



MYTIME

YOUNG CARERS

MAKING MEMORIES PROGRAMME

IMPACT REPORT 2021-2022

November 2022

Charity Number: 297481

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www.mytimeyoungcarers.org



MYTIME

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CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Meet Daniel. Daniel's mum has multiple sclerosis and depression, and Daniel has been caring for her since he was just five years old. For as long as he can remember, Daniel has wanted to study medicine. More than anything in the world, he wants to know how to fix his mum.

But Daniel's falling behind in school. He worries about leaving his mum on her own, so his attendance is poor, his concentration too and his teachers don't know how to help him, because they have no idea what Daniel has to contend with at home. His caring responsibilities take up so much of his time that he has no hobbies, no social life and it's taking its toll on his mental health. His confidence and aspirations are low, he's almost always tired and stressed, he lacks any real sense of identity outside of his identity as carer and he feels totally alone.

Daniel is a remarkable young man but when he grows up, he's not likely to study medicine. In fact, he's twice as likely as his peers to find himself out of employment altogether.

A young carer is a child, just like any other. The only difference is that young carers are responsible for the care of at least one member of their family, though they may be as young as 5 years old themselves. These children work incredibly hard to take care of their loved ones, yet they represent a largely forgotten community, and often face enormous disadvantage as a result.

Founded when former Trustee Matthew Barker was gifted an accommodation centre in the Purbecks, **MYTIME** Young Carers was established with the goal of providing young carers with much-needed breaks from their caring responsibilities, and with opportunities to build an all-important support network. Now, our mission and aims have broadened and developed to meet a wider range of the needs young carers present, and today, their futures are very much at the forefront of our thinking.

MYTIME'S MAKING MEMORIES PROGRAMME

THE NEED

Young carers come under enormous pressures, and because their caring roles can be so all-consuming, they are often unable to counterbalance these with hobbies or with time for themselves. This can result in high stress levels and poor mental health and can leave young carers lacking any real sense of self. In addition to this, the young carers we serve tell us that children without caring responsibilities are often unable to imagine or understand their situation, and that as a result, young carers often feel isolated. Lack of identity, ineffective or limited support networks and poor mental health can all have profound and lasting impact on a young person's daily life and future prospects.

The national data available around young carers suggests that:



The statistics paint a picture of the wide-scale disadvantage that young carers all over the country face. What they can't do, is bring to life the day-to-day reality for a young carer. At **MYTIME**, we are interested in the individual, and committed to truly understanding the varied experiences of the young carers with whom we work. That's why we use focus groups to develop a deep understanding of the challenges faced by young carers among our own community. In conversations with young carers ranging from 8-18, we have noted the following:

¹ <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/young-carers-wellbeing.pdf>

² <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/young-carers-wellbeing.pdf>

³ <https://carers.org/campaigning-for-change/invisible-and-in-distress-prioritising-the-mental-health-of-englands-young-carers>

⁴ Research carried out by Action for Children and Carers Trust

⁵ The Me-We Young Carers Project, 2022

⁶ The Me-We Young Carers Project, 2022

MYTIME'S MAKING MEMORIES PROGRAMME CONT.

The most commonly used words when describing emotions associated with caring include: **“stressed”**, **“tired”**, **“anxious”**, **“lonely”**, **“worried”** and **“angry”**.

Most young carers agree that their role is “tiring” and complain of feeling **“drained”** due to the amount of responsibilities they have. One young adult carer of age 18 explains that, **“It’s draining to see the people we love in pain. It can make you feel very angry a lot of the time.”**

Young carers speak of how hard it can be to find the energy to be positive and provide mental and emotional support to the relatives they care for, when they themselves are already feeling drained.

The vast majority of young carers state that they do not feel able to confess their own emotional struggles to the person they care for, as they feel a sense of responsibility for that person’s mental welfare and do not wish to **burden** relatives with their own problems.

Most young carers agree that they would rather not go out with friends, than go out and worry about the relative they care for. They, therefore, often **sacrifice** chances to socialise or take part in leisure activities, in order to stay at home and fulfil their caring duties instead.

Most agree that children without caring responsibilities are unable to empathise, and that this generally leads to a lack of sensitivity or an unhelpful response. Many report having been picked on, **bullied**, **belittled** or **judged** in the past, either because of their caring role or because of the condition of the person who they care for.

The general consensus is that talking openly about caring roles with children who are not, themselves, young carers represents too much of a risk. The vast majority of young carers therefore do not tell many, if any, of their friends about their caring responsibilities, even though this exacerbates feelings of **isolation**.

Many young carers form their closest friendships as a result of attending social events with other young carers. They explain that among other young carers, they generally feel well understood, whereas among young people of their own age who do not have caring responsibilities, they often feel that they **“don’t fit in”**.

