

MND Matters: Episode 11: Fundraising

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Chris: Welcome to MND Matters, brought to you by the MND Association. Alongside, members of the MND community, we bring stories, information and expertise direct to your ears. Remember to subscribe to ensure that you don't miss an episode.

I'm Chris and I'm Director of External Affairs at the MND Association.

I'm really delighted to introduce today's guests who in this episode will be chatting to you all about fundraising for the MND Association. All three are very keen fundraisers, completing a wide range of events in the past and raising money for people with MND and families affected by MND. So, say hello to Jeremy, Tamara and Matt. Hello. Welcome all.

I just wanted to really start just briefly ask you each a first question which is about if you could tell me a bit about your fundraising for the MND Association, so what you've been doing to raise funds, and maybe Jez if I start with you if that's okay?

Jez: Yeah, sure, no problem at all. I've been interested in helping MND for quite some years. I lost my grandmother to the disease in the 1980's and over the years I've done bits and pieces here and there. A few years ago though, my wife told me I had far too many shirts so we did a shirt challenge where I wore a different shirt every day for a year, or thereabouts, and raising money. But more recently what I've done is, well I suppose about 3 years ago in common with a lot of people, decided I'd put on a bit too much weight. I used to play rugby and I had to give up playing rugby through injury and weight piled on, diagnosed as diabetic and I had to do something about it so I started running and my wife who's very good at finding these little challenges for me, I think it's to get me out of the house more than anything else, but she said why don't you get in touch with the Motor Neurone Disease Association and see about running the London Marathon which I did. I was due to run the London Marathon April 2020, well we all know what happened there, continued my training, continued my fundraising, ran it virtually in October 2020, continued my training, continued my fundraising and eventually ran the London Marathon for the first time in October last year. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Really gave me something, a challenge completely out of my comfort zone physically but, you know, really gave me opportunity to do lots of good things, raising money for such a valued and wonderful organisation.

Chris: Fantastic. Thank you. That's absolutely brilliant. And Tamara, what about you?

Tamara: So, I had a significant birthday in February and, as a result of that, I decided that I would set myself 50 challenges, so a challenge a week for 50 weeks all based around the number 50 - no prizes for guessing where the number came from! And, so, I have been doing exactly that and so my challenges have been a real mixed bag. They've been everything from doing headstands to walking 50 miles, I had all my hair shaved off, I had to build a house of cards with 50 cards. The most recent one was swimming 50 lengths of butterfly in the pool on Sunday and, so, yeah, it's been a real mixed bag, mostly based around the number 50. And we are now on week 44 so I've got six weeks left to go to the end of my challenges. An interesting 43 weeks.

Chris: Great. Absolutely brilliant. Fantastic. And Matt, how about you?

Matt: So, for myself, I first got involved with raising money for Motor Neurone Disease when I moved to Plymouth 10 years ago. I joined the local rugby club down there whose Chairman unfortunately had recently been diagnosed with MND and at the top of his bucket list was to raise a

million pounds for charity to help find a cure and that included, you know, the club doing lots of different events, sort of running the Plymouth half marathons and head shaves and all the other sort of things like that. But myself, recently myself and a friend took it upon ourselves to, very similar to Jez, ex rugby player who wanted to throw myself outside my comfort zone and jumped on a bike and decided that it would be a great idea to tour all 13 of this year's premiership rugby clubs by bike, so we covered 850 miles in 12 days raising a very good amount of money for MNDA.

Chris: That's amazing. It just shows you I think the range of activities that people undertake to raise money for the MND Association. I'm always blown away when I read ThumbPrint and look on the website to see what people are doing and get the news on fundraising. It's just absolutely extraordinary.

I suppose I think some of you have already talked about your motivations so, maybe, would any of you like to say any more about your motivation for raising money for the MND Association?

