

## Volunteers donate 2,000 hours of their time to help neighbours beat the recession

People living in Radford, Hyson Green, New Basford, Sherwood Rise, Forest Fields and the Arboretum area of the city have found an innovative way to help each other through the recession - thanks to a project called the Skills Exchange.

Run by the Partnership Council charity based in Hyson Green, the 'time bank' style project has encouraged over 164 people to volunteer an amazing 2,000 hours of their time absolutely free - simply to help out other members.

Members earn Time Credits instead of money for volunteering to help other members, which they can spend on 'buying' volunteer help of their own.

Skills on offer via the Skills Exchange include gardening, decorating, childcare, baking, cooking, sewing and even guitar lessons.

### **Helen from the Skills Exchange says she's constantly surprised at how much time members are willing to give:**

*"Some of our members turn to the Skills Exchange for help with things that many of us may take for granted. For example, one young mum asked for help to blow up lots of balloons - as a treat for her four-year-old son on his birthday. Whilst, other members have provided lifts to hospital and so on, for those members without a car.*

*In addition, another of our members who's an ex-tailor has offered to teach a volunteer from Sneinton how to alter and repair clothes - so he can help other people in return. It's incredible the kind of snowball effect that the Skills Exchange has."*

### **Jane, a member of the Skills Exchange agrees:**

*"I joined the Skills Exchange because I wanted to help people and do my bit to tackle some of the issues that many people face everyday, especially now when many of us can't afford to pay for services like decorating.*

*The Skills Exchange also puts on lots of social events for its members so it's a good way to meet new and interesting people. Personally speaking, the project has given me a social life as well as giving me the chance to put my skills to good use."*

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Other examples of skills swaps include help with filling in forms, gardening lessons, making children's carnival costumes, catering for events and delivering leaflets.

As well as individuals, the Skills Exchange includes organisations such as Noel Street Leisure Centre and the Nottingham Credit Union.

Skills Exchange are always looking for new members, so if you live in Hyson Green, Radford, New Basford, Sherwood Rise, Forest Fields or the Arboretum area of the city please get in touch to find out more.

**Call Helen on 0115 970 8200 or email [helen@partnershipcouncil.co.uk](mailto:helen@partnershipcouncil.co.uk)**

With 2,000 hours volunteered by the projects 164 members there's no doubt that community spirit is alive and well in Nottingham.

**To find a similar 'time bank' style project in your area please visit:  
[www.timebank.org.uk](http://www.timebank.org.uk)**

**For more information about the Partnership Council please visit:  
[www.partnershipcouncil.co.uk](http://www.partnershipcouncil.co.uk)**

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