

Paul's Story.

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I was keen to get involved in volunteering for something that would help others in some way.

At last year's Wellness Day organised by BMS HR, I had a chat with Helena Yeaman from the Lloyd's Community Programme about the various volunteering schemes they were sponsoring. From the information provided, I decided to investigate further about the Hackney Schools Mentoring Programme (HSMP).

This programme links schools from the Hackney area with people from businesses and involves adults mentoring 14 – 15 year olds on a 1:1 basis; 1 mentor with a small group (2 – 3 students); or 2 – 3 mentors with a large group (approximately 10 students). The role of the mentor is to assist the students with skills needed for life once they leave their current school and go into further education or into the workplace. The purpose of the scheme is to support students during the first year of their GCSE course, help raise their aspirations, attainment, self-confidence and their overall performance.

The mentoring programme starts in September and runs through to June at the end of the academic year. There is great support from the HSMP, with a resource pack to get you started and keep the programme on track.

I volunteered for either a 1:1 basis or a small group and now I am mentor to two girls, Jaazan and Savannah, from Hackney, who I generally meet fortnightly at our office.

On 20th May, myself and two other mentors organised a treasure hunt around The City for all of the mentees, with prizes for first and second placed teams donated courtesy of the CSR team at BMS. All students that took part received a goody bag, made up of donated goods from the various companies taking part. The event was a great success and a reward for all the hard work the students and mentors have contributed over the last year.

I plan to get the girls to give a presentation at BMS about their experiences on this programme and how it has helped them. Hopefully it will encourage others to get involved in the programme. Watch this space!

It has been a very rewarding experience and I would recommend it to others, it has been a great adventure!