



# Your Impact

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Fundraise Your Way

## The Caley to Castle Crusade

When Gregor Miller's dad was diagnosed with motor neuron disease (MND), he began learning about this rare condition, and started on a fundraising journey of incredible physical challenges.

Gregor began his crusade after discovering that while there is currently no cure or treatment for MND, the University of Edinburgh's Euan MacDonalD Centre for Motor Neuron Disease Research is dedicated to conducting research that will improve diagnosis and develop new therapies.

We caught up with Gregor after the completion of his most recent challenge, an unbelievable run of 165 miles from Inverness to Edinburgh.

### Gregor, tell us more. What inspired you to do all this?

When my dad was diagnosed with MND, I decided that I had to do something. I had never even heard of MND, but I soon found out more and discovered how horrific it is. Doddie Weir had recently revealed that he was suffering from the disease and my dad said 'he's 30 years younger than me, I got to see you grow up and meet my grandkids, but he's never going to have that experience'.

My dad passed away from MND two years after he was diagnosed and his memory inspires me, but I've been inspired by others too. I met a man



Gregor Miller

called Steve who has MND and he came to support me at my 100-mile challenge. When I saw him again, at the end of the 165-mile crusade I just welled up. We've kept in contact. I just can't do enough to help him and others.

I'd never really done much running, I was more into team sports, but I wanted to do something that would be a challenge. A lot of people do marathons, but I felt I could push it to the next level. That's where the idea of the five challenges came from.

### What were the challenges?

After a lot of training, I did my first fundraising challenge, which was a run

from Stirling Castle to Tynecastle and raised about £20,000. As soon as that was done, I wanted to do more. I got the idea to go a bit crazy and try to do five challenges in a single year. Those were the Inverness Half Marathon, the Manchester Marathon, running from Glasgow to Edinburgh, and running 100 miles in 24 hours at the Stirling University track. That last one was particularly tricky as it ended up being on the hottest day of the year.

Those were all a build-up to the big one though - running from Inverness Caley Thistle's Caledonian Stadium to Tynecastle Stadium, going 165 miles in 48 hours!

“ I got the idea to go a bit crazy and try to do five challenges in a single year.



With Dougie Vipond from Deacon Blue



Gregor and his support team, who joined him for sections of the Caley to Castle run

### What training did you do?

I have had to train incredibly hard and clocked up more than 4,000 miles, while also holding down a full-time job. It has been challenging, as sometimes I was going to work at 4am then coming home from work after a full day and going out for a 40-mile training session and then back up at 4am again!

It paid off though, as the run was horrific - you wouldn't think going from north to south there would be so many uphills, but it felt like it was up and down all the way.

### How about your support?

In training it was mostly just me, but my wife Sian would sometimes join me on her bike. For the Caley to Castle challenge my good friend and Paralympian Sean Rose joined me on his hand bike for the full 165 miles, along with Richard Ellis, a photographer from the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation.

I then had a support team of runners who joined me for sections of the run, including my wife Sian, Andrew Paget, a lifelong friend; Scott Wilson, Hearts FC ambassador and presenter; Willie Conquer, SFA and FIFA official; Colin Cameron, Hearts and Scotland football legend; and Davy Winton with his son Ross, who have family friends who passed from MND.

### Why did you choose to support the Euan MacDonad Centre?

I heard about the Euan MacDonald Centre and when I saw what they are doing, I just immediately knew they were the ones that we need to do this for.

I decided to support them, My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation and MND Scotland, all of whom are fighting to raise awareness for MND and funds to help with treatments. Ultimately I feel that the researchers at the Euan MacDonald Centre are the key to finding new treatments, and so anything I can do to help them is my priority. They have jumped through hoops to support me in return.

### Has the 165-mile crusade changed you?

“ You have to appreciate today, as there are no guarantees for tomorrow.

Yeah, without a doubt. You have to appreciate today, as there are no guarantees for tomorrow. No one in my family ever had MND and then one day my dad was golfing and he was having trouble holding the club. Initially it was put down to carpal tunnel syndrome, but a physical therapist was the one who suggested that he was checked out further and soon we knew the reality.

“ I heard about the Euan MacDonald Centre and when I saw what they are doing, I just immediately knew they were the ones that we need to do this for.

