

On being a volunteer By John Haydn-Jones

I first heard of Maytree when I attended a Christmas charity concert in a Wren church in the City of London in 2007. It was a beautiful setting and I was full of the festive spirit; I was struck however by the sombre significance that we were supporting some obscure small charity for suicide of which none of us heard before. During the interval someone gave a brief talk about Maytree's ethos and what volunteers did; I was immediately hooked on such a novel concept, and by the sincerity and kindness of the presenter.

I had long been considering volunteer work as a way to compliment my paid work as airline cabin crew which I have done for many years. I had felt that I had not been developing professionally and I have long been passionate about mental health. I wanted something 'grounding' and challenging that would also allow me to feel more connected to the city where I live, as opposed to the continuous pattern of flitting off on my next trans-Atlantic trip. Intuitively I felt that Maytree could fulfil something that had somehow been missing.

Almost a year after that concert I contacted Maytree about volunteering. Just as some of our guests feel hesitation and ambivalence and sometimes unworthiness about being accepted for a stay, I felt that perhaps I couldn't provide what Maytree rightly demanded from its dedicated volunteers. I was delighted therefore, after pacing up and down Moray Road, to feel good about the interview and then be selected after what felt like an intimidating training process: I was surrounded by psychology students and mental health professionals!

My past seven and a half years' volunteering have been a richly rewarding time of learning and development which I couldn't have foreseen. There is a kindness, openness, and a respectful collaborative communication which is truly motivated by care and compassion. I know that how I approach my paid work has improved by honing and improving my skills that I learn and refine, and certainly don't always get right, at Maytree. I know that collectively we save lives. I know that as an individual I have contributed to having saved lives. I cannot think of rewards more worthy than that. It astonishes my colleagues at work when I tell them about what volunteering at Maytree involves, given the high level of responsibility with which we are empowered.

I feel respected, listened to, and that I have a valid voice and contribution to make at Maytree. I believe that this is rare in many work settings. The lack of any taboos or judgement add to a progressive, inclusive, safe setting. I have often commented at reflection sessions how jarring it can feel stepping back into the chaos and harshness of the big city after being immersed in a gruelling shift. And when I feel that things haven't gone well, either with guests, potential guests, or with internal structures and procedures, I have felt motivated and encouraged to voice my concerns in a proactive and constructive way and that my voice is genuinely heard. This signifies in my opinion how well Maytree has evolved into its current state of operation.

I am gratified to make a difference to people in distress with such a caring bunch, whilst at the same time developing personally in ways that I wasn't able to predict all those years ago, whilst shivering in the Wren church listening to beautiful music!



Newsletter Winter 2016

Hello from the Director

As I write this edition of the newsletter, I am sat in the small office right at the top of the house in the eaves. I can hear laughter travelling up from the kitchen; real, honest, loud, jaw aching laughter. It puts a smile on my face. You might think that for our guests and for our committed hard working team of staff and volunteers, that laughter is off limits. You would be mistaken. Whilst, many of our guests arrive filled with anxiety, burden with depression and with no sense of hope, they also bring with them courage, strength and an often deeply buried and forgotten sense of self and humour. Their courage to reach out for support and to arrive at Maytree, their strength in talking and sharing their deepest darkest feelings and thoughts of suicide with volunteers and staff that they have only just met and their willingness to trust in Maytree, never ceases to touch and inspire me. As Maytree continues to support the increasing number of people who contact us and as we continue to grow, we will start 2017 with the exploration and discussions about the possibility of replication. I will of course keep you updated on our progress. And I hope that Maytree can continue to rely upon your ongoing support, so we can continue to grow and reach more people who are contemplating suicide.



Natalie Howarth. Director

Warmest wishes

Nat Howarth.



Who we have supported

Month	Number of callers	Number of guests
June	221	9
July	241	12
August	210	10
September	279	12
October	227	11
Total	1,178	54

Text

Farewell and thank you to Janet Lewis Jones, one of our wonderful Trustees. Janet has been on the board for eight years and will be stepping down at the end of December. We said farewell & good luck to Anja Murphy in November, as she moved on. Farewell and good luck to Iqtadar, our Head of Fundraising, as he moves on to another job. Hello and a warm welcome to all our new volunteers.



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Thank You

In loving memory

David Beard fundraised in loving memory of his son Luke Beard. We're deeply grateful for his support. David raised £650.

Heidi Davies fundraised in loving memory of her partner Mark Kendall. Thank you for supporting Maytree. Heidi raised £155.

Andrew Cope and Demon Trading sadly lost a loved colleague to suicide. **They raised £80 for Maytree from their friends and customers. Their support is much appreciated.**

Ellie Reuben, Liz Belgin and Joanne Lazaris recently did their Do It For Danielle Sponsored Walk in Beckenham, in memory of their friend Danielle. Thank you. This is the second year running they've kindly supported Maytree in this way. **They raised over £600**

Pat Phillips and Richard did an all-night Marathon through the streets of London to raise funds for Maytree. They raised £1,298. A fantastic achievement ! Thank you.

Denise Fuller fundraised for Maytree, raising £90. Thank you.



Terrence Collis, our Chairman, got a few of his friends together for a walk, stumble and limp called An End to End, along Hadrian's Wall. They put one foot in front of the other to increase awareness of suicide and to promote Maytree's work. **They raised over £9,000. A huge thank you to them and their feet.**

◀ From left to right: John McKinstrie, Peter Jones, Terrence Collis, Keith Moxham.
They were joined by Val Gill and Lucinda Partridge-Hicks.

Thank you to a number of our volunteers and staff who braved the cold at QPR football ground on the 1st of December. Thank you to QPR for help-ing us tackle the taboo of suicide and in promoting Maytree.



Fundraising News



Thank You

A huge thank you to all our donors, supporters, volunteers and funders for your ongoing support and belief in our unique charity and vital work.

A huge congratulations and thanks to the Maytree running team, who not only crossed the finish line at the Royal Parks Half Marathon , they also raised a whopping £8,111 for Maytree.

Top: Left to Right: Ben Scanlan Steve Altman, Pete Coward, Carol Lewis, Josie Flight & Dan Lanyon.

Left image: Chris Conlon, who flew over from Spain to take part, Carol & Steve.

Right: Daniel Regan crossing the finish


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www.Maytree.org.uk
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If you are interested in becoming a Maytree volunteer then please email Carol@maytree.org.uk for more information and an application pack or visit our website www.maytree.org.uk and click on "I want to help".