

# ALEX TEDFORD

## SHROPSHIRE VOLUNTEER: DESIGNER AND SANTA'S ELF

### **When did you start volunteering for Greyhound Trust and what inspired you?**

In 2008 when I moved to Shropshire. I loved greyhounds but didn't feel I could commit to adopting, so started fostering.

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### **What roles do you perform as a volunteer?**

I design posters for events, but the main job is the yearly calendar. I think of a theme and catchy phrase for each month, and try and include a pic of every dog who has had a photo sent in.

In Santa's grotto, my role is as support elf - preliminary dog fusses, helping the hounds select a good present from Santa's sack (it'd be a real shame if a squeaky toy loving hound accidentally chose a chew stick), making sure Santa's beard hasn't slipped and taking photos of the dogs and their owners with Santa.

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### **Do you have a favourite role?**

I absolutely love being Santa's elf. We get lots of the same hounds coming back every year. I'm a big black hound fan and we have some absolute beauties visit us as well as some of our foster dogs. It's heartwarming to see owners who love their dogs so much. People of all ages queue up to tell Santa what good hounds they've been this year.

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### **What do you feel you've gained from volunteering for the Trust both personally and professionally?**

I have had so many lovely days spent telling people how wonderful Greyhounds are - people are always surprised when you tell them they don't need much exercise, and they always melt when a hound leans into them. My life has been made richer by all the beautiful hounds who have passed through my home on their way to their forever sofas.

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### **Have you homed a greyhound from Shropshire or any other Greyhound Trust branch?**

I ended up adopting Little My, the first dog I ever fostered. She seemed so sweet and quiet when I first met her at the kennels but turned into a little whirlwind at home. She was very much like a stroppy toddler in her younger years - very demanding and a bit of a diva, but when our other lurcher died and she no longer had to compete for attention she became a different dog!

She often came to work with me and gained quite a fan club and when I used to do events wooed many a man with her lean. She was complex, naughty, sweet and wonderful. I have so many lovely memories with her.

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### **Anything else to add?**

I've made lovely friends and memories and met so many wonderful hounds. There are so many different ways you can be involved - think about what you're good at and see if you could use it to help out your local branch.

**If you're interested in volunteering for Greyhound Trust, contact your local branch to ask about opportunities.**

**Let's do it!**