MND is horrendous, you are trapped, unable to move, but your mind is fully intact. You become a prisoner in your own body and it's why I am so passionate about it. I really just want to keep banging that drum, day in and day out. I finish off every message I send with a 'let's find a cure'. I'm completely determined.

### What would you say to someone who was considering fundraising for MND or for any other cause?

Do it, just do it. You've got to give back and help others, as you don't know what your help might do. That's the way I look at it. When I was in the middle of my run, I had some really dark times. At 4am, coming down in pouring rain from Inverness, I wanted to stop at every step. I knew that people with MND don't have that option. They have pain every day and so anything I'm feeling will go away in a few days, but theirs won't ever end.

That's what kept me going, they can't give up and so neither will I.

### Fundraise your way

If you'd like to fundraise for the Euan MacDonald Centre or other areas of the University, visit our website, or contact our Senior Community Fundraising Officer Kerry Mackay at [Kerry.Mackay@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kerry.Mackay@ed.ac.uk).



[ed.ac.uk/fundraise-your-way](http://ed.ac.uk/fundraise-your-way)

# UoE Saving Lives: CPR champions

A group of nursing students came together to apply for a Student Experience Grant to help them train others in life saving techniques.



Students taking part in a UoE Saving Lives event

Nursing students Lorena Álvarez de Eulate Mullany, Irma Rodriguez, Anabel Fernandez, Megan Caldwell and Merwa Zen, and medical student Hannah Kaufmann Wolfe found inspiration for their Student Experience Grant (SEG) while volunteering as part of Restart a Heart Day in 2022.

“The experience in 2022 was fascinating and rewarding, inspiring the need to replicate this initiative at the University. With the support of University staff, we applied for a Student Experience Grant and UoE Saving Lives was born!” says Lorena.

UoE Saving Lives sought to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) awareness to the community of students and staff at the University of Edinburgh with a series of events delivered across campus.

“ We gained confidence in our potential as not only student nurses, but as leaders.

Funding enabled the purchase of equipment, including mannequins and external defibrillators, as well as meeting the costs of running the events.

Cardiac arrests can occur suddenly and require immediate care, and being able to perform CPR can save a life. The University is well equipped with defibrillators in public areas and around its buildings, but without an understanding of how to use these life-saving machines, they lose their effectiveness.

After recruiting volunteers to help run the sessions, the project carried out six events, even braving wind and rain when working outdoors, to make more than 300 people CPR-aware. They partnered with the organisation Save a Life for Scotland, who helped plan and deliver the sessions and supported them with equipment, training and materials.

The students found that organising and delivering these sessions helped

enhance skills not typically practiced in their university studies: “We gained confidence in our potential as not only student nurses but as leaders,” says Lorena.

The initiative has since inspired others to keep it going, with new students taking over and running further events. The team has received wider recognition, too, having been nominated in the Nursing Student of the Year category at the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards.

Thanks to the generosity of alumni, this project has equipped students and staff at the University with skills to take life-saving action and continues to inspire life saving action to this day.



The students pictured at the RCN Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards

## Student Experience Grants

Supported by alumni and friends, these grants offer one-off contributions of up to £5,000 to support innovative projects that will enhance students’ social, academic, entrepreneurial, sporting or cultural development.



Student Experience Grants help students develop as innovators and can be the launching point for exciting projects with real-world impact.

[student-experience-grants.ed.ac.uk](https://student-experience-grants.ed.ac.uk)

# A legacy of opportunity

Susan Kawala spoke to us about how her father's time at the University of Edinburgh, attending the Polish School of Medicine (PSM) during the Second World War, inspired her to leave a legacy.



The Polish School of Medicine in 1941

Legacy giving

Many people who have a connection with the University of Edinburgh look for ways to give back, help others and change lives. For Susan Kawala, despite not being an Edinburgh graduate herself, it was the University's history of giving opportunities and breaking barriers, as illustrated by her own father's story, that inspired her.

“As a person who never attended the University of Edinburgh, I am leaving it a gift in my will, and you may be asking the logical question – why?”

“The short answer to this question is that the University of Edinburgh represents an outstanding example of a university that has engaged in equity and inclusion since the 1800s - without ever being required to do so. Throughout its storied history, the University has broken barriers for many different classes of students. It deserves not only words of praise, but also funds to ensure that its existence endures.”