Young carers agree on the value of activity days out to be enjoyed among other young carers, such as those provided by **MYTIME** Young Carers. They differentiate between the value of fun activities such as ice-skating - which help to **“take our mind off of things”** and feel like a **“reward”** for their hard work at home - and more therapeutic activities such as the focus group that they were, at that very moment, taking part in. All young carers agreed that it is very helpful to have opportunities to talk to other children who have shared similar experiences. One young carer described it as **“a relief”** to have been part of our focus group, and to have been able to talk out loud about her experiences as a young carer, safe in the knowledge that all the other children would understand. Another stated that, **“This doesn’t happen enough. It makes more difference than you’d think.”**

OUR WORK

Through our Making Memories Programme, we aim to:

Provide young carers with much-needed breaks from their caring responsibilities, and thus help **reduce their stress levels**. We know that children need opportunities to play and have fun in order to develop into well-rounded, happy young adults, so our activity days, weekend retreats and youth group sessions represent precious opportunities for young carers to take time for themselves and to relax.

Reduce feelings of loneliness. The role of a young carer is often overlooked, misunderstood or even unfairly stigmatised and many young carers feel isolated in their experiences as a result. Our Making Memories Programme proves to young carers the reality of their situation: that they are not alone. Better still, it allows young carers the chances to meet other members of their own community and to establish a support network comprised of children who can truly understand and relate to their circumstances.

Offer young carers new experiences and broaden their horizons. Young carers often lack any real sense of identity outside of their identity as carer, and this can have huge impact on confidence, mental health, aspirations and future prospects. By trying new things, young carers can develop an **all-important sense of self**.

In order to achieve these goals, we:

- Provide fun and enriching activity days catering for approximately 40 young carers of ages 5-18.
- Provide residential retreats at our accommodation centre on the Purbecks, catering for 20 young carers of ages 5-25.
- Provide 3 weekly online youth group sessions for young carers of ages 5-18, reaching approximately 90 young carers each week.



OUR IMPACT

Over the last financial year and despite disruption caused by Covid, we:

- Provided 21 activity days
- Provided 2 residential retreats
- Provided 141 online youth group sessions

Through these, we were able to support over 500 young carers.

At present, we use surveys and small group focus events to monitor and evaluate the impact of our Making Memories Programme. Of a sample group of 137 service-users surveyed last year:

97% FELT LESS STRESSED AS A RESULT OF TAKING PART IN OUR MAKING MEMORIES PROGRAMME

95% HAD HAD FUN

95% FELT LIKE PART OF A COMMUNITY

85% MADE A NEW FRIEND

89% FELT THAT THEIR MOOD HAD IMPROVED

81% HAD THE CHANCE TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

92% FELT MORE CONFIDENT

81% REPORTED AN INCREASE IN SELF-BELIEF

76% IMPROVED THEIR TEAM-WORKING SKILLS

94% FELT THAT THEIR PHYSICAL HEALTH HAD IMPROVED

The statistics demonstrate the extraordinary difference that our Making Memories Programme can make to the mental and emotional wellbeing of young carers, but their comments and stories give us deeper insight into the true value of this programme. The testimonials below summarise why we do what we do, and why our work is so important.

TESTIMONIALS

JANE POPE, BURTON PRIMARY SCHOOL:

“ The online youth group is **literally a lifeline** for some of our children, **the only escape they have.**”

YOUNG CARER, AGE 16:

“Days out with **MYTIME** help to **take my mind off things** and **make me feel less alone.**”

YOUNG CARER PARENT:

“I just want to say a massive thank you. Sophia has come home absolutely buzzing telling us about all the exciting things she's done. **It's so lovely seeing her so happy and carefree.**”

YOUNG CARER, AGE 18:

“ Mostly it was the **downtime** I loved... just resting with those that understood and needed to rest too. **Not feeling lonely for a change.**”

YOUNG CARER, AGE 14:

“I got to **meet new people** and **enjoy activities I thought I would never do.**”

YOUNG CARER, AGE 9:

“ **MYTIME** youth group sessions have been great for me. The first session was meditation and afterwards **I felt less stressed and not gloomy anymore.** It was so good to chat to other people.”

CASE STUDIES

ALI'S STORY

Ali is 13, and has been a registered young carer since she was 5. She cares for her dad, who has unstable epilepsy and PTSD.

As a nurse, Ali's mum works irregular shifts, so in her absence, Ali does the cooking, washes and dresses her father, makes sure he has taken his medication and keeps him safe. She has saved his life on more than one occasion. The following testimony has been provided by Ali's mother:

*"Over the years, Ali hasn't had a lot of support from outside agencies and until we came across **MYTIME**, she didn't know any other young carers. She describes being a young carer as isolating and unfair. She sees it as a big responsibility and feels that she has lost some of her childhood.*

***MYTIME** have been part of Ali's life since she moved to secondary school. Their online youth group sessions and activity days have had a real impact on her and on us as a family.*

The youth group sessions are a part of her weekly routine. Ali looks forward to the sessions and afterwards always says she feels relaxed and happy. The variety of sessions put on is amazing: sessions have included cooking, interactive animal sessions, cinema nights and family nights too which have been really fun and have allowed us to interact with the team. Ali is very protective of her time in the sessions and doesn't like us to interrupt!

*The team at **MYTIME** are immense! They are all-inclusive, non-judgemental, friendly, fun and knowledgeable about the impact that being a young carer has on a child on a daily basis.*

Some of the team have been young carers themselves and this is inspiring for Ali to see. It gives her hope for her future aspirations of becoming a paramedic.

