I cannot believe that in 2016 people with any form of disability are made to feel worthless and face discrimination on a daily basis. With the Olympics and Paralympics, still fresh in our minds, we should now hope, people with all forms of disability, whether it's mental, physical, or emotional, get recognised with their own rights, and are given the recognition they all deserve, whether they are famous or not......

My name is Natasha, I have Epilepsy and a form of dyslexia. On the outside, I look like an everyday person. Alas, I sometimes have problems fitting into society. I have been known to get strange looks when I show the conductor my bus pass. Some may think I’ve just aged really well! Others get really big eyes when I say, “Oh mine is a Disabled pass.....” "But what is wrong with you?”, they all think. “You don't look disabled.”

I am a very, creative, people person, who loves to make things, help others learn new skills and make craft goods. Not having all the skills, space, or equipment myself, I am honoured to be able to volunteer for a local charity called Craft Aid International. It’s one of the only places I feel accepted.

It's run by Susie Hart MBE, who is a textile artist in her own right. Sometime we all forget Susie is human, because she doesn't know how, to say "No” and wants to help and do everything: taking part in talks, events, running craft classes, or helping someone in need. I swear if, you cut her chest open, you would find a heart of gold! At home, she is a devoted wife, and wonderful, loving mum, to two daughters, one of whom has Down's Syndrome.

In a perfect, world Craft aid international, would have a base, for at the moment you could say, Susie is the heart and soul of Craft Aid International. Though rain, shine, and snow, she packs her car, with all the equipment needed, to make our enchanting goodies.

Craft classes, are held at Harrogate, and Leeds church hall, also Harrogate hospital where Craft Aid helps long term brain injury and stroke patients once a week during term time for everyone over the age and of 18 years old.

At the beginning of the craft classes, everyone bustles around, helping to unload the car, and set up the equipment. Then we have a brief meeting about what we are making today, and if needed, we’re given instructions on how to make the items. Then once all the participants have arrived, the fun begins! And we get to choose one of up to four different crafts. We get to make greetings cards, flower brooches, mosaics, jewellery, marbled paper and more. At the moment, we are making Christmas goods!

When possible, we use materials that are recycled or made out of recycled items, and it has been known, for Susie to have a look in a skip to give much needed life back to a item. If you pass a skip one day, and see some legs, with Susie's shoes hanging out and her cries, it will be her exploring the skip, but this time, not able to get the goodies out by herself!

100% of all the money raised goes straight back to the charity, and all the craft classes, are free of charge, with a break half way through, for a cosy chat, drink, cake or biscuit sometimes homemade.

Over the last few months, Craft aid international, have held a number of events, like the annual Summer Ball, which raised over £6500, a stall at Plaza Latina- London's best Latin American festival, and a Craftival at Harrogate’s new art and music festival, Happygate, where we had three bustling craft areas. Visitors could learn how to produce beautiful marbled paper, make some very cool Pom-poms or create their very own mosaics masterpieces.

Susie also is helping to set up a project for the disabled people, in a tiny Peruvian church, in the city of Arequipa in Peru.  For unlike England there is no government funding, for any one with a disability. People in Peru have to nowhere to go. It is hard just facing every day tasks, not to mention the discrimination they face, and the difficulty of getting a job.
Thank god they now have a regular place, to go, where they are safe, and shown compassion, and love. With all the equipment provided, they are taught new skills. They also learn social skills, whilst making their goodies, and look forward to meeting their regular friends. Once their items have been sold, they are given a wage.

We are now very excited, about our biggest event of the year, the Knitting and Stitching Show, at the Harrogate international centre: the times of which are Thursday 24th 10 - 7pm, Friday 25th 10-5.30pm, Saturday 26th 10-5.30, and then Sunday 27th 10-5.00 pm.

The stall will be run by volunteers and the disabled participants, giving them the amazing opportunity to meet and greet visitors, and take part in the event. Also it gives, everyone the perfect opportunity, to meet our participants, and get to know a little about them. They then can get a true sight of what Craft Aid International is all about. They’ll get to see some of the goods that we make, and the story behind them.

At our stall, you’ll see our stunning handmade Christmas cards, snow flake craft packs, Christmas garlands, alongside our all year around goodies: a wide range of greeting cards, packs of marbled paper shapes and felt flowers. Then there will be Peru goods, including handmade jewellery, beads made out of cereal boxes, a wide range of greeting cards, Peruvian fabrics, and cushions made with traditional Peruvian material.

We will have lots of different wools, and with the help of our friendly volunteers, you will have a chance to make your very own funky Pom-Pom.  All we ask is a small donation, and for you to remember us, and tell all your friends about us!

We look, forward to seeing you there to share in our excitement.