NEWS RELEASE

British Exploring celebrates the value of volunteering

Youth development charity, British Exploring Society is working with #iwill (Run by the charity Step Up to Serve) and vInspired to launch a new approach to making life-changing expeditions more accessible. The scheme, called Explorer Miles, is all about making expeditions more inclusive while incentivising and developing the habit of valuable community action in young people at the same time.

Explorer Miles is being launched as part of NCVO’s Volunteers’ Week and will enable young people to earn award credits towards the costs of participation on a British Exploring international expedition. Individuals, Companies, Trusts and Foundations will be encouraged to further recognise the volunteering efforts of young people by matching the value of Explorer Miles earned - reducing expedition participation costs even further.

“We had two aims when we devised Explorer Miles,” Honor Wilson-Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer of British Exploring, commented. “Firstly, we are committed to making our transformative expeditions as accessible as possible to young people from every area of society. Secondly, we wanted to ensure that everyone who joins us on expedition is really ready to benefit from their challenging journey into a wild and remote location. We believe that the positive learning experience of community action is a fantastic start to the journey of any young explorer.”

Matt Hodgson is Head of Sales and Marketing for British Exploring and he has been liaising with partner organisations to create the Explorer Miles scheme: “vInspired already enables people to enrol, find local projects in need of help and then log, validate and be rewarded for their volunteering hours online. Creating a partnership with this successful national scheme, British Exploring can now help potential explorers earn credits up to a maximum expedition value of £1000. With an entrepreneurial mindset, young explorers can also go out, with our support, to find match funding from local businesses and organisations. At the maximum level, they could secure the equivalent of a £2000 subsidy on an expedition - as much as 80% of the total costs.”

British Exploring is currently planning 2017 expeditions to Ladakh in the Indian Himalayas, the Peruvian Amazon and the Canadian Yukon. Matt Hodgson says: “If young people enrol in the next few months, they have a whole year to develop their volunteering experiences, earn their Explorer Miles and then make the dream of a life-changing expedition a reality.”
Edward Watson, Chairman of British Exploring is thrilled with the benefits that Explorer Miles bring to participants' home communities: “The new Explorer Miles scheme has considerable appeal in encouraging young people to volunteer in their own communities ahead of any expedition. Given the life-changing skills they will learn with us while they are on expedition, this is just the beginning of their contributions to society. From past experience with over 8000 young people completing our expeditions, we’re confident that those same individuals will return to the UK with the confidence, independence of mind and leadership skills needed to continue that work and really make a valuable contribution to their communities in future.”

Further information about the Explorer Miles schemes can be found here (http://www.britishexploring.org/explore-with-us/explorer-miles.aspx) and the vInspired programme is online at www.vinspired.com.

As an organisation we know first-hand the value and reward of volunteering. Members of the British Exploring office are currently giving their time at Lewisham NHS Trust, TackleAfrica, Operation Raleigh, The Spires Centre and Youth Adventure Trust and have also contributed to a number of projects overseas.

“Being a Youth Adventure Trust volunteer has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I’ve learnt new skills, met like-minded people and been lucky enough to spend time in beautiful parts of the UK, partaking in activities I would never have had the chance to do otherwise. There is a real sense in achievement in seeing a group of young people develop and grow over the camp, and pride in knowing that in some small way, I’ve contributed to giving these young people an invaluable experience. Looking back on it now I realise I’ve grown in unexpected ways too. I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone and can’t think of a better way to dedicate my time.”

Megan Daly – Explorer Coordinator British Exploring
**British Exploring** is the world’s oldest youth development charity dedicated to developing the life skills of young people for the wider benefit of society through exploration in wild and remote locations.

Established in 1932 by Surgeon Commander George Murray Levick, a survivor of Captain Scott’s final 1910-1913 expedition, today British Exploring delivers a range of youth and leadership development expeditions and training to young people. These programmes, which have always included a strong focus on scientific education and research, are open to all, and involve remote wilderness expeditions to some of the planet’s most challenging environments including the Arctic, Amazon rainforest, Himalayas and the Arabian Desert.

In recent years the Society has increasingly focused on creating successful and life-changing expeditions for disadvantaged young people and for those with least access to opportunities.

Volunteering has always been central to the work of British Exploring. The unique British Exploring model is made possible through the leadership and delivery of all of its programmes by an exceptional team of professional volunteers who provide hundreds of hours of adventure, medical, scientific and social skills.

[www.britishexploring.org](http://www.britishexploring.org)

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