that she's a volunteer - she puts in so many hours. We know we're really lucky to benefit from her knowledge, skills, and commitment."

Maureen, who originally comes from Aberdeenshire but currently lives in South London, says she was stunned to be nominated for, and then to win, the IT Volunteer of the Year Award.

“I just wanted to do something worthwhile to help vulnerable older people,” she said. “But I never imagined being able to make such a difference through IT to so many people.

“I’m so proud that one of our oldest volunteers is in their 90s, and continues to make weekly calls to their friend using our system, which truly supports a friendship and enables anyone to volunteer for us.”

But as calls to The Silver Line continue to grow, the charity is in urgent need of more volunteers. It currently has around 1000 older people waiting to be matched to a Silver Line Friend.

Maureen added: “I hope people see this and realise there are so many different ways to volunteer and support The Silver Line’s work.”

But the IT challenges are far from over for Maureen, as she’s now over-seeing the helpline’s move to a new base in Blackpool. This includes bringing in new IT and telephony systems and ensuring it is efficient, and ‘future-proofed’ to deal with changing demands from older people.

To find out more about volunteering with The Silver Line:

- go to our website www.thesilverline.org.uk
- or contact the volunteering team on 020 7224 2020 or email: volunteering@thesilverline.org.uk

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About The Silver Line

- The Silver Line is the UK’s only free, confidential, 24-hour seven-days-a-week, helpline for older people.
- Since being launched nationally in 2013, The Silver Line has received over 900,000 calls from lonely older people.
- 68% of calls are after 6pm or at weekends; while 67% of callers contact the helpline because they are lonely or isolated, 88% live alone, and 54% say they have no one else to speak to.
- The Silver Line works in partnership with Age Scotland to deliver the service in Scotland.