

Richard Mobbs: How I've spent my last five paid volunteer days

With so many great causes in need of an extra pair of hands, it can be difficult to decide where to dedicate your time. Richard Mobbs, Niche Automotive Account Manager at Swann Insurance, shares his experience of volunteering at Special Olympics Snow Camp.

For the last five years running, avid winter sports fan Richard Mobbs from Swann Insurance has spent his paid volunteer day nurturing budding snowboarders and skiers at the Special Olympics Snow Camp.

Special Olympics New Zealand offers sports training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Richard is one of more than 2,500 dedicated volunteers who help some 6,000 athletes take part in 13 different types of winter and summer sports.

The programme, which operates all year round, not only helps participants to improve their physical well-being, but also to make friends, gain confidence and experience being part of a team.



This year's Special Olympics National Winter Games took place at Cardrona Alpine Resort

Richard said initially he thought he wanted to help people with physical disabilities, but changed tack when he met a co-ordinator who worked with people who are intellectually

impaired. He was invited to attend a Special Olympics meeting at Snow Planet in Silverdale where regular training sessions are held approaching autumn.

Richard said: "I love winter sports and reached a point where I wanted to give something back.

"My passion is skiing but they were in need of guides or coaches for snowboarding; as I had done a little snowboarding before, I ended up assisting them."

This year, Richard spent six days volunteering at the camp between 18 and 24 August.



The team at this year's Snow Camp

He said: "I love seeing the expressions of joy on athletes' faces when they achieve a new goal - generally they are so happy and eager to be participating in sports.

"There is a huge buzz for me in working with these guys and helping them to reach their potential, which could possibly be attending the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games being held in Schladming Austria."

Richard intends to continue using his paid volunteer day each year helping out at Snow Camp.

If you are interested in helping out at Snow Camp, contact Rodney Penney: rodneyp@vodafone.co.nz. For more information about Special Olympics New Zealand, click [here](#) and to see footage of Richard's volunteering experience this year, click [here](#).