Jez: I mentioned my grandmother and, you know, she was diagnosed with MND in 1985 I think it was. Very rapid time from diagnosis to losing her. She had a particularly aggressive form of the disease. Back then it was a case of it wasn't really known about and she went through so many different diagnoses, you know, was it MS, was it this, was it that? You know, MND back in the 80's was something that you just didn't know about. But what really drives me now is I hate to think that people have gone through what we've gone through without us making an attempt to try and move things on and I know the great work that the Association does and everything around it. So, it's really important I feel that we continue to try and give those funds to be able to really fight what is a horrific thing.

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. Tamara, how about you?

Tamara: Yeah, so when I started out, interestingly enough I hadn't really a personal connection with motor neurone disease or with the Association, but it has been amazing since I started doing this back in February how many people have said to me 'oh, my friend died from motor neurone disease' or 'my brother-in-law' or, you know, 'I have a neighbour who's lost his best man to the disease' and somebody in the village who is fighting it now and people at work and it's just even random strangers that I met. So, one of my challenges was to climb Glastonbury Tor 50 times and along the way I stopped to talk to a lot of people and there was a lady there who I think it was her mother-in-law or her father-in-law had literally had their diagnosis a fortnight previously and, so you know, we stopped to have quite a long chat really and, to hear and find out about peoples' stories, I'm so glad that I chose it as my charity and kind of 42 weeks on I now know a lot of people who've been affected by this. There's so many more people out there than I think anybody even realises. For me, raising awareness and getting the word out there has become quite a big part of what I want to do so all of the videos, each of my challenges are videos, and on all of the videos I try to put some of the little facts and some of the little bits of information from the MNDA website into the video so that anyone who's watching it will actually learn something from it about it as well.

Chris: Yeah, that's really interesting. I think the synergy between fundraising and raising awareness is really close actually. It's something we found very much over the last year with the fundraising for example that Kevin Sinfield's done, we've seen the awareness raised with the funds at the same time which is really interesting I think. Matt, I think you said you lost a friend to MND. Is that right?

Matt: Yeah. So, I'm very similar to Tamara. I didn't have a personal connection with MND before I moved to Plymouth in 2009 but Simon was actually the first person to say hello to me and greet me when I first walked into a training session at that rugby club. So it kind of really hit home what he

was going through and his sort of recent diagnosis and over the years, being a part of that rugby club, you get to see the camaraderie of a rugby club. They're like a family and it was quite evident when one of their own got hit down with this diagnosis that everyone jumps behind him and are kind of encouraged to raise as much money as they could. And I think that's one of the biggest factors when we came to do our challenge this year was it marked the 10 years since he'd passed away and knowing he was so close but yet so far away from that million pounds we were like, well let's do our bit now to really push that fundraising home. And, very similar to what Tamara said, we met somebody probably every day that had been either directly or indirectly affected by motor neurone disease. I remember a gentleman coming up to us on one of our evenings. We were in a pub in High Wycombe just ordering some food and he saw we were in Motor Neurone Disease t-shirts and hoodies and he came over to us and we had an amazing conversation about the work the charity does, and it transpired he'd lost his mother-in-law to the disease and very kindly he paid for our dinner. And it's the little sort of touches like that which really kind of hit home as to what we were doing our challenge for. It wasn't, yes, the cause and the reason was to raise as much money for Simon, but it was also the awareness that we brought with it. Every day we had a sense of this is why we're doing it.

Chris: It's really interesting isn't it how the community aspect of raising money comes into play. One of the questions I was going to ask, maybe I could ask you Jez, is how did you find spreading the word about your fundraising and getting your friends and family and the wider community to support that because that can be a challenge and it's something I know, you know, how am I going to get people to support me to do this? How did you find that Jez?

Jez: It's quite an interesting point you make there Chris because, yeah, I mean essentially what you're doing is you're hitting the same people. You know, it's not like running a raffle which is three weeks or something. This is a huge commitment that you're taking, you know, it's over a year or two years. For me now, I've been fundraising on the back of marathons since mid-2019 so, you know, I'm quite a sociable kind of guy. You know, I've got quite a few Facebook friends and a fair percentage of them have contributed but you've got to be very aware that you're hitting the same people all the time. So, what I found was that you need to offer something back, whether that be a competition so I've done things like prediction games for rugby World Cups and Six Nations, or we did a blind sweepstake on the FA Cup so people bought an envelope for a fiver and you try and hit more people but for lesser money almost I think the thing is. There's a real big balance but people are generous. People do look at things you do and can see the effort and will support it and it doesn't matter how much they support you by. I mean some people are putting £500 into something. Other people will give a fiver and each pound that you get, regardless of where it comes from, regardless of what size of donation it is, each pound is equally as valuable as the other pounds that come in. That's the attitude that I've taken to my fundraising.