Susan Kawala

Susan's father, Brunon Kawala, was a teenager when he left his home in Poland in September 1939, escaping just ahead of the Nazi invasion. Brunon was a driven individual with a keen mind, and in Edinburgh he sought out opportunities to further himself. This led to his admission into the Polish School of Medicine (PSM), which had been established at the University in March 1941.

The establishment of the PSM was a unique wartime academic initiative and while originally intended to meet

the needs of students and doctors in the Polish armed forces, the PSM opened its doors to civilians from the outset. Students followed a Polish curriculum, were taught mainly in Polish, and were educated to progress towards their Polish medical degree.

“ Throughout its history, the University of Edinburgh has gone the extra mile to educate groups that many other universities have ignored. For this perspective I shall always remain grateful.

Susan credits both the PSM and the University itself with supporting her father in his successful education: “The education my father received while at the Polish School of Medicine allowed him to obtain a subsequent English medical degree from Durham University Medical School. Based on this qualification, he was able to



Above and right: Dr Brunon Kawala

## The Polish School of Medicine

The Polish School of Medicine was inaugurated at the University in 1941.

The school was born at a time of great need, tremendous suffering, significant upheaval and conflict and of great uncertainty.

The act of setting up this “Medical School in exile” was described at the time by Sir Sydney Smith, the University’s Dean of Medicine:

“We offer nothing more than an opportunity to labour together with us for the common good, an opportunity to keep alive the academic spirit and freedom of thought and of word which Universities hold as our most sacred heritage.”

337 students were subsequently enrolled in the school and 228 (including 46 women) received their medical diplomas.

practice medicine in the UK and from there, he emigrated to the United States where he enjoyed a successful, 40-year career as a Doctor of Internal Medicine in San Francisco, California. My father never told me much about his early years, but he remembered his days at the PSM fondly.”

Inspired to learn more, Susan first visited the University of Edinburgh in 2013, while travelling. Susan then returned to the University in 2022 to learn more about the PSM after discovering that the late Dr Maria Dlugolecka-Graham MBE was its coordinator. Susan contacted Dr Dlugolecka-Graham and she agreed to meet with her. Dr Dlugolecka-Graham was able to provide a comprehensive overview of the PSM’s history and some insight into how groundbreaking it was for the

University to agree to allow the PSM to operate on its grounds.

Susan was not only amazed by the history of the PSM, but by the University as a whole. “I decided to learn something about the University’s history. What I discovered in my enquiry impressed me to no end. Not only was my father, a young foreigner, given the opportunity to become a doctor, but I was informed that

Edinburgh first admitted women to its medical school in 1869!”

Susan has been inspired by her father’s history and the University’s legacy of inclusion, opportunity and excellence. Her bequest will allow us to continue promoting these values and offering future students the same chance that her father received.



Students at the Polish School of Medicine in 1941

## Join the Carlyle Circle

Leaving a legacy to the University of Edinburgh can pave the way for talented people to access higher education, create transformative educational experiences for our students, and help support the research needed to solve global challenges. Visit our website or contact our Legacy Manager, Morag Murison at [Morag.Murison@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Morag.Murison@ed.ac.uk) for more information.

[ed.ac.uk/giving/legacy-giving](https://ed.ac.uk/giving/legacy-giving)



# A cup of change

Fundraise  
Your Way

When Wendy Stubbs' sister told her about a machine that makes it easier to find patients' veins, she immediately thought of the University's Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic and how it could use the machine to help its patients.

The Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic at the University of Edinburgh aims to improve the quality of life for people with a range of neurodegenerative conditions through research. By conducting drug trials and discovery research, the centre aims to bring hope to people living with neurological conditions including multiple sclerosis (MS), motor neuron disease (MND), Parkinson's and early onset dementias.

Wendy approached the Clinic with her fundraising idea, and after some trials they decided to focus on an AccuVein machine. "Now I had to think of how to raise funds for the machine that could help staff and patients."

The Clinic has many supporters, who fundraise in a variety of ways, but Wendy knew that she would have to be imaginative: "I knew I couldn't do a big, long walk and had to have a long think on what I could do that would challenge me and raise money for the machine."

