



June 21st, 2017

## Salute to hospice volunteers

A special event was held to acknowledge the invaluable work of the volunteers at St Benedict's Hospice, which is run by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust.

The Volunteer Recognition Awards are held annually at the hospice and centre for specialist palliative care in Ryhope, Sunderland, to say thank you for the tremendous work they do.

At the event, which was organised by the St Benedict's charity and the Trust, awards were presented to volunteers with varying lengths of service. Avril McLeod received her 25 years' service award. Marie McLennan, Sue Cuthbertson and Margaret Swinney were recognised for 10 years' service. Five years' service awards were presented to Georgia Lay, Eileen Savage, Edith Craig, Jan Bray and Annette Murray, and 36 volunteers were honoured for achieving one year's service.

Mrs McLeod, who lives in Burdon, said: "Twenty five years ago, I decided to volunteer at my local hospice because I wanted to do something useful and I've done it ever since in all sorts of ways. At one point, I drove the bus, picking up patients and taking them home. At the moment, I support activities in day services and serve lunches on the ward. I consider it a privilege to work there; it's such a wonderful place and it does such a valuable job. As a volunteer, you get satisfaction when you hear the patients say how much they value it."

As well as the volunteers who offer patients and their relatives and carers practical and emotional support, there is a team of committed fundraising volunteers who work in the hospice café and charity shops. Volunteers are also more than willing to help with any other fundraising activities, all profits from which go to supporting and developing the work of the hospice.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Chairman Neil Mundy, who presented the awards, said: "We are indebted to our volunteers for their fantastic support. I am constantly amazed by their selfless commitment and dedication."

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*Pictured above: St Benedict's Hospice volunteers, including Avril McLeod (front row, right) who has 25 years' service, received their service awards from South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Chairman Neil Mundy (far right)*

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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