

# 6 WAYS THAT GIVING GIVES BACK

Charities and schools have always worked well together – and there's more to the relationship than simply raising money for good causes...

## 1 It changes lives

For some young people, charity fundraising could be their first experience of making a genuine, practical difference to the world in which they are living. This can be especially significant when schools serve catchment areas in which children's life choices tend to be restricted; planning an event or campaign, seeing it through to its conclusion, and understanding the implications of the ultimate donation can be immensely empowering, and enable students to realise that their actions can have a real impact – that they are not just passive cogs in an overwhelming system.

## 2 It's learner-led

By encouraging learners to research and suggest suitable causes to support and ways to do so, unlikely leaders can emerge, and previously hidden skills and qualities can often start to be revealed. It's amazing what a difference it can make to a young person's attitude when he or she is working towards a chosen goal, about which he or she cares deeply, rather than one that has been set by someone else. And passion in one area of life has a tendency to spark enthusiasm in others; a positive experience working with a small group to raise funds for a specific project can lead to improved confidence and resilience when facing challenges across the curriculum.

## 3 It broadens school horizons

Surrounded as they are by a constant focus on testing and results from both politicians and the media, students could be forgiven for assuming that secondary school is all about exams – that everything they do in the classroom from the age of 11 is aimed at them achieving those essential grades when they're tested at 16+. Allowing space within the timetable for activity that is valuable for its own sake, despite not leading to a nationally recognised qualification, can go a long way towards reminding children, teachers and parents alike that there is more to a top-notch education than what's in the envelope on results day.

## 4 It gets the community involved

Research shows that improved parental engagement can have extremely positive effects on students' achievement. Fundraising campaigns are a great way of getting parents and carers involved in school life on a level playing field – without the pressure of having to discuss behaviour management or academic expectations for a change. Barriers can be broken down, and genuine connections made, as everyone works together towards a common target.

## 5 It enhances teaching and learning

For most charities, raising awareness is just as important as raising money. To that end, the majority are very proactive when it comes to working with the education sector – whether through providing innovative, free resources with clear curriculum links for classroom use, arranging for speakers to visit schools, or organising trips that enable students to see the charity in action. This can result in the establishment of mutually beneficial, long term partnerships, and increasingly creative approaches to both fundraising and learning.

## 6 It's fun!

Education is a serious business, of course. But there should be room in all schools for silliness – and one-off fundraising events with the emphasis on absurdity allow even the most serious-minded and sophisticated teen to indulge in pure playfulness; dressing up, performing, joining in games, and generally letting off steam. Morale is boosted, the atmosphere is lightened, student/teacher relationships are strengthened, there are some superb pictures for the website... and money goes to where it's needed. Positive outcomes all round!

