

AISHA MIRZA: COMMUNITY CHAMPION CASE STUDY

Aisha Mirza is a community Champion for the Lake District National Park. She has been involved with Mosaic for two years and has managed to promote the National Parks through various media outlets. She's arranged a number of visits to the Lake District National park and was a member of the Mosaic Management Team.



Mosaic Community Champion Aisha Mirza (Victor de Jesus)

Aisha's Journey with Mosaic

The journey with Mosaic has been an inspirational one, from the people I have met to the help and support I have received. I think really for me it was relearning about the outdoors and re-engaging. I couldn't wait to jump right in and grab every opportunity the project had to offer.

The first opportunity to come my way after signing up in February 2010 was the Mosaic Annual Event [a celebration event to which all champions and partners are invited] in the Lake District. This was the first time in a very long time that I was to venture out on my own. It made me realise how much I had been missing. I'd had the privilege of visiting the National Parks with my family since childhood, but these good times had become memories. Juggling work, family and children had left little time for anything else.

Following that, I attended a Group Leader weekend. That was spent networking, talking, relaxing, trying new things, learning and gaining new information and making new friends. I left revived and ready, with my mind brimming with ideas of what I could do to promote the Lake District and other National Parks, not only locally, but nationally too.



What I've done with Mosaic

I signed up to be part of the Mosaic Management team, as I'm a firm believer of active participation for change. I also felt strongly that the National Parks did not have much presence in Asian media, so I contacted any media connections I had and secured airtime talking about Mosaic and encouraging ethnic minorities to engage with National parks. I began to introduce more people through talks, presentations, attending Mela's and doing stalls at events. Other work I've done includes:

- An interview on the Indus show on BBC Radio Manchester
- An hour long slot on Ghup Shup with the Mosaic Project Officer on Pendle Community Radio
- Helped secure coverage for Mosaic and the National Parks in Emel, a Muslim lifestyle magazine
- Had an article published in Sisters magazine
- Took part in a live phone interview and attended a 1 hour interview on live TV
- Helped organise two challenges for champions from different national parks, including climbing Helvellyn via Striding Edge in the Lake District, and walking the Yorkshire Dales 3 Peaks

What I've got out of Mosaic

I've got my confidence back after such a long time and, due to this, my independence. I feel Mosaic has opened the doors to my childhood once more, reawakening memories that I can now actively share with people of my community. Mosaic has helped me visit different places through the training I have received and by broadening my knowledge of the National Parks. I am able to not only enjoy the National Parks with my family a great deal more, but also feel confident to encourage others to do so as well.

Finally, it's the friendships I've made with so many people, including staff working in the National Parks, volunteers, the Mosaic team and the champions themselves. It is these ties that make this project so unique and heart-warming.

My Biggest Accomplishment as a Mosaic Champion

I think the biggest personal accomplishment for me has been to start writing again and then to finally have my work published. Writing is a passion and as some of the greats such as Wordsworth were inspired by places like the Lake District, I am too.

© Campaign for National Parks 2012. The Campaign for National Parks asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this document in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

