



Elizabeth Haycock: Open house days

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ELIZABETH HAYCOCK - MARIE CURIE



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO FUNDRAISE?

Having been a nurse for Marie Curie for many years, I was inspired by the important work the charity does in allowing people to choose where they spend their final days.

WHAT DID YOU CHOOSE TO DO AND WHY?

I have helped with various other appeals that the charity holds nationally, like Daffodil Day and getting friends together to attend charity balls. Opening my home up once a year to friends for a coffee morning is a social activity as well as a fundraising one! We've now done it for the past twenty years.

WHAT WAS INVOLVED AND DID YOU GET MUCH HELP FROM THE ORGANISATION/PEOPLE YOU WERE SUPPORTING?

I've been doing it for so long now that the event seems to run itself! As well as providing tea, coffee and cakes we have a bring and buy table, a raffle, sell cauliflowers and wallflowers (which has now become a local tradition) and christmas cards and gift wrap on behalf of Marie Curie.

Because the event is in my own house, we don't advertise in newspapers and with posters. The word is spread by invitations in the village where I live and word-of-mouth.

The charity has always been very supportive, and provides things like leaflets and information for people to take away, as well as the cards/gift wrap for us to sell at the event.

We always ask the local paper and parish magazine to include a thank-you after the event to let people know how much we have raised, and thank everyone who helped and came.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ON YOUR VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISING TEAM AND HOW DID YOU GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER?

The team are friends and family - we usually have about five or so helpers, and really couldn't have kept the event going without them. As the event runs all day from 10am until 9pm, we provide lunch for helpers and try and make it as much of a social occasion as possible.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE PLANNING FOR IT?

Not difficult! Each person who helps has a different strength - one of my friends is particularly good at raffles, for example - so encouraging people to help out with the things they're good at helps lighten the load.

We decided early on not to charge for admission, as it's a private house, and we did want people to feel comfortable coming and spending their money on the things for sale instead! This seems to work well. We also decided not to have a set price for tea and coffee, but to allow people to make their own donations.

I've got a food safety certificate already, so am aware of the things you have to be careful of when providing food and drink.

Apart from that - letting people know when the coffee morning will be, organising the things to sell on the day and reminding people to bring items for the bring and buy sale are the main things to think about.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE, INCLUDING EVERYONE'S TIME?

Fewer than 40 hours

WHAT WAS IT LIKE ASKING FOR DONATIONS, ANY TOP TIPS?

We don't really ask for donations, although we do ask people to bring along items for the bring and buy sale and raffle. Having said that, we do have one marvellous lady who likes to oversee the donations for tea and coffee, and make sure the only visible coins are the £1 ones...

WHAT WAS YOUR TARGET?

Didn't have a target to start with - any amount would have been appreciated.

HOW MUCH DID YOU RAISE?

£3,500 to £4,000 per year for the past twenty years...

WOULD YOU DO IT AGAIN?

Definitely. We'll continue doing it every year until people don't want to come anymore - and there's no sign of that yet!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WANTING TO DO THE SAME THING?

Speak to your charity - they are there to support your efforts. Make sure you have enough help, and appreciate the help you get. Always remember to thank everyone involved!

DID YOU USE HOW2FUNDRAISE.ORG FOR INFORMATION ON THIS ACTIVITY?

No