

Cambridge University Press creating extended partnerships with local charities



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS' APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For the last 8 years, the Press in the UK has selected a 'charity of the year' to support for a 2-year period. Past charities have included Romsey Mill, Blue Smile, Centre 33 and Rowan and they have just announced their new charity will be The Castle School. The two-year period allows a meaningful relationship to develop where the Press can work in partnership to maximise the impact they can have.

'There is a massive appetite among our colleagues to use their skills to benefit others. People get a great deal of satisfaction from helping local community projects and at the same time they can gain new skills.'
Heidi Mulvey, Head of Community Engagement

Cambridge University Press seeks to partner with charities that are local so their employees can become involved. Charity partners should also have a link to education, which ties in with the Press's mission and goals. Nominations come from Press employees and the long list is reduced to a shortlist of the charities with most nominations. The employees then vote for the winner.

'The shortlisted charities are asked to tell us what they do, what specific difference the support we can give will make and what kind of volunteering can help them beyond the fundraising.' Heidi Mulvey

A well-timed letter from a parent from the Castle School to the Press' Chief Executive, Peter Phillips, arrived just as the list of charities for 2019 to 2021 was being drawn up. All pupils at the Castle School have a statement of special educational needs, mostly for autistic spectrum disorder or speech, language and communication needs. The letter led to another Castle School parent, who is also a Press employee, agreeing to champion the school's bid. The school was voted a clear winner and will work with the Press for the next two years. Cambridge University Press will fundraise on behalf of the school and encourage colleagues to volunteer. There is also likely to be in-kind donations, such as books and materials and use of premises for events.

All Press employees are encouraged to do at least one volunteering day a year, but many do more. For example, one project group have volunteers visiting a local primary school weekly for an hour to do one-to-

one reading with children who need additional help. The children benefit from the extra support, the Press volunteers benefit from spending time with colleagues across different disciplines, which also helps develop a greater sense of teamwork. They also get to see how educational materials are used in the learning environment. In another example, they have hosted interviews for Centre 33, who are recruiting an IT person. One of their IT colleagues has helped them with their brief for the job description, and has spent the day with them interviewing.

SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS WITH BLUE SMILE AND ROWAN



Blue Smile, a children's charity providing counselling and support in schools, is a past charity of the year that forged a successful partnership with Cambridge University Press that went beyond fundraising. While the additional funds the Press raised enabled the charity to extend its activities in a local primary school, the Press also got to know the charity well enough to be able to support them

with the redesign of their website and they also donated IT equipment. Blue Smile engaged with Cambridge University Press employees through events such as lunch and learn sessions. The Press also has Friday updates on their intranet, which invite colleagues to get involved with volunteering opportunities coming up. Although the formal relationship with the Press has ended, several of their employees continue to volunteer for the charity. www.bluesmile.org.uk



We think of charities as equal business partners - we gain as much from the relationship as they do.'

Heidi Mulvey

Press and Blue Smile colleagues



Rowan, a charity that provides an art centre for people with learning disabilities, have just ended their time as charity of the year with the Press.

'It was such a huge eye opener. They do such wonderful work.' Heidi Mulvey.

Colleagues were able to go along and take part in sessions and meet and chat with the students. As a result of involvement in a ceramics workshop, a colleague who ran the Cambridge University Press bookshop in central Cambridge was inspired to create a Christmas window display about Rowan, creating some excellent PR for the charity. Cambridge University Press colleagues fundraised for Rowan, which was matched funded by the Press. They also volunteered to improve facilities such as the garden used by the students and they hosted events such as a performance at the Cass Centre of *Through The Cloud I Can See You*. www.rowanhumberstone.org.uk



The Press designed a display board for their shop display which Rowan continue to use for events.

'We have loved being charity of the year for Cambridge University Press and we got so much more out of it than just the agreed financial support (including lasting friendships!) From visits from Press staff to Rowan, student artists visiting the Press, volunteering opportunities, fundraising activities (ranging from bike rides, quiz nights to whiskey tasting evenings), bookshop displays and performances! We really did everything we could with them. As part of what they do a certain amount of income was agreed which supported our drama room which has now been transformed into a performing space! However, on top of that they nearly doubled this income and that has come in to be used to support the day-to-day at Rowan. It has been a fantastic two years and we are very sad it has come to an end. '

Hetti Wood, Communications Ambassador at Rowan summarised their experience



Press colleague with student artists at Rowan

KEY LEARNING POINTS

Businesses are constantly approached by charities asking for support. The Press's Heidi Mulvey estimates she receives over 200 emails and letters a year. Her advice to charities that want to stand out is to do your homework and look for a clear fit between what a business does and how they could make a difference to your beneficiaries beyond just asking for a donation. The Press does make donations to charities other than their charity of the year, but this is usually driven by colleagues who want to get together and help. Charities need to use their networks to find supporters within businesses that can champion their cause.