

Sharon Firth is to become a Rotary “Community Champion”



Sharon Firth, to whom we awarded the Bob Abson Community Service Award last year, is being honoured by Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland with a prestigious Community Champion award.

Community Champions are part of Rotary’s Champions Awards, which are held annually to recognise the outstanding and inspirational humanitarian and community service of volunteers from around the country. Sharon, who was nominated by our members for a Community Champions award, is among 14 winners who will receive their awards at a ceremony in Nottingham in May, as part of Rotary’s Annual Conference and Showcase event.

Sharon and her husband have two sons, one with Asperger’s Syndrome and one with severe Autism. Upon their diagnosis, they were given a leaflet, a box of tissues and told that there was no cure.

Sharon set up the charity Beat Autism to help other desperate parents find their way through this challenging condition, and gain the help and support that is needed.

Beat Autism provides parental support and learning groups, drop in clinics, training to school staff to help them understand the challenges autistic children can face and a kids club, where children are free to simply enjoy being themselves.

The search for this year’s winners was carried out across Rotary’s vibrant network of over 1,700 Rotary clubs, with Rotary members and also members of the public having their extraordinary work recognised. This ranged from tackling mental health and supporting education, to alleviating poverty and fighting prostate cancer.

Debbie Hodge, President of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland, commented,

“The Champions Awards is about giving those who pioneer, lead and support some amazing volunteering projects the recognition they deserve.

“The selfless and truly life-changing impact of our champions really demonstrates how we can make a difference and touch people’s lives.

“Rotary is certainly a place where people can turn their passion and ideas into lasting change. There are so many heroes out there and to them I say “thank you and keep doing what you’re doing”.

“Sharon’s work is invaluable in helping those individuals and families who are impacted by autism and she is a very worthy recipient of one of this year’s awards.”

Sharon Firth added, I was very surprised to have been nominated by the Rotary Club of Normanton but delighted to learn that I am to receive a Rotary Community Champion Award.

For more information about Rotary’s Champions Awards visit: www.rotarygbi.org/events

To get involved in Rotary and make a difference in your community, visit www.rotarygbi.org/join