Lights to Remember: how to run your own event

Overview



Lights to Remember is a festive remembrance activity that gives people an opportunity to remember loved ones while supporting Marie Curie. It can be run as a standalone event or added to an existing Christmas activity. Common examples include carol or remembrance services, community remembrance trees, Christmas tree festivals and workplace remembrance trees

Expected income varies depending on the format. A remembrance tree at an existing event can raise between **£30-£100**, with a carol or remembrance service usually raising between **£200-£600**. These activities also help raise awareness of Marie Curie and engage local communities.

Key points to consider

Success Factors Successful Lights to Remember events often have: • Strong community involvement • Good local venue partnerships • Effective promotion • A welcoming and reflective atmosphere • Simple donation mechanisms such as remembrance tags and collection tin	**Timeline** Begin planning during the summer for events taking place in late November or December. This allows time to: • Secure venues • Arrange trees and tags • Recruit choirs or performers • Organise volunteers • Promote the event	**Venue Requirements** Suitable venues include: • Churches and cathedrals • Shopping centres • Community halls • Coffee shops • Health centres • Workplaces • Existing Christmas tree festivals Choose venues that are accessible and well-used by the local community.
Event Options Popular Lights to Remember activities include: • Carol services with a remembrance tree • Church or cathedral remembrance services	**Fundraising Model** The main fundraising method is donations in exchange for remembrance tags placed on a tree.	**Promotion** Promote through: • Social media • Local newspapers and magazines • Community groups

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• Christmas tree festival displays • Community remembrance trees • Workplace remembrance trees • Adding remembrance tags to an existing Christmas fundraising event	Additional fundraising opportunities include: • Collection tins • Refreshments • Raffles or tombolas (where permitted) • Marie Curie Christmas card sales – check with your CF • Donations made during remembrance services	• Friends, family and volunteer networks • Local websites • Posters in community venues Promotion is particularly important for remembrance services and carol events
Volunteer Roles Volunteer requirements will depend on the type of activity you're organising. Typical roles may include: • Setting up and decorating the tree • Welcoming attendees • Managing donations and collection tins • Supporting remembrance tag activities • Serving refreshments • Coordinating choirs or performers • Packing down after the event	**Health & Safety** • Complete an Event Activity Plan and risk assessment in advance. • Obtain public liability insurance information from the venue. • Share relevant documentation with your Community Fundraiser. • Follow venue guidance for any refreshments or activities being provided. • For any emergencies on the day, call CFIT on 0800 3047112	**Event Day** A typical event may include: 1. Setting up the remembrance tree and donation area. 2. Providing tags and pens for attendees. 3. Welcoming visitors and encouraging donations. 4. Holding any remembrance service, carol singing or readings. 5. Offering refreshments and additional fundraising opportunities. 6. Thanking attendees and volunteers.

Expected Outcome

Lights to Remember activities are simple, flexible and suitable for any fundraising group. They provide a meaningful way for communities to remember loved ones while raising **£30-£600+** and increasing awareness of Marie Curie's work. For more support on running an event like this, speak to your local Community Fundraiser.

Case Study: Chester Fundraising Group

The Fundraising Group organised a Lights to Remember service at Chester Cathedral on a Sunday evening in December. The event started at 6pm with refreshments from 7pm.

The event was a free event to attend, but the group had volunteers at the entrance with donation buckets. Inside, there was a memory tree for people to place tags to remember a loved one, and one of the volunteers made a Marie Curie branded tree topper.



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The service began with a lantern procession led by the Mayor of Chester. A Marie Curie nurse did a reading, and a local choir came along to sing hymns and Christmas carols. After the service, everyone was invited to stay for refreshments.
The event raised £325 and was enjoyed by many in the local community so the group have decided to make this an annual event.

Your Lights to Remember Event Checklist

Before the event

☐ Organise the venue and choose a suitable date, and gather any necessary paperwork
☐ Source a Christmas Tree
☐ Order tags from your Community Fundraiser
☐ Promote the event locally
☐ Organise choir or band, if applicable
☐ Organise refreshments, if applicable
☐ Complete your event Activity Plan
☐ Source raffle/tombola prizes, if you are running one
☐ Confirm volunteer roles for the event

On the day

☐ Set up the Christmas Tree
☐ Have tags in a suitable place where people can write a memory
☐ Ensure there are enough pens for people to complete the tags
☐ Have plenty of collection tins and donation envelopes

After the event

☐ Collect and bank all the money raised
☐ Thank your venue and volunteers.
☐ Review your event with fundraising group members and your Community Fundraiser

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