

People who kept me going – Patch Pacheco



This year's volunteer service, in [Pendower Good Neighbour Project](#) where I work with children and elderly people living within Pendower estate, is a journey towards self-improvement, filled with graces and joy; matter-of-fact speaking, challenges, more so in terms of community living; a whole lot of adjustments; and loads of "firsts" - first trip around UK, first Geordie word, first English food etc.

Yet at the end of this year's experience I looked back and asked myself, "What has remained in me?" When plans I have made did not materialize in a manner I conceived them "What had kept me going?" Such difficult questions. I kept pondering about it for days, so I decided to read my journal and I can't help but smile while I come up with a list. Here are some of them that I'd like to share;

- Geff - I call him the Technician - takes care of electricity and other related stuff. He asked "Patch, what letter comes after S? Of course I was hesitant when I answered T? Then comes the reply, "Yes please. One sugar and little bit of milk." I make him tea every time he comes to the center, and he would lend me DVDs and bring food for me and Rosie (my partner in the community).
- Christine, Administrator, she cooks for our lunch club every Thursday too. She says "Patch, I'll make it my mission to feed you right so by the end of your year here you gain a few more pounds."
- Pauline, pensioner, she comes every Thursday and sometimes helps out in the center. She brings us loads of nice stuff and delicious quiche and cheese scones. She shares the same mission with Christine. She says "Patch, every time I see a bottle of tomato sauce I remember you coz you always look for a bottle of ketchup every time you eat with us."
- Gordon, gardener, every time he sees me "Hello, Are you alreet? How was your day/weekend?" He teaches me Geordie.
- Charlene, she lives in the estate, she comes with her children in the center. She says "Patch and Rosie you should come by my house and have some tea."
- Norma, she knits nice stuff for the center, she asks "Are you's girls okay of going somewhere with me and Gerb (her husband)?" She took us to the coasts and to Bamburgh Castle.
- And a long list of canny people to follow ...

Sometimes when I feel so exhausted and down, these people have their own way of cheering me up with their subtle ways of expressing their care and gratitude for our service in the community. These are the things that have remained in me and kept me going. I have learned so much from them.