

# Breakfast for sheriff and police inspector...from Jeananne

By Katie Macleod

**N**ational Care Day, hosted on 16th February by Who Cares? Scotland, is an annual celebration of the success of children and young people with care experience. In the Western Isles this year, though, the celebrations were held later than usual, on the 22nd – and they were a little bit different, too.

Who Cares? Scotland is a national independent advocacy and membership organisation that works with care-experienced young people in a range of different ways. Jeananne, Participation Assistant at the office in Stornoway, grew up in care, and as a teenager had difficult encounters with the criminal justice system, including time spent in custody.

Now, with her new role and her own tenancy, her life looks quite different, and for National Care Day she decided to invite two people who were involved in her past – the local police Inspector and Sheriff – to have breakfast at her home.

Jeananne, along with her sister Sophie and friend Megan, who have all had different experiences of care and police interaction, hosted the breakfast, putting on a spread of croissants and a fry-up for Sheriff David Sutherland and Inspector Jane Nicolson.

“I cooked breakfast for them, and we sat down and talked about how we felt at the time, and how Inspector Nicolson and Sheriff Sutherland felt at the time,” says Jeananne.

During their chat, Sheriff Sutherland talked about how he is very aware his actions can change people’s lives – Jeananne acknowledged that he had given her multiple chances in the past – and Inspector Nicolson discussed how worried the police are when a young person runs away from a children’s home.

“Just to see how ‘normal’ they were made it so nice. Sheriff Sutherland only left himself five minutes to get to work,” says Jeananne with a laugh, adding that he took away a “doggy bag” of croissants for his colleagues, and suggested they all pose for a selfie to mark the moment – and that was after her cats had tried to steal the show, getting lots of attention from the two visitors.

“The breakfast had a lovely symbolism to it,” says Alison Frizzell, Advocacy and Participation Worker at Who Cares? Scotland in Stornoway, who helped organise the breakfast. “The whole point of it was for these two people to come along, and see the turnaround that Jeananne had managed to achieved.”

“There was nobody more delighted than these two people sitting in the room, very casually, listening to these girls open their hearts up about how they felt. It was just lovely. National Care Day is all about celebrating your care identity, and celebrating successes, and Jeananne has literally turned her life around.”



“My role is to give young people who don’t ordinarily have a voice, predominantly care experienced young people, a voice,” explains Alison. “I explain it to young people by saying ‘Imagine there’s a radio in front of you, and you’re in a meeting, and the radio’s right down at the lowest volume, what do you hear?’ And of course they say ‘Nothing.’ It’s my job to get that volume up, and up to the right people at the right time, making sure young people get opportunities that their non-care experienced peers take for granted.”

“Who Cares? Scotland is all about giving young people that voice, individually or together. It might be in Children’s Hearings, it could be in reviews, it could be something as simple as pocket money or bedtimes in the children’s home. It could be on big issues that are important to a group of young people. But what’s unique about Who Cares? Scotland is that it’s independent advocacy. I work only for the young person. It’s all a voluntary service that young people choose to engage with.”

For Jeananne, her new role as Participation Assistant is giving her plenty to focus on. On National Care Day she visited Inverness as the Western Isles’ representative for the regional celebrations, and last month she took her place on the Care Council in Edinburgh for the first time.

The Care Council is Who Cares? Scotland’s national representative body made up of care-experienced young people who are chosen by

their peers to represent their region. These Councillors then come together throughout the year to work for positive changes to care across Scotland, discussing their experiences and ideas with senior national leaders. Jeananne and her peers in the Western Isles have also been involved in putting forward their views to the Independent Care Review of Scotland’s care system, which was announced by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in 2016 and set in motion last year.

“This is Jeananne’s first taste of being involved in something like this, and it will be lovely for her, it’s all about her and her successes,” says Alison of Jeananne’s new role. “It makes me feel very humble to see what Jeananne and these young people share with someone like me who’s an advocate.”

“Who Cares? Scotland is founded on being relationship-based. We form relationships with young people and develop trust, we don’t just go to a Children’s Hearing and that’s it, end of story. We go for coffee, they can phone us up if they’re having a bad day. That’s the key: Who Cares? Scotland is about independent advocacy and opportunities to be included and heard that’s relationship based and solely about the young person.”

If you’re a young person in the Western Isles and think you might benefit from independent advocacy or group opportunities, contact Alison Frizzell at Who Cares? Scotland on 07764 290921 or at [afrizzell@whocaresScotland.org](mailto:afrizzell@whocaresScotland.org).