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. And I know that the Community Fundraising team at the MND Association supports through that process and they can give ideas and thoughts about how to fundraise so they're always there on hand to help. And I wondered actually, Jez has hit on an interesting point, Tamara you've been fundraising over a long period of time and that has its own challenges as well when you've got one of these kind of long activities. How have you kind of kept yourself motivated over that period of time, engaging people?

Tamara: In terms of engaging people, what Jez says is absolutely true, there is a finite pot of people. Everybody in my email list gets an email every week from me. Hopefully, they don't kind of think 'oh no, it's Tamara again' and that sometimes they read them. But I've done other things, so posters and banners, particularly on the events that I did outside. So, the 50 mile walk we had big banners out in the middle of the village and some friends of mine who were my kind of support crew over

the 25 hours of that challenge literally stood in the middle of the road in our village with collection tubs and accosted anyone who went past. So, they really went out of their comfort zones to talk to people, and I did a spot on a local radio station. I put messages in our village and our parish magazines to try and spread the word and I know people who are friends of friends have kind of put things out and reposted my posts. So, trying to educate people a little bit more and I think some of the challenges that have brought in the most money have been where I've actually been out and about and able to talk to people and to explain what I'm doing and why I'm doing it rather than the ones that happened in the back garden during lockdown which were just shown out on video. So, it is hard, but you keep your end goal in sight and you just kind of keep going.

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. And Matt, what's kept you going? You talked about the community, obviously with the rugby and everything, how have you found the support you've had?

Matt: The support we've had has been fantastic. I think, not to repeat what Jez and Tamara were saying, but with social media, you only hit a certain number of people and we really found that in the build up to our ride that it wasn't really getting anywhere unless we did something out of the ordinary. So, there was one challenge I remember Mark and I said if we raised £300 we would do one of our warm-up rides in a dress so we actually did 100 miles in a dress, which wasn't the comfiest of things and I think we blinded a lot of people around the Bristol area, but it was something very different that we were able to kind of give a different angle onto what we were doing. Mark also did his own version of Bohemian Rhapsody whilst cycling along on our ride which was, I mean it deafened me but it raised a lot of money which was nice. What we also found though was a lot of the clubs that we visited donated a signed shirt that we were able to auction off so just being a part of specific Facebook groups, just becoming a member of those and explaining what we were doing with then saying, so, with Gloucester, we had a signed Gloucester shirt so if you'd like to place a bid, really kind of engaged the rugby community whilst then giving them the opportunity to get something back from it.

Chris: Yeah, excellent. I think you've all hit on a number of different things that really keep things going. It is a lot of fun and I think that's one of the most important things is that, you know, you have fun when you're fundraising because that keeps you going doesn't it? It keeps you motivated. I know when I've been doing it, that's the thing that's kept me going.

So, maybe I'll start with Matt. What was the best bit, the most fun part of your fundraising?

Matt: For me, I think it was the very different but very unique welcome that we had from all of the premiership rugby clubs. Newcastle Falcons squad giving us a guard of honour to see us off and to have that experience was just incredible. Unbelievable it was.

Chris: Amazing. Thank you. Thanks Matt. Tamara, what about you in all the events that you've been doing? I know you haven't finished yet but what's been the best bit, the fun bit?

