Global Xchange

Young people active in the community

My GX Fundraising Journey

My name is Peter Ennals. I'm 21 years old and I am part of the Namibia/Newcastle team Global Xchange 2011/12. Applying to GX was a decision based on my time at Bath University. Having been heavily involved in the Universities 'Nightline' – a student orientated phone listening service – I decided I wanted to pursue further charity work as it was so rewarding. Since I didn't take a gap year before University I felt it was a perfect time to do something like GX.

I chose GX over other similar programmes because it promised an experience that made a real difference – not just building a well or scrubbing down an elephant. Being a first time fundraiser was part of that experience. I had to raise £1000 which at first seemed rather daunting despite the constant reassurance and advice VSO gave. Sat at the computer reading my fundraising tips e-mails it became apparent that setting up a 'JustGiving' page was the perfect start. Seeing "Target: £1000, Progress: 0%" after initially making my page triggered some panic and so Facebook statuses started appearing daily to spread the word prompting friends to start donating.

Once my JustGiving page was up it seemed like possibilities were endless. Leaflets were printed out and handed to family friends. Next I set up a car boot at village day with posters provided by VSO – raising £145. Although it's only a fraction of my goal it made it seem even more achievable. Realising I don't need to have a huge monumental event, I started organising several smaller fundraising projects.

Chatting with other volunteers gave me the idea of 'Living Below the Line', that is living off of £1 a day for a week. Yet again Facebook helped promote and it encouraged sponsorship.

Sadly I was unable to get a bag pack sorted with a supermarket due to late notice, knocking my confidence a little. However, I received a permit to do a street collection. If doing a collection I would recommend not being afraid to ask passer-bys for spare change with a smile on your face. Once you engage them they are friendly and more likely to give a few coins and it really starts adding up. Through this I raised £105.46. It proved to me how generous everyone can be when you give them a chance. I definitely recommend it because so many people really are interested in what you are doing and wish you luck.

My final bid for fundraising was going to my old secondary school. Having sent a letter I had a meeting with the head teacher; organised a few assemblies to raise awareness; had my story and details e-mailed to staff; and got a team of students to do a cake sale with me. Knowing school children love cupcakes I raised £70.34 and received several donations from old teachers. Again the generosity and enthusiasm of those involved made the experience very worthwhile.

With fundraising complete I was proud to have made a total of £1070.80 in less than two months! My early doubts were abolished quickly and, although having some rejected letters, those who did reply were really helpful and made it possible. Once you get the ball rolling fundraising is doable and even enjoyable – just don't hold back!

For more details about my fundraising see my blog: www.pete-gx.blogspot.com

Pete Ennals
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