



## Real Member Stories

### Charity



**On top of the donations, we get support to help us access funding we wouldn't get otherwise...**

**Case Study: Catherine McLeod of Dingley's Promise**

In Berkshire, you will find Dingley's Promise. With centres in Reading, Wokingham and Newbury, they specialise in early intervention and support for children with disabilities, ages 0 to 5 years old. They are passionate about giving the children they care for every opportunity to succeed in life, and to move into mainstream education where they can. To support their efforts, CEO Catherine McLeod looked into joining her local chapter of BNI, and it quickly became clear it was a great decision for the charity.

"As a charity we've been a member of BNI since 2017, in three different chapters during that time – Newbury, Wokingham and Reading. I first discovered it because the BNI in West Berkshire were having a charity day when they invited local charities into the room, and we were invited to that. And I sat there and I thought 'my gosh, we have to be a part of this because it's a really good way to make sure the families who need us know about us.'

'If you're a charity thinking of joining, I think it's about really being aware that yes, the money that you can get in the room is great, but then you also have to think about the support that you can get from those people and their contacts.'

'Money is a difficult thing for us to measure, as sometimes it's a challenge to track donations. But I can give a few examples of how well we've done from it. So for example in Wokingham we recently had the Wokingham Business Breakfast for charity, and we had about 65 - 70 people in the room for the breakfast, with an auction and a raffle as well as donating some of the door fees. That one event actually ended up raising £3,000 in the morning, which is incredible. But then they also paid it into a matching programme, so we ended up with £6,000 just from the one morning, supported by BNI'

'On top of the donations we get, we also get support that helps us access funding we wouldn't get otherwise. For example, sometimes the businesses in the groups have connections to a trust linked to their business, and one of those was St James Place. The Reading Central has a person who works at St James Place, so we worked together to make an application and that was successful and that was another £9,000.'

### **“From one single morning event, we ended up raising £3,000 in the morning, which is incredible”**

“It’s really, it’s really paid dividends. As I say the hours are a lot compared to the come back when you compare it to some other income streams but actually it really has been really successful for us, really enjoying it.”

“It’s also a free marketing resource in a way, because once those people know you, a lot of them have experience of marketing, and a lot of them have a lot of contacts - and they will start pushing your charity, so you’ll get better known in the local area. You’ll have more people who will know what you do and therefore either support you or make sure that beneficiaries that need to know about you can find out about you, that’s really important.

And I think it’s also something that people should think about if they’re managing a charity, sometimes it can be quite lonely and you might not get that much chance for professional development and joining BNI really helps with professional development, with how you present yourself and how you present your organisation. It can help you to develop your own capacity to work better with corporate and small businesses, which you may not be able to get, or you may have to pay a lot for training on elsewhere. So I do think it’s also about the benefits that individuals who attended get as they grow in confidence and ability to work with businesses, which can have a huge impact on your charity.”

If you would like to know more about becoming a member of BNI, or want to visit our chapter, all you have to do is get in touch!

#### **Contact Catherine McLeod**

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BNI is the most successful business networking referral organisation in the world. We have thousands of members in the UK and Ireland, passing hundreds of thousands of referrals worth over millions of pounds every year!