



For immediate use

January 2021

**“You can’t put a price on how volunteering brings more happiness and hope to a home.”**

*Home-Start Northern Ireland launches ‘Give the gift of time’ urgent appeal for volunteers*

Local mum and volunteer Reda Matuseviciene is helping Home-Start Northern Ireland launch its ‘Give the gift of time’ volunteer appeal which aims to inform and inspire local people to volunteer an hour a week to support local families through this unprecedented crisis. The campaign is specifically targeted at inspiring people to register as a volunteer in the Antrim, Carrickfergus, Craigavon, Lisburn, North Down and Omagh areas.

Reda knows first-hand how a few hours a week can transform a life of a young family. Her story began eight years ago when she prematurely gave birth to her second daughter at 24 weeks. At the time, Reda, and her husband Arunas struggled to cope with looking after a very ill little baby and a 3-year-old big sister, who also needed some support. The family were referred to Home-Start and for nine months Reda found the Home-Start volunteer was a real lifesaver, providing Reda with much needed support.

Speaking about how her Home-Start volunteer made a difference, Reda said:

“It was a lifeline and the fact that someone came into your home and give up their free time to spend time with you made you feel special. You can’t put a price to how much that helps build your confidence as well as bring more happiness and laughter to your home.”

Reda’s Home-Start’s volunteer was more than a lifeline at a time of challenge and thanks to the kind, compassionate and respectful approach of the volunteer, Reda was able to overcome any challenges and build up her confidence.

Inspired by the impact of her Home-Start volunteer, three years ago Reda decided to give the special gift of time to another family in need of support and friendship during a difficult time.

Reda registered as a volunteer and after the highest quality of training and support from Home-Start Craigavon, Reda was matched with her first family and from then never looked back. Speaking about the impact of volunteering, Reda said:

“As a volunteer, I get the chance to help a mum or dad with key tasks so they can get a chance to do the simple things that most of us take for granted. For example, by being there for a few hours, I can give a mum a chance to take a shower and relax, all the time knowing that someone is able to keep an eye on her most precious children.”

“As a volunteer, the greatest reward for me is the feeling I get when someone opens the door and says thank you for being here. Their words show how relieved they are to see you and how valuable your support is. No money can buy that feeling.”

Alan Hanna, Northern Ireland Director, Home-Start UK said: “We need volunteers like Reda to help support local families especially through these challenging times when many families feel pushed to the point of breaking. Last year, our volunteers provided emotional and practical support to over 1,200 Northern Ireland families that were struggling to cope. It’s through volunteers like Reda, that



parents don't just survive, they get a chance to thrive; so that our communities can build back better."

Home-Start volunteers provide emotional and practical support to families struggling to cope and who may be facing issues like isolation, financial worries, bereavement, or mental and physical health challenges.

Alan continued: "If you can spare an hour a week to support a family in your local community when they need it, then please get in touch today. Full and thorough training and support will be provided. The work of Home-Start volunteers has never been more urgent and important. We need volunteers now more than ever."

To register your interest and to find out about various volunteer roles on offer in your area visit: [www.home-start.org.uk/register-to-volunteer](http://www.home-start.org.uk/register-to-volunteer) and give the #giftotime in 2021.

#### **ENDS**

**For more information and to arrange a further interview please call Jayne Murray, Home-Start Northern Ireland on DD: 07718 912772 or email: [jmurray\\_assoc@home-start.org.uk](mailto:jmurray_assoc@home-start.org.uk)**

#### **Notes to Editor:**

##### **About Home-Start UK in Northern Ireland**

Home-Start UK in Northern Ireland is a local community network of trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through their challenging times. We are there for parents when they need us the most because childhood can't wait.

Supported by local volunteers, our services are based in communities right across Northern Ireland. Starting in the home, our approach is as individual as the people we're helping. No judgement, it is just compassionate, confidential help and expert support. Last year Home-Start NI supported over **1,200** families and **2,800** children.

Home-Start UK in Northern Ireland is comprised of 15 local Home-Starts based in the following areas:

1. Home-Start Antrim
2. Home-Start Ards, Comber & Peninsula
3. Home-Start Armagh & Dungannon
4. Home-Start Banbridge
5. Home-Start East Belfast
6. Home-Start North & South Belfast
7. Home-Start Carrickfergus
8. Home-Start Causeway
9. Home-Start Craigavon
10. Home-Start Down District
11. Home-Start Lakeland & Irvinestown
12. Home-Start Lisburn
13. Home-Start Newry & Mourne
14. Home-Start North Down
15. Home-Start Omagh District