THE STORY OF DENNIS, A COVENTRY AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEER

The following case study deals with the experience of Dennis as a volunteer of the Coventry Ambassador programme. His feedback and views were collected during an interview and are transposed below.

“A great opportunity to give something back”

Dennis started volunteering back in 2005, particularly in sport events which are his area of preference. For him, volunteering is “a great opportunity to give something back”. This is also an occasion to meet a wide range of people, whether they are other volunteers or part of the public, and more importantly to achieve that through something you like, such as sport for Dennis. Volunteering enables him to try something different and still be participating in sports.

Sport is what attracted Dennis to volunteer as a Coventry Ambassador. Indeed, he explains that the exciting part of the programme was the opportunity to be involved in the Olympics. According to him, many people joined the programme at that time for this reason, because they wanted to be involved in such event in some way and play a part.

“When Coventry Ambassadors came along to be involved in my home city and be involved in the Olympics, it was perfect”

Traveling to London was constraining considering the work commitment required from a Games Maker involved in the city. Consequently, the Coventry Ambassador programme was a good compromise for Dennis: “When Coventry Ambassadors came along to be involved in my home city and be involved in the Olympics it was perfect”. It enabled to take part in the Olympics without the disadvantages caused by the travels.

Thus, Dennis became one of the first Coventry Ambassadors, volunteering in the programme since the very start in 2012. However, he also reveals that his journey actually started one year before in 2011: “Before 2012 I learned that there might be an opportunity to be involved in the promotion of the Coventry Ambassador scheme”. He was involved in the promotional filming about the Coventry Ambassadors and what was going to happen in 2012.
“There is an opportunity to promote the city”

Volunteers are not only offering their time to others but also gaining from it. Dennis is already used to working with people thanks to his professional background, a skill set that he brought with him. The Coventry Ambassador programme gives him the chance to use those personal skills in a different setting but also to build and develop those skills and experiences.

Moreover, being a Coventry Ambassador enables Dennis to give back but also to benefit from activities that could only have taken place if there had volunteers. This also gives him the opportunity to still be involved in sports but also to promote the city which is important to him as a proud resident of Coventry.

“Being a Coventry Ambassador has opened up the world to me”

It also offers the chance to experience new things as Dennis says “Being a Coventry Ambassador has opened up the world to me”. Indeed, volunteers meet people, travel and see behind scenes which is enriching: “I have actually learned a lot about the city and about sports within the city”. Dennis also has the opportunity to meet people from different nationalities and from different types of work that he would probably never have had the chance to.

The benefit of being a Coventry Ambassador is to meet some great people who are no more, no less than the Ambassadors themselves according to Dennis who explains how much he enjoys their company and working with them. He even concludes by saying: “So being a Coventry Ambassador is absolutely fantastic”.

“Smaller events are great too […] you are meeting people here and around Coventry and promoting sports and they do remember you”

When it comes to events that marked him, Dennis indisputably refers to the Olympics and the chance he had to contribute to it in the country. This is something he would have never thought possible in his life time. However, he also remembers lots of other events such as the prestigious Davis Cup or even less prestigious and smaller ones: “Smaller events are great too” such as the Sports Week for example. The nice thing about those events is that: “You are meeting people here and around Coventry and promoting sports and they do remember you”. He also adds with humour: “Even when you are not wearing pink and purple”, the official colours of the volunteers’.

“Fantastic!”

Finally, Dennis was asked to summarise his experience as a Coventry Ambassador in one word. Without hesitation and with enthusiasm, he chose “Fantastic!” . He would recommend the programme to people who want to:

- Meet like-minded person
- Develop their skills and have great experiences
- Participate and contribute and be involved in the city and the promotion of the city
- Do a lot of good and have a great time