This led Wendy to the innovative and imaginative idea to have a 'no mocha month'. "All my friends and family know I love a mocha, so I donated all the money I would have spent on mochas to the JustGiving page. It's



Wendy at one of her fundraising breakfasts

“ I couldn't do a big, long walk and had to have a long think on what I could do, that would challenge me and raise money for the machine.

safe to say that Starbucks' takings went down significantly that month!"

But it wasn't just the savings from her local Starbucks that Wendy contributed, as she got others in on the fundraising too: "Friends and family sponsored me to not have a mocha for a whole month. I was laughing with a colleague that I was actually embarrassed about the amount I spent a month on mochas but I was glad to have so much to redirect to the Anne Rowling Clinic."

Wendy's actions show that there are many ways that you can contribute, and she puts it best herself: "You don't have to do a challenging walk, run or jump out of a plane to make an impact - there are different ways of doing it."

These kind of machines are not cheap, however, as Wendy discovered: "The machine was much more expensive than I expected but I didn't have to raise it all myself. Just at the point I was thinking 'oh goodness, what have I started', and wondering if I should go ahead with this idea, I found out the staff at the Anne Rowling Clinic were doing the Kiltwalk to help raise money and they were happy to put it towards the AccuVein machine."

Between Wendy's innovative fundraising and the incredible staff at the Clinic, they were able to successfully fundraise for the full amount. The AccuVein machine is now helping people at the Anne Rowling Clinic.

Wendy was really grateful to everyone who had helped her fundraising, "When I heard the staff were also fundraising I felt humbled! The staff who work so hard to look after patients and do such an amazing job are doing a Kiltwalk in their spare time! I already think they are amazing but this really filled my heart that they care so much."



## A Kiltwalk collaboration

Dawn Lyle is the MS and Neuroimmunology Hub Manager at the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic: "Many of our Clinic users have to have blood taken as part of their routine care, and many know when they come in that getting a blood sample is not always easy. To alleviate this anxiety and that of the staff who have to take the samples, four of us from the Clinic walked 15 miles of the Kiltwalk to fundraise for the purchase of an AccuVein machine. The Clinic has found it an invaluable piece of equipment and this is thanks to Wendy Stubbs for her insight in bringing the Veinfinder to our attention."

# An insightful student experience

This year's Insights Week took place 3-7 June, with students meeting with alumni working in a diverse range of organisations and sectors.



Students and alumni at the Scotland Insights networking evening



Graduate Molly Nelson hosted nine students at Bramwith Consulting's London office

The University's Insights Programme is designed for undergraduate students who may have faced barriers accessing university or those from under-represented groups to develop confidence, skills and connections to prepare for their career journeys and life after graduation.

Thanks to the generous support of donors and alumni volunteers, the programme provides selected students with unique opportunities for career exploration, in Scotland and key global cities, underpinned by a tailored programme of development support delivered by our Careers Service.

## What the students say

We asked a selection of students who participated in the Insights Programme what they gained from taking part. Here are some of their responses:

“ Being in such amazing workplaces has definitely inspired me to work hard and take advantage of every opportunity life has to offer. London was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip. We got an insight not only into the professional world, but also into the city.

“ I enjoyed the places we visited and I am grateful for the energy, effort and time that all the alumni gave us.

“ I genuinely feel a lot more prepared and reassured moving forward, looking for work experience and jobs. Also, all the alumni I met were absolutely amazing.

“ I had an amazing time and it is something I will remember forever.

## What the alumni volunteers say

We also asked our alumni volunteers who host students in their workplaces or offer careers advice the same question:

“ Having been a student who was not confident enough to go on the Insights Programme myself, I thought that now I'm a more confident person I could get involved as a host and hopefully inspire more students.

“ It was quite emotional, actually; after hosting the students and seeing what they got out of the day, I really felt like I'd helped the University community.

“ I have had a lot of amazing mentors throughout my career. It feels really great to be able to give back and see students take advantage of this opportunity. I've enjoyed receiving emails asking for advice and being able to provide some (hopefully!) meaningful guidance. I've also done CV reviews and feedback, and connected a couple of students with professionals in their specific area of study.

## Thank you!

Thank you to all Insights donors and alumni host volunteers. With your support, you help encourage career exploration, provide support and inspiration, broaden horizons, and demystify workplaces and professional life for students at the University of Edinburgh.