Tamara: The best bit so far I think will be about the people that I've met along the way and, particularly the people that I met in Glastonbury when I was climbing Glastonbury Tor 50 times. So, I was there for the best part of 11-12 hours and there's always lots of people up Glastonbury Tor and they're always interesting people. So, we started early in the morning and there was a group doing a meditation to the sunrise. One member of that group came to talk to me, and she didn't have any money to give, she didn't have anything that she could donate financially but she had an amazing crystal stone marble, and she gave me that and it was to wish me well on that day and on all of the fundraising. And that marble came up and down the Tor with me I think 48 times and it now sits on a little mantelpiece just in our living room, so I see it, I walk past it every day. That lady, I don't know

her name, I don't know anything about her other than what I've just said to you guys, but she will stay with me along with all of the other people that I met on that day and every other day throughout the 50 weeks, so I think it's about the people for me.

Chris: Lovely. Thank you, Tamara. Lovely story. It's quite emotional as well, yeah, absolutely. Jez, how about you?

Jez: Well, the best bit for me was doing that marathon and I just, you know, everybody turns around and says it's going to be a life changing moment in your life and everything like that, it's going to be the most amazing experience, and there's a bit of flippancy about you going 'yeah, whatever, it's just running a marathon' and then you do it. Running around London in a vest with Motor Neurone on it and your name on the front, strangers are shouting out your name and saying 'Go on Jez, go on'. You run that London Marathon and all these people who just want you to succeed, who want you to do your best, who want to give you support without any need of anything coming back to them other than you smiling at them just reaffirms your faith in the human race. But what really got to me and I'm afraid I'm going to get a little bit emotional here, a bit like Tamara, I crossed that line and I became at peace with my grandma and that is such a huge thing. You know, I know my grandma she loved me, whatever, but to be able to do something in her name that's going to help other people, because that was what she was like, she helped other people first. To be able to do something like that in her name, and if you've got that opportunity, I'd say go out and do it because that's the real life reaffirming part of it. I've done something good and I've done something good in somebody beautiful's name and that's just wonderful.

Chris: That's lovely, thank you. Thank you all for sharing that, that very personal kind of moments there. Thank you all very much indeed. That was lovely, thank you. What do you hope your fundraising will achieve and where would you like to see, you know, the money go if you like and what do you think it will do for people living with MND?

Jez: What really motivates me is seeing how motor neurone affects people and yet people don't know about it. It's a funny thing to say but when you see people like Doddie Weir and Rob Burrow, and people who are well known, them raising the awareness, and it's so sad that they've got it but, almost in a way, because of their stature and the love that people have for them because, you know, they are heroes. I mean Doddie Weir, a thorn in the side of English rugby teams over the years, an absolute hero of the game and now being a hero in his fight. Rob Burrow again, big tough guy in a small body and a big tough guy now. But the fact that it's taken high profile people to get this disease to bring it to awareness so that the BBC Breakfast pick up on it, like Sally Nugent does and she's done such great work around Rob Burrow in particular, I hope that we can build upon that with what we're doing. The scientists and the doctors and the researchers, whatever, who are looking for the cause and the cure and whatever, I mean that's beyond me. I could not do anything to help that whatsoever but if I can build upon what's being done now, even in my tiny little way so that my 500 friends know about motor neurone and then if somebody speaks to them at work and says about it, they know a bit about it and word starts spreading, that's job done isn't it?

Chris: Sure. Absolutely and I think it's making that contribution isn't it? It's your contribution to this fight which is really important, I think.

Tamara, where do you hope we can make progress?

Tamara: You know, Jez has already talked and I spoke earlier about raising awareness. Obviously, research is expensive. Anything that we can do to add to that pot of money is going to be helpful. Everyday people like us. And a couple of people, fundraisers who really hit home for me were Stuart

and Charlotte who did the Spennylympics who absolutely just blew everything out of the water in the three weeks of their Olympic events and you think, you know, we can make a real difference and it doesn't matter if we raise £50, £5,000 or £50,000, every single penny will go towards improving the lives of the people who are suffering and the people who love those people. So, you know, whatever we've done and whatever we've had to do to get to this point, it's been worth it. Absolutely hope that somebody, somewhere along the line will benefit from our efforts. However, it's just, it's all part and parcel of the big picture.

