



## **The Queen honours outstanding volunteer group Twinkle House In West Lancashire with prestigious Award**

Twinkle House is delighted to be one of 130 UK voluntary groups, 12 North West and 3 from Skelmersdale to be awarded this year's Queens Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for volunteer groups. This is the highest national honor that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind

This prestigious award is given to exceptional groups across the UK to recognise and reward voluntary groups and volunteers who regularly devote their time to helping others in the community, improving the quality of life and opportunity for others and providing an outstanding service carried out in their local communities. It recognises work that is of social, economic or environmental service to the local community and is supported, recognised and respected by the people who benefit from it.

Twinkle House has received the Award for its outstanding services provided to children, young people and adults with disabilities and additional needs in West Lancashire. Over the past seven years the group has developed their specialist sensory-based service providing tailored practical support to members of the local community and support to their carers. Based on their success in delivering support and achieving exceptional outcomes, the group have been working tirelessly to expand their service with bigger premises locally to allow many more children and adults to benefit from their exemplary support.

Those receiving this year's Award were selected from 413 groups nominated by members of the public who have been helped personally or witnessed the benefits of a group's work in their community.

Twinkle House will receive a certificate signed by The Queen and an exclusive commemorative crystal, presented by Her Majesty's representative in Lancashire, Lord Shuttleworth KCVO at a special ceremony.

The group has also received an invitation for representatives to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

Speaking of their success, Jill Appleton, Manager of Twinkle House said "We are all absolutely delighted and honored to receive this award for our Charity. It has been achieved through the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers and staff that have helped our service develop providing high quality support to our many beneficiaries, and our thanks goes to each and every one of them. Our sincere thanks also goes to Susan Valentine of St Richards Primary School, Skelmersdale who nominated the service for the award. Susan has been bringing pupils from the local school for vital additional support for many years and experiences first-hand the difference our support has made to the lives of those individuals."

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Award Committee Chair, former broadcast journalist Martyn Lewis CBE said,

“Volunteer groups make such an important contribution to their communities, often without praise for the incredible job they do. In these difficult times their efforts are even more valuable. It’s a pleasure to celebrate the achievements of Twinkle House with The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service and give official recognition for the benefits they bring to others’ lives.”

More than 980 groups around the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man have now received this annual Award since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.

For details of all this year’s Award winners and information on how to nominate a group, visit [www.direct.gov.uk/qavs](http://www.direct.gov.uk/qavs), where a nomination form can be downloaded.

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**For further information**

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**Note to editors**

**About the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service**

In 2002, in celebration of Her Majesty’s Golden Jubilee, the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service by Groups in the Community was established. Its purpose is to recognise groups of individuals who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others. It is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind and is equivalent in status to the MBE. As such, the Queen’s Award not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office for Civil Society (OCS). As part of the Cabinet Office, OCS works across government departments to provide support to voluntary and community organisations and is responsible for delivery of the Big Society programme.

Groups must be nominated for the Award – self nomination is not permitted. A group (two or more people) can be nominated if it is based in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The group has to have been volunteering for the benefit of people in the UK or overseas for at least three years and more than half its members must be volunteers who have the right of residence in the UK. Groups solely concerned with fundraising for charitable purposes are not eligible. Further details on entrance criteria and the nomination process are available from [www.direct.gov.uk/qavs](http://www.direct.gov.uk/qavs).