



A Celebration of Giving

What is MWA?

May Week Alternative is an award-winning initiative set up by undergraduates at the University of Cambridge which encourages students to celebrate the end of the academic year by making the world a better place.

In 16 months, with the support of over 200 students, we have raised £49,000, protecting over 56,000 people from malaria. This is coordinated by a Committee (now of 22 students) and a growing network of college reps.

May Week is the last week of the Cambridge academic year, and the end of exams are traditionally marked by a week of extravagant parties, called May Balls. By putting charity at the heart of the May Week celebrations, MWA aims to change the way students think about giving, transforming thousands of lives in the process.



May Week Alternative



mwa-partnership@srcf.net

How does it work?



We encourage students to donate the approximate cost of a May Ball ticket to the **Against Malaria Foundation (AMF)**, independently rated as one of the most effective charities in the world.

We recommend a donation of £150, which after matched funding can protect 350 people from malaria! However, we welcome any donation significant to the donor, as we want there to be no financially exclusive barrier to students joining.



We then host a modest Summer Party (see p.5) during May Week, where we come together as a community to celebrate not only the end of exams, but also our incredible collective impact.

With 100% of donations going directly to charity, we rely entirely on external support to make our Summer Party happen. As a result, we work closely with our partner organisations to create a meaningful and enjoyable celebration of giving.



What are our key objectives?

1

Direct impact

Our primary aim is to raise money for AMF and in doing so protect tens of thousands from malaria by providing life-saving anti-malaria nets.

2

Put charity at the heart of May Week celebrations

We offer students a positive framework which allows them to celebrate May Week by making a significant impact on the lives of others. If May Week is about celebrating the opportunities which we enjoy in Cambridge, MWA goes one step further and asks how we can use those opportunities to make the world a better place!

3

Inspire students with our positive vision of giving

By inviting students to engage with significant giving through this celebratory context, MWA aims to normalise this positive approach to charity. We hope that students will come to see charity as being worthwhile and rewarding, taking this ethos forward into their future personal and professional lives. See the [TEDx Talk](#) given by MWA's founder for more on this.

“

By putting charity at the heart of celebration, and by inviting students to profoundly engage in the positive process of giving, we can unlock an unprecedented wave of philanthropic engagement which has the potential to last a lifetime.”



- George Rosenfeld, MWA Founder, at TEDxCambridgeUniversity

The story so far

Spring 2018



A group of five students coordinated the initiative and within just a couple of months raised **£12,000** for AMF, with over **40 students** joining.

That was enough to protect over **15,000 people** from malaria - that's more than the total number of undergraduates at Cambridge!

October 2018



Last year's efforts were coordinated by a Central Committee of **12 students** and a network of over **25 college reps** across Cambridge.

We **quadrupled** our social media reach through Facebook and an email newsletter; our Facebook posts regularly reach thousands of students.

February 2019



We were invited to speak at various events, including the Cambridge International Development Conference, the Cambridge Union, and TEDxCambridgeUniversity.

We were recognised with the Vice-Chancellor's first ever **Social Impact Awards** – see [this article](#).

March 2019

2x

We raised over **triple** the previous year (having acquired matched funding), with more than **170 students** joining. Many were making the biggest donations of their lives to date (average £80+), on a level unparalleled when it comes to student charity.

This total is **more than double** the previous year and will protect over **40,000 people** from malaria.

June 2019



We hosted a Summer Party (see p.5) with over **140 participants**, thanks to the generous support of **11 university and corporate partners**.

We recruited this year's Committee, a body of **22 students** from across Cambridge, and we continue to grow our **network of college reps**.

Summer Party

2019



Though our primary focus has always been the donation itself, the Summer Party is the culmination of the MWA calendar. Last May Week, our Summer Party brought together over 140 students, each of whom had chosen to celebrate May Week through giving.

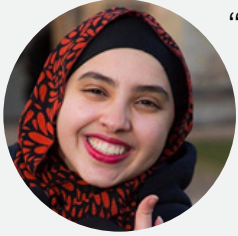
Given that 100% of donations go straight to charity, we developed partnerships with a range of organisations in order to put on the event. We were very grateful to the six separate food providers who supported us with in-kind contributions for our party, as well as the financial sponsorship we received. With music and comedy groups also offering to perform for free in support of our message, we were able to put on a memorable celebration of giving, without using a single penny of the money donated by students.