Chris: Yeah, excellent. Thank you. Matt, have you got anything to add to that? There's quite a lot covered there by Jez and Tamara.

Matt: What we've found is the more and more that we can raise awareness, like Jez said, more and more people then know about the Association, the disease and, even if 10 people then go on to raise £50 let's say each, then it's more money into the pot which ultimately is going to help the researchers and everyone to find that cure that we're all desperately hoping for.

Jez: I just wanted to add something else to that as well. That is a long-term project, you know, we're not going to find a cure tomorrow, regardless of how much money we throw at it, it's going to take time. But also to help people whilst we're trying to find a cure, whilst we're trying to find a way to end this disease, that people are supported, that they are able to retain dignity and retain a standard of living.

Tamara: Yeah. The other thing that I think comes on from what Jez has said is about hope as well. We haven't mentioned, but one of the things that I would hope that I have done over the last however many weeks and over the whole year is to give some hope to people who are suffering, to people who are struggling, to people who are watching their loved ones suffer. Knowing that there are a whole bunch of us trying to do something to find a cure for them and to move things forward so that one day, fingers crossed, you know, somebody will get that diagnosis but it won't be the horrific diagnosis that it is now. So, if we can even instil a little bit of hope in the people that come behind us then, you know, that's a plus point for me too.

Chris: Yeah. I think you're absolutely right. I think hope is really important and I can certainly reassure you, as people who are fundraising and raising awareness of MND, that it makes a massive difference because of the feedback we see from people with MND and their families when they see people fundraising, when they see coverage in the media, it does give people that hope that people are talking about MND and that is really, really important to people I think. Absolutely.

I wanted to come to a personal level with fundraising now and I just wondered, Matt maybe I can come to you first, on a personal level, what you got out of the fundraising. Did you find it a generally positive and fulfilling experience I guess is the question?

Matt: I think like we touched on a minute ago, there was more to it than just the money we could raise. If we could raise the awareness in every city that we went to in our brightly coloured MND cycling jerseys that were enough to turn heads and ask questions about what we were doing, that almost meant more to us at the time than raising the money. Once we'd finished, you know, and put the bikes away and stuff and then reflected on how much money we then raised, I think it then actually hit home that we have raised a really good amount of money for the Association and that's hopefully going to go to support people and support research.

Chris: Yeah, absolutely. Tamara and Jez, did you find it a generally positive experience?

Tamara: Some of my challenges have been really quite enjoyable and some of them really haven't. Some of them I knew that I would be able to do and some of them I didn't actually think I could do. And it's interesting to see from a kind of personal growth and development perspective what you can do when you are motivated and when you have something of a goal in your head that you think, yeah this is uncomfortable, this is outside of my comfort zone, and I would like to stop and go and hide underneath the duvet but I am not going to because I have made a promise. So, yeah, I think getting outside of our comfort zone, even things like getting in front of a video camera which I absolutely loathe so I'm quite glad this is a podcast and not a video recording, has been super interesting but just motivating and learning what motivates people and what keeps us going when things are tricky has been amazing.

Jez: For me personally, without the fundraising I very much doubt whether I would have done what I've done. I was the world's worst trainer. I'd turn up for a training session, I'd go through the motions, we'd work out what the line out calls were and I'd be off for a pint and a fag. And I could turn up on a Saturday and, at the level I found myself at, I could get away with it. Suddenly, getting to the point where you turn around and you say 'right, I'm going to sign that piece of paper, whatever, I'm going to run the London Marathon', as a 20 stone as I was at the time, 48 year old diabetic, and you suddenly realise things are getting real now and I had to do it. The fact that money was coming in and fundraising was happening was what got me out on cold mornings to go and do a 10 mile run but that's all part of the fact that next year I want to run more marathons and raise more money for Motor Neurone so, on Thursday on payday, I shall log in and put myself down for the Brighton Marathon and Yorkshire Marathon and I want to run the London Marathon again for Motor Neurone. And, without that fundraising I don't think I would have ever started that journey or, if I had started that journey, it wouldn't have been too long before I turned round and gone 'you know what, I'm happy. I've done the couch to 5k, I've proven it, I'll go back to my old tricks'. So, actually, having the fundraising giving me the kick up the backside I need has not only been beneficial I hope to the charity but it's been hugely beneficial to me as a person. I can't tell you what my mantra is because it's very, very rude but, basically, it's saying I will show people. I would say 95% of the people I know including myself turned around and went 'no you won't. That won't happen'. And all the way around the London Marathon when I was talking to my grandma, I was saying 'I'm going to show them grandma. I'm going to show them' and as I rounded the bend onto the final 200 yards to the finish line it was 'I've shown them. I've shown them'. It's proving to yourself. Doddie Weir, Rob, all these people have been so brave in putting themselves out there, showing themselves at their most vulnerable and, if they can do that, then I can 26.2 miles around London, not a problem at all, and I can raise a bit of money.

