

# CREATING JOY AND LASTING MEMORIES: THE STORIES OF PERRY CHAPERONE VOLUNTEERS

United By 2022 Charity, a legacy of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, champions the West Midlands by connecting businesses with community groups. Funded by a £5 million investment, it has continued five impactful programmes supporting volunteers, young people, and local grassroots organisations. The charity upskills community groups, enhances their resilience, and focuses on marginalised communities. Through civic engagement and community development, United By 2022 preserves the Games' spirit of pride and inclusivity across the region.

**The Volunteers Collective**, launched in June 2023, connects dedicated and passionate volunteers with West Midlands event organisers, continuing Birmingham 2022's volunteering legacy. Perry, the enthusiastic bull mascot of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, continues to bring joy across the West Midlands and needs chaperones at events in order to interact with the public.



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it's like the joy is contagious.  
You go home with such a full heart.  
**Claire, Perry Chaperone**



When Claire first volunteered as a Perry Chaperone, she wasn't sure what to expect. Perry, the beloved mascot of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, was known for bringing joy wherever he went. Claire's role was to accompany Perry at events, ensuring everything ran smoothly. What she didn't anticipate was how much she would cherish the experience of witnessing Perry's magic in action.

One of Claire's most memorable moments occurred at Brindley Place in the lead up to Christmas 2023. "There was this group of schoolchildren who had just finished a tour at the Sea Life Centre," she recalled. "The timing was perfect – they were thrilled to meet Perry. Two of them even happened to be celebrating their birthdays that day, and Perry made it unforgettable for them." Claire added, "Seeing the kids' faces light up, it's like the joy is contagious. You go home with such a full heart."

For Bob, Perry Chaperoning became a way of life. After volunteering daily during the Commonwealth Games, Bob transitioned seamlessly into his role with Perry. One of his favorite events was at a community center in Chelmsley Wood, where local youth had written and directed their own play. "It was incredible to see these kids take such pride in their work," Bob shared. **"Perry was a huge hit with the children, adding fun and excitement to their day. You could see how much it meant to them."**

Kelly, another chaperone, found Perry volunteering to be a blend of fun and discovery. At the Priors tennis event, Kelly played swing ball with children while Perry charmed everyone on the court. "Perry's a surprisingly good tennis player," she joked. But the real magic, Kelly said, was seeing how many children still treasured their Perry toys from the Commonwealth Games. "They'd show me their teddies, saying they still had them because they loved Perry so much. It's moments like that that remind me why I do this."

The volunteers noted that Perry wasn't just about fun and games. One volunteer highlighted Perry's role in a water safety campaign, where the mascot balanced his playful energy with a respectful presence during a serious event. "Perry knew when to step back and let the message shine," she explained. **"It was a perfect example of how Perry can elevate the importance of a cause while still engaging the audience."**

The logistics of Perry Chaperoning weren't without challenges. Volunteers like Sue noted the occasional last-minute bookings and transportation difficulties, particularly for events in less accessible locations. However, the group found strength in their camaraderie and adaptability. "We're like a little team," Kelly said. "If one of us can't make it, someone else steps up. There's a shared sense of responsibility and support."

Despite the hurdles, the volunteers expressed immense pride in their roles. "Volunteering with Perry isn't just about the events," Claire reflected. ***"It's about creating memories—for ourselves and for the people we meet. Perry has this way of bringing communities together, and it's a privilege to be part of that."***

Today, the Perry Chaperone volunteers are more than just a support team—they're ambassadors of joy and connection. Their stories are evidence of the power of volunteering to foster community spirit and create lasting impacts.



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