If you want to learn more about how you can become involved with the Insights programme please contact [insights.programme@ed.ac.uk](mailto:insights.programme@ed.ac.uk).

# Viking Genes

The Viking Genes project is working with island communities to advance the future of medicine. Since 2003 they have undertaken four genetics studies that use island health investigations to carry out life-saving research into common diseases.



Studies in Orkney led to understanding how the BRCA1 gene is linked to breast and ovarian cancer

Professor Jim Wilson grew up in Orkney before reading genetics at the University of Edinburgh. He is now Professor of Human Genetics at the University's Usher Institute.

He and his team have been studying the genetic make up of Scottish islanders, discovering new insights into the genetic history of the Scottish islands and where their ancestors came from.

In doing so, the team's research has identified that many of the island populations have their own unique gene pools, revealing that certain disease-causing variants are found more commonly in some island communities than elsewhere in the UK. Armed with this knowledge, the team works carefully to return results to those individuals who have been identified with a higher risk of developing life-threatening conditions, allowing for earlier intervention and preventative surgeries.

"Island communities provide a unique opportunity for gene studies, as within isolated communities there is a smaller gene pool and this can lead to greater prevalence of certain genes, allowing their influence to be assessed.



Professor Jim Wilson

"This allows us to inform those island residents who have been identified as being at greater risk of developing a life-threatening condition, such as cancer or heart disease. Because of this, several islanders have been treated to remove cancers they didn't know they had, whilst others have opted for preventative surgery to reduce their risk of developing cancer later in life.

"Many of their family members have also now been tested by the NHS, helping even more people take action against cancer and heart disease."

Following three highly successful projects, which have led to research breakthroughs and results in diagnosis and treatment of disease, Professor Wilson's fourth research study launched in the summer of 2022. It was initially made possible by funding from the Medical Research Council and involved recruiting more than 2,000 people into the study who had two or more grandparents from the Hebrides. This data, combined with that of past studies, meant that more than 10,000 participants have now been involved and contributed to the study.

This information is helping to gain a better understanding of genetics and health across the Scottish islands. The studies have already shown significant impact on how we understand certain diseases, such as the link between BRCA2 gene variants and an increased chance of developing breast, ovarian and prostate cancers. The variant is seven times more common in descendants of the island of Whalsay than BRCA1 and BRCA2

“ It's simply not true that everybody is the same as one another. It's actually important where you come from.



gene variants are in the UK mainland population.

Understanding the risks that certain genes raise means that more effective testing can be done to help those individuals with a higher risk. Professor Wilson explains that “just two gene variants account for nearly all (>90%) of the inherited cancer risk from BRCA variants in Orkney and Shetland. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the general UK population, where 369 variants would need to be tested to account for the same proportion of cancer risk from BRCA genes. Any future screening programme for the Northern Isles should therefore be very cost-effective.”

Understanding this risk means that, in the future, people with a Whalsay-born grandparent may be able to request a referral to a local genetics centre and be offered increased screening.

For Christine, a native Shetlander, learning in 2023 that she carried the Whalsay BRCA2 variant led to a mammogram, where she discovered she had breast cancer. Christine went on to have her ovaries removed and a double mastectomy as prevention, and received the all-clear in March 2024.

She is thankful for the research and insight into her genes. “I am so grateful you told me I have BRCA2, as my next mammogram would have been in another two years and it might have been a different story!”



Ingrid discovered through the Viking Genes study that she had an inherited heart problem, and that her daughter had the same genetic variant

“ We will never be certain, but it is possible that taking part in this survey has saved our lives.

Ingrid’s family is also from Shetland and she was a volunteer in the Viking Genes study. Some years after taking part, her GP contacted her after receiving notification of a potentially rare genetic variant from the study. Ingrid underwent testing and it revealed that she had Long QT, an inherited heart problem, which can be very difficult to spot using standard medical tests.

Through genetic testing she has since discovered that her father and daughter carry the same variant. She and her daughter now have regular check-ups and neither have any symptoms.

She credits the study with changing her life: “We will never be certain, but it is possible that taking part in this survey has saved our lives. Long QT is the type of condition that you don’t often find out you have until it is too late.”