Chris: Thank you, yeah. Matt, sorry, did you want to come in there?

Matt: I was just going to follow on from what Jez said about, I definitely think I do fall into that category of being one of the world's worst rugby trainers, but I knew I couldn't do that with getting on a bike because it was so alien to me and I couldn't just rock up on Tuesday 28th September hoping that I'd be able to cycle 850 miles. I think one of the things that I've got from, you know, listening to Tamara and Jez is that we've all, the 3 of us have really pushed ourselves and our boundaries and thrown ourselves completely out of our comfort zones to do something that people a year, two years ago would have told us we couldn't have done and I think, that looking back was one of my biggest drivers of motivation. To be able to turn round to those people that said 'you're not going to get on a bike and cycle 850 miles', I can and I've done it. We can because we're driven, we're motivated to proving them wrong.

Chris: Yeah, fantastic, thank you. And, actually, you've led me on quite nicely to the next part really and the next question which is our fundraising theme for January is 'No time to wait' and the reason

that we've called it that is because a third of people diagnosed with MND die within a year of diagnosis and half within two years and that's why we use the phrase 'no time to wait'. And I guess I just wanted to ask you, perhaps start with you Tamara, what would you say to someone who's listening now who was thinking about fundraising for the MND Association?

Tamara: I would say just do it. If you've got even half an idea, put a date in the diary, tell as many people as you can. The thing is once you start to tell people that's another great motivator because you've got to do it then. You've told people, you can't then say 'ooh, yeah, no, I didn't actually mean that'. Just do it. It doesn't matter if you raise £5 or, you know, £50,000, it's all going to a super cause and it will all make a difference. Be brave. Be bold. Just get out there. Even if your idea seems a bit silly, go with it, talk to people, it might develop into something else, it might grow, you know, get other people on board. Just go for it.

Chris: Fantastic. Thank you. Have any of you got any top tips for anybody who's thinking about fundraising? Is there anything you've kind of learnt along the way?

Jez: Personally, I'd say my top tip is be unique. Don't worry if something doesn't come off. The one thing I found when I was first doing fundraising is that sometimes you did an event, and it just didn't work or people didn't buy into it. I found that hugely frustrating because you set out thinking this is such a fantastic idea. Just because you think it's a fantastic idea doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be a fantastic idea. And then my third tip would be get people engaged. Don't do it all yourself. Running a marathon was a team effort. I couldn't have done it primarily without my wife. She's been an absolute rock behind me. She fully supported me. As I say, I mean it might well be that she quite enjoyed me being out of the house for 2 hours on a Sunday morning. I don't know. But, you know, everything I did she was behind me. She was a great sounding board for ideas. She'd turn around and say 'no I don't think that one will work' or 'that's going to take too much work' or whatever. My family, mum and dad, whatever, you know, get everybody involved, get friends involved. Say to a friend, so when I did the virtual London Marathon, I did 10 laps of the local reservoir and public park, people came down and ran either a lap with me or 2 laps. One guy ran half of it with me, so you get everybody involved. And it's not you dictating to people that 'this is what I'm doing, you must give me money', it's getting their buy-in as well, making them part of the team. Bringing them in, many hands make light work and all of that sort of thing, you know. You're not just turning around to people and saying 'open up your wallet', you're saying to people 'please get involved and get the same out of it that I'm getting out of it' and people will do that. They will support you.

