

NOMINATION DETAILS

Who is being nominated?

Individual

Please provide the name of the person being nominated:

Tommy Murphy

Job title:

Support Worker

Organisation:

Support for Ordinary Living

AWARD DETAILS

Which category are you entering?

Category 8: The Untold Story

Please confirm that the work carried out relates to the last two years (up to January 2018):

Yes

Q1. Overview: (max 200 words)

"Tommy deserves an award, as he has been the best support worker that Brian has had in his life. Tommy treats Brian like a normal person and treats him as an equal. I just wish we had met SOL and Tommy a lot sooner. He's honestly one in a million"

– Theresa Denny (mother of Brian)

Tommy Murphy is a Support Worker with SOL. He is 62 years of age and previously worked in a residential environment in schools for 16 years. He worked with boys aged between 14-18 and has a unique ability to bring out the best in young people and encourages them to reach their full potential.

He has a natural gift of building up trusting and rewarding relationships. His positivity is infectious with many of the younger people in his community seeing him as a father figure. He is a non-judgemental man that looks to encourage and inspire all those around him.

When Tommy joined SOL he was recruited to work with a young man called Brian. Brian is on the autistic spectrum and also has a mild learning disability. Since working with Brian, Tommy has had a hugely positive impact on Brian's life.

SSSA Entry Form 2018 :

Q2. What did you do? (max 500 words)

"Brian is the centre of my world, I love him to pieces, but even I could see how isolated he was becoming. You always want what's best for your kids and in my opinion Brian meeting people and becoming less reliant on me would be a massive step in the right direction. It would be a start to get him away from his iPad or to venture outside and see the real world rather than through his favourite DVD's. With Brian being so inactive I've always been concerned that he would develop health problems. With his weight increasing and his very insular lifestyle it was causing us a real concern. We've always encouraged him to be more active and to join in with activities but he can be stubborn! If he doesn't want to do something then he doesn't do it.

I can only describe Tommy coming into our lives as an absolute Godsend! Tommy is a good bit older than Brian and I was a bit concerned that they wouldn't have things in common but I shouldn't have! From day one Tommy has been there for Brian. When we held a planning meeting, Brian said he wanted to see some of the local football grounds. Unbeknown to us Tommy is friends with a few of the guys from the local junior football teams so he got in touch with them and organised a tour of them. I was overjoyed when I heard Brian saying that he had really enjoyed it!

After the tour going so well I spoke to Tommy about my concerns about Brian's health. He spoke about his previous experience of the positive impact group exercise had on a group of younger boys he had previously worked with. The sense of belonging young guys can get from joining a team or going to a gym. I was slightly sceptical at the start as Brian isn't the most sociable of people but I agreed to let Tommy introduce him to the local boxing gym. I was concerned as boxing gyms can be pretty intimidating places and also the fact that Brian doesn't like noisy places with lots of machines. Over the coming weeks I could hear Brian talking more and more about different people in the gym that Tommy was introducing him to and how they were encouraging him to join in with different exercises. As this was going on Tommy was keeping me up-to-date with how it was going. Initially Tommy and Brian would just go to the gym and watch the other people train. Tommy would watch Brian to see if he showed an interest in any of the exercises then slowly encourage him to give it a go. As Tommy is friends with the gym owner, and most of the people who attend the gym, they knew what he was trying to achieve and they all wanted to make Brian feel comfortable in his surroundings and encourage him to give things a try."

Q3. What did you achieve? (max 500 words)

"The change in Brian has been dramatic. We always encouraged Brian to make friends and lead a fulfilling life but if he doesn't want to do something then he won't do it. The change can be summed up with one name... Tommy. I honestly can't thank him enough for everything he has done for us. He identifies with Brian and he knows what he needs in his life. He is able to get Brian to try new things when he would have previously refused..."

I've always been close to Brian but prior to Tommy he had started to show real signs of anxiety when I wasn't with him or if I needed to go out somewhere. He would have temper tantrums and lash out but I knew that was one of his ways of expressing that he wasn't happy or he felt threatened. Since Tommy, there has been a huge change with how Brian copes with things and the behaviour he displays.

Tommy is one of the most positive people you will ever meet. When he's in a room with you, you automatically feel good! People gravitate towards him because he's so positive. He makes you feel that if you want to do something then you can do it. The thing that seemed like a huge challenge suddenly becomes manageable. Over time I can see this is what has been happening with Brian. My son was happy in his own world, albeit a lonely world, Tommy has just enhanced it! Brian still loves to read his books, watch his DVD's and use his iPad but now he goes to "his" gym with Tommy, he works out with "his" friends and goes to events and social gatherings to enjoy himself!

When Tommy originally suggested that he took Brian to the local boxing gym I had my misgivings. Tommy would keep me updated but sometimes it was hard to process what he was saying. What he was describing was a totally different guy from the one I knew and loved... then I saw the video of Brian in the gym. My son was actively taking part in an exercise class and being spurred on by the other members of the gym... people I know from my local community. From watching the video I got a real sense that my community was looking out for one of their own and the man I have to thank for that is Tommy. He called upon his friends and local contacts to get Brian involved in things. He's been the guy that has been able to calm Brian down and get him to try new things and he's the one that constantly looks out for my son. He's helping Brian find his place in the world by getting him involved in his local community and making friends. He has even been working on a healthy eating plan for Brian so he can get his weight problem under control. He's honestly like his guardian angel."

SSSA Entry Form 2018 :

Q4. Why should you receive an award? (max 100 words)

"Tommy deserves an award for the dedication, commitment and friendship he has shown my son. He has had a dramatic impact on Brian's life and has made a huge difference to my family. When we talk about Brian's support Tommy is always one of the first people to speak on Brian's behalf. Tommy does whatever it takes to enable Brian to lead a fulfilling life and achieve his full potential, even taking him to events when he is not paid to do so. He knows that it's more than a job, it's my son's life."

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