Professor Wilson hopes that by returning actionable findings such as BRCA and Long QT to the volunteers, and identifying heightened genetic risks in the Scottish islands, they will act as exemplars for later deployment on a national scale, to help realise the full impact of genomics on medicine.

The Viking Genes project is working with the University of Edinburgh to help secure its future, and the University has recently launched the Viking Genes Fund, seeking financial support for this incredible work.

Future research hopes to investigate high cholesterol, cardiomyopathy, haemochromatosis, Wilson disease, Pompe disease, Batten disease, and island-specific multiple sclerosis variants, but Professor Wilson lays out the difficulties:

“This type of work to improve population health is typically not funded by academic research grants, and we are asking for your community’s help and support in order to continue our work.”

“We are seeking funding to support the small team of researchers and part-time support staff that I have and who have done great work on this project with a limited budget.

“Any donations or funding will be used to enable analysis of the Viking Genes data and then prepare our materials to communicate our findings to the different audiences.”

## The Viking Genes Fund

The Viking Genes research has been funded by research grants for 20 years, allowing them to return actionable findings to participants, enabling them to take quick preventable action against breast and ovarian cancer risks.

The research dataset is rich with information, and the next step is to fully analyse this, hopefully leading to findings about many life-threatening diseases. Unfortunately this type of work, to improve population health, is typically not funded by academic research grants and so the University is working with Viking Genes to help fundraise for this life saving research. Find out more about the project, or become a supporter:

[viking.ed.ac.uk/support-us](http://viking.ed.ac.uk/support-us)



# Going abroad to get ahead

As part of the Study and Work Away Service, the Go Abroad Fund is an accessible way to help students take part in an educational, short term international experience. The fund in particular helps students from a Widening Participation background, allowing them to have experiences which would not otherwise be accessible to them.



Ellie in Kyrgyzstan

Ellie spent five weeks in Kyrgyzstan and over this time her group explored the country, visiting both the capital Bishkek and travelling out into the valleys and the Naryn Too and At-Bashy mountain ranges. She used this experience to develop herself personally and professionally, growing her skills in leadership and resilience, while exploring and learning from a different culture.

Ellie's background in ecology allowed her to appreciate the flora of the region, even carrying out a small fieldwork project using the tools at her disposal. Using walking poles to create quadrants and rough transects, she explored the species' richness near the At-Bashy river, putting skills learned at university to real-world use.

Ellie was able to build cultural relationships during her trip: "Our interactions with the local people showed how kind and hospitable they are, offering us to stay the night in



Ellie and her group traveled across Kyrgyzstan, visiting a number of regions

their yurts or join them for a drink."

Coming home Ellie has learned lessons about her own strength and resilience: "Looking back on my time in Kyrgyzstan, I am reminded of how strong, capable and resilient I am. When times become tough in my everyday life, I think back to the

“ Looking back on my time in Kyrgyzstan, I am reminded of how strong, capable and resilient I am.

times I was soaking wet in a leaky tent in the middle of nowhere. If I can get through that, I'm sure I can get through this.”

She also learned from and built relationships with the locals and those in her group, teaching her endurance that she can use in her own life. "I am reminded of the good in people, not just the local Kyrgyz people but how adventure brings out the best in those around you.

"When there is challenge, adversity and uncertainty, we support each other through it."



Wild horses in the valley pastures

## For Guillem, the Fund allowed him to take part in the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign summer school, pursuing research in Human-Animal Studies.

The Go Abroad Fund gave Guillem access to an educational experience that would otherwise have been inaccessible: “It was a week-long intensive immersion in the field of human-animal studies, with lectures, workshops, and field trips led by leading scholars from around the world.”

Experiences like this can be key to how students are able to access and understand their areas of passion. For Guillem, this course gave him



Guillem at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Summer School

knowledge in a competitive sector, and insight into where it could lead after he has completed his studies.

“I learned about the latest research in human-animal studies, met other scholars from around the world, and had the opportunity to interact with leading experts in the field. I also visited animal farms and other relevant places, which gave me a first-hand look at the work done in

the field beyond academia.”

“The Go Abroad Fund from the University of Edinburgh helped me cover part of the travel costs and some of my expenses while participating in the summer school.

“I am grateful for donors who made it possible for me to have this transformational experience.”