*Since joining **MYTIME**, Ali's confidence has grown. She feels like she has made connections with the other young people in the group as they have all had similar experiences and understand the pressures she's under. She belongs somewhere and can just be herself.*

*We are so grateful for **MYTIME** and all the hard work that is put in to support Ali and the other young carers."*

CASE STUDIES

Said's STORY

Said is 9 and cares for his brother who has autism. This testimony has been provided by Said's mother:

"Said's brother has frequent meltdowns, and as a result, Said's friends at school told him that they were scared of him. Said has never been able to have friends over to play and is almost never invited to friends' houses either. This has caused Said great sadness.

*We were referred to **MYTIME** in lockdown, which was particularly hard for us a family. At one point, Said had to move in with his grandmother as we were so worried about the impact that 24/7 spent with his brother would have on his own wellbeing.*

Said joined the online youth group and within a couple of weeks fitted straight in. All the staff are amazing and lovely with him, as are the other young carers, older and younger than him.

Said is confident to chat to others in the group and it's so lovely to see he's been able to socialise."

GOVERNANCE AND STAFFING

Please find below a brief biography of our CEO and Trustees:

KRISTA SHARP – CEO

Having spent thirteen years working as a teacher and on Senior Leadership Teams in a variety of different schools across the country, Krista has developed the unshakeable belief that no young person's destiny should be defined by their beginning. In November 2019, Krista stepped onto the **MYTIME** team as Executive Director, and in 2020 she assumed the role of CEO. Krista has brought bold strategy, raw enthusiasm and endless dedication to the charity.

PAUL TANSEY – CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

As Managing Director of established Dorset digital marketing firm, Intergage, and director and former president of Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Paul brings a wealth of business acumen and a large business network to **MYTIME's** board of trustees. In his roles as career and enterprise advisor and as governor at Poole High School, Paul demonstrates unwavering passion for educating and inspiring young people.

BEN ANTELL – VICE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

In his time as Headteacher, Ben was nominated for Headteacher of the Year Award. Now, he works as regional director of the United Learning Academy Chain. Ben offers a rare and detailed insight into the British educational system. What's more, he understands young people, he knows what they need to thrive and he is deeply invested in their success. Ben's scrupulous and critical questioning and acute attention to detail make **MYTIME** stronger.

REBECCA TURNER – TRUSTEE FOR SAFEGUARDING

As a primary school music teacher, Rebecca works with young people day in and day out and is committed to our shared goal of supporting young people to become the best versions of themselves that they can possibly be.

KAREN ECKSTEIN – TRUSTEE FOR RISK MITIGATION

Having practised as a professional indemnity insurance defence solicitor for 30 years, Karen now runs her own company helping clients with risk and insurance related issues. Karen is a very practical and pragmatic advisor to the **MYTIME** team. She is a former young carer herself, and also brings experience of trusteeship to the board having previously acted as trustee to the educational charity, the ATT.

NICKY GOULDER – TRUSTEE FOR CHARITY GOVERNANCE

As Chief Executive of Create, 2020's Charity of the Year, and as Trustee to various other charities since 2009, Nicky brings a wealth of experience in charity leadership and governance to **MYTIME's** board of Trustees. Nicky is an entrepreneurial spirit, and advises **MYTIME** on income generation, impact measurement and business management.

It should be noted that **MYTIME** will, this year, also be welcoming former young carer, Katie Exell of Bates Wells charity law firm to our board of trustees as Secretary. In addition to this, the charity are currently looking to recruit a new trustee and Treasurer with experience in accountancy.

CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS

This year, we have been fortunate to receive funding from Trusts and Foundations including the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Triangle Trust 1949 Fund, the Amateurs Trust, the Postcode Local Trust, the Ashworth Charitable Trust and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. We have also received funding from one source that chooses to remain anonymous. To these funders, we are incredibly grateful. Without them, none of the work detailed in this report would have been possible.

In addition to this, we are the chosen Charity Partner of the Year for AFC Bournemouth; BH2 Leisure; Frettons Solicitors; Ellis Jones JLD; Greendale Construction; Chicken and Blues and Bishop Aldhelm's CE Primary School. We are most thankful for the ongoing support of these organisations.

We also work in partnership with both Dorset and BCP councils, and with organisations including Worth-It Positive Education; The Colour Works Foundation; The Leonardo Trust and Create Arts.

Finally, we are part of the Young Carers National Voice, a collective of 18 young carer charities and organisations from all across the UK. Both staff and young carer ambassadors meet online approximately 12 times a year to share best practice and to campaign collaboratively for young carers' rights.



STATEMENT OF CHARITY ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES

We confirm that we work carefully to abide by the Charity Ethical Principles laid out by the NCVO. We always put our beneficiaries first; we act with integrity in everything we do; we are open, honest and transparent with all stakeholders and we recognise and prioritise the right to safety of all staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, charity partners, suppliers and supporters.

In addition to this, we take care to operate within the boundaries of the Code of Fundraising Practice as laid out by Fundraising Regulator.

Finally, MYTIME is proud to represent a Living Wage Employer.





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