The Cambridge Impronauts were honoured to entertain everyone at the MWA Summer Party. It was lovely to be part of such a special afternoon by bringing laughter and delight to the generous students who had chosen to celebrate by donating!"



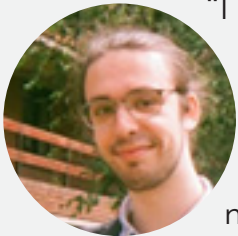
- The Cambridge Impronauts, performing at the MWA Summer Party



“Everything about the party embodied the ‘Feel Good Do Good’ philosophy – everyone had a wonderful afternoon, but what made it really special was reflecting on our collective impact. Hands down the highlight of my Cambridge experience so far and I can’t wait for next year!”

- Areeg Ashraf Emarah, Third Year Engineer

Most importantly, we made sure that impact was clearly at the heart of the event. Through banners and displays around the garden, as well as a speech by our founder, we encouraged participants to visualise the scale of their collective impact, which sparked many conversations. This focus prevented students from feeling like they had paid for an event - instead, they were able through the celebration to engage with the significance and impact of their donations.



“I had designed and printed a ‘What Next?’ leaflet for students to take home, emphasising that MWA could be just the start of their altruistic journeys and listing concrete next steps. We had planned to hand them out as students left the party, but most people picked one up of their own accord – there were none left by the end!”

- Jacob Arbeid, MWA Vice President



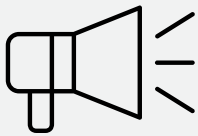
What Next?

Building on this strong platform, we aim to establish MWA as a central pillar of May Week - this would mean hundreds of students celebrating each year through giving. In doing so, we hope to normalise the incredible donations we have seen this year, and transform students' attitudes towards charity as a result, with long-term impact as detailed above (p.3).

Put simply, our goal is to combine celebration and giving at the heart of May Week and beyond.

How do we plan to achieve this?

Expand



Through a combination of social media, outreach events, student press and word of mouth, we will strive to ensure that every student in Cambridge can hear about MWA and our philosophy. Having tripled in size last year with no budget and limited experience, this year we aim to go further still. With a bigger and more experienced team, and most of all the legitimacy of a successful campaign behind us, we aim to exponentially increase the number of students involved.

Partner

In order to cement the concept of charity at the heart of May Week, we will continue to cultivate long-term partnerships with university and corporate institutions. Your financial support and logistical experience will be essential to the continued growth of the movement. In particular, partnering with university institutions will provide us with the legitimacy and expertise which will be invaluable in ensuring MWA's place as a long-term staple of May Week.



Inspire



Most importantly, in order to ensure that MWA has a truly lasting impact on the way students think about charity, we will continue to look for new ways to allow students to connect with the impact of their donations. By inviting them to embrace charity alongside celebration, and then offering concrete ways to improve their social impact, we will empower students to take our positive philosophy of giving forwards into their adult lives.

How can you help?

We hope that colleges can play a vital role in ensuring the success of MWA, particularly given our emphasis on uniting students across Cambridge. By working with us, you can support your students in choosing to celebrate May Week through giving. You can also connect with a wave of celebratory altruism which is gaining momentum across Cambridge and beyond, and which is turning the tradition of May Week into a force for good.

These suggestions are largely based on previous partnerships with colleges, but they are by no means exhaustive, and we'd love to discuss any other ideas you may have. We'd also greatly appreciate any feedback and advice which you could offer us!

Match Student Donations

A clear way to show students that their college supports their decision to join MWA is by offering to match their donations. Of course, you could choose to set a financial cap, or match only the first few students as a symbolic gesture of support.



Host Our Summer Party

We are very grateful to St Catharine's College for hosting our Summer Party in their St Chad's Garden last year. Their support allowed us to create a truly memorable event for all involved, and many college members passing by during the afternoon stopped to ask about MWA and engage with our message for the first time!



Given the growth of the movement, this year we are looking to hold our Summer Party in a location with flexible capacity for 200-600 people, with rain options and availability during May Week, ideally on June 12th or 14th. We would also require permission to play live music with speakers, and to serve and store external food and drink (unless the college can offer their own catering within our limited budget).

Support Our Summer Party

We rely entirely on external support to put on a meaningful and enjoyable celebration of giving for all the students who have donated. As such, we are grateful for any contributions towards our catering or logistical requirements (e.g. storage and refrigeration space in the lead-up to the event). Last year, several colleges also offered financial support (between £150 and £900) to help cover the costs of the event.