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## Cathal applied to the Fund to take up a volunteering opportunity in rural Cambodia, spending six weeks with the NGO Community First.

Cathal was one of four Engineering students from the University of Edinburgh Engineering for Change student society who set out to build a new aquaponics system in a Cambodian village and develop Community First’s Farm School campus. This system uses small scale fish farming with hydroponics plant cultivation, and uses the fish waste to fertilise the plants.

The new technique is very useful for small-scale local farmers. As Cathal explains: “It yields up to three times the crops per square foot on average compared to typical soil culture. It is particularly effective in rural Cambodia where the rainy and hot seasons make growing vegetables in the ground difficult.”

This aquaponics system yields both the fish and vegetables, which provides a significant benefit to the farmers.



Cathal and his group set up an aquaponics system

“These systems help tackle the major problems of malnutrition and food security; 40% of children in Cambodia suffer from stunting as a result of malnutrition.”

Ensuring that the work is sustainable is key to these projects and the team provided training and a user manual with instructions in Khmer and English to ensure the long term success of the system. The team also carried out work to improve the local school campus and to help clear and

replant sections of the farm.

“I’m really grateful for the funding I received from the Go Abroad Fund. By volunteering in Cambodia, I gained an insight into the environmental challenges of this developing country and gained invaluable hands-on experience, and developed my skillset. It was amazing to witness the social and economic benefits of aquaponics systems in a local community that faced challenges surrounding food and financial security.”

# Chemistry's forward-looking history

In 2013, the School of Chemistry marked its tercentenary, celebrating 300 years of achievement. We look back at how some of the money raised has been used, and how the School's fundraising continues to develop.

The University of Edinburgh's School of Chemistry can trace its roots back to 1713. In its more than 300 years, it has earned a global reputation and attracted students from around the world.

Edinburgh's Chemistry students have made both fundamental and far-reaching contributions to chemistry theory and practice. It was with this in mind that the School chose to use the donations it received during its tercentenary to start a programme to support a new generation of students, who might otherwise be unable to access an education at Edinburgh.

It can be particularly difficult to balance working at a part-time job alongside studying for a chemistry degree. Chemistry courses are intensive and often require many hours of practical lab work. Given this time commitment, some students who face challenging personal or financial circumstances may be anxious about accepting a place.

The Chemistry Tercentenary Access Bursary aims to address these educational inequalities. It is offered to students who are from a Widening Participation background and meet the criteria.

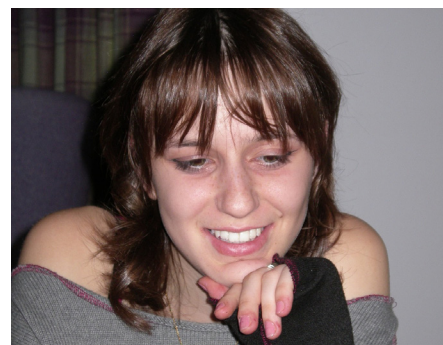
Critically, this funding is offered to those who hold an offer to study at the School, meaning that students are

able to accept offers knowing that they will have this support. The funding of £2,000 is available for each year of their degree, providing stability and assurance over the long term.

In the 2023/24 session six students were offered this support, thanks to the generous contributions of alumni and friends. The School is now making offers for the 2024/2025 intake, with funding coming equally from the Chemistry Tercentenary Fund, the School of Chemistry and industry partner Afton Chemical.

Cat was one of the students who received funding. It has enabled her to settle more easily into university: "The bursary has been an incredible help for me this year, I'm not sure I would have been able to stay here without it. Not having to worry about money issues was a massive weight lifted for which I am so grateful."

She also expressed her gratitude to everyone who had contributed to the



Cat, first year student at the School of Chemistry

fund. "I can't express how thankful I am, your kindness has supported me in so many ways, including feeling welcomed as a student in the University of Edinburgh. Knowing that I have the support of those who have contributed to the bursary motivates me to try my best to prove myself and hopefully become a great chemist."

The fund continues to raise money to enable future generations of students to benefit from funding.

If you'd like to know more or get in touch to help with the fund, please contact [chemistry.alumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:chemistry.alumni@ed.ac.uk)



Students in the Chemistry teaching laboratory in the Nucleus building

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