Tamara: There will always be, you know, people who can't help you financially, but they can help in other ways as Jez has said. Some of the best support I've had has actually not involved any money at all. It's been about people, you know, baking cakes and bringing me a cup of tea at the end of a very long walk or standing on the poolside cheering as I swam that last lap of butterfly or, you know, just being present sometimes and being helpful. Family and your friends can be an absolute gem and, as Jez has said, they can really help with all of the background stuff and all of the extra bits that go with fundraising. There's always going to be people who can't help or who won't help or who are not in a position to help and you just have to say 'okay, that's fine' but don't let it put you off and keep asking and keep going.

Chris: Yeah, fantastic. Thank you. Matt, have you got anything to add to that?

Matt: Yeah. I think it is having that idea that is in your head and just run with it. It doesn't matter how big or how small it is, just go with it and try. If it doesn't work, amend it. Try again. It is about having that support team around you. It's not just about people who can, you know, put money on your JustGiving page but it's those people who can take the pressure off of you, of planning

something that you want to do and, you know, like Jez said with his wife, my wife was incredible with our fundraising and Mark's wife. They drove our support van up and down the country. They checked in and out of our hotel rooms, they cooked us meals, that just took all the pressure off, and it was an idea that we had and we were just able to, not run with it, but cycle with it.

Chris: Excellent. Yeah. And I think that's the thing. If you can get that support from friends or your family, it will really help you along and I know, as I said before, that the Community Team at the MND Association is there to support as well and give encouragement and to kind of drive you along, especially if you're doing some of these longer events as well which take a bit of training. I remember having support from your family reminds me of when I was training for the Marathon and I remember saying to my wife 'I'm just going out for a training run', she said 'how long are you going to be?' and I said 'what, 3½ hours'. It's those sorts of things. As well as the support, you need the understanding as well don't you to make that happen?

Jez: Absolutely, and then the other thing of course as well, as I got to the end I rang my dad and my dad turned round and said 'I'm proud of you son' and when you get something like that at the end of something so emotional, it just makes everything worthwhile and knowing that my dad said that knows that the person that I was doing it for would have been proud as well, that is so huge.

Matt: But it's also getting those words of 'well done' or 'I'm proud of you', that is the cherry on the top of the cake I think. Because it just makes everything, all the pain, sweat, tears, everything worth it.

Jez: Yeah. It just dissipates immediately doesn't it?

Chris: That's great. Well, thank you all. I just wanted to thank you so much for taking part in the podcast today and sharing your fundraising stories, your ideas, your thoughts on fundraising and your motivations. It's been really fascinating to listen to you and I think one of the things we hope with this podcast is that people who are thinking about fundraising for the Association maybe will find it less daunting. It is fun and with that support you can really do something very, very worthwhile so thank you so much for taking part. It's been an absolute pleasure to talk to you, and to anybody listening, if you've been inspired and would like to find out more about doing some fundraising on your own, there is no time to wait. Get in touch with our team. They can help you find the right event, the right event for you. Please just call 01604 611860 or email fundraising@mndassociation.org or just visit our website at MNDassociation.org/fundraising.

So, thank you so much everyone. It has been a real pleasure to meet you and to talk to you about your fundraising activity and just on behalf of the Association thank you so much for all the fundraising that you've done. I think 2021 has been an extraordinary year for the MND Association, for MND, for fundraising and raising awareness and we're hoping to make 2022 just as big a year as well so thank you so much for all you're doing and continuing to do because I know you're still fundraising for the Association so thank you very much. It's been a real pleasure meeting you. Thank you.

Jez: Thank you and thank you for giving us all the opportunity to do it. Without you being there and supporting us, we'd never be able to achieve it so thank you to the Association.

Chris. Yeah, thanks guys. Thank you very much indeed.

Outro: You've been listening to MND Matters, a podcast from the MND Association. Find more information at MNDAssociation.org and if you've been affected by any of the issues raised in this

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