



Harrow School raised £7,388 for West London YMCA's work with vulnerable young people.

As well as the satisfaction of fundraising, the boys said, "This experience was an incredibly meaningful enterprise."

They had a taster of how it feels to be young and homeless in the UK. "One of the main things that we all realised was how the homeless person has very little choice at all in their life. Although our experience certainly felt difficult, the homeless person that needs help will have to go through this day in day out with no hope of this cycle ending. This is what West London YMCA desires to achieve. It works to take young people out of this unending spiral and put them on a path to recovery."



**SLEEP
EASY** YMCA

West London YMCA

Sleep Out Info Pack

All you need to know...
what to do and how to do it.

WEST LONDON
YMCA
Christian faith in action

WestLondonYMCA.org
Charity no: 1058593

About Sleep Easy

“It is something that is truly unacceptable in this day and age and in the firstworld for people to overlook the problems of youth homelessness” (Cory Monteith). Sleep Easy is a national YMCA sponsored rough sleeping event. Spend one night sleeping in a cardboard box, like many young people are forced to do every night, and help your local YMCA raise funds to transform young lives.

Why is homelessness in London an issue?

Homelessness is not just about rough sleeping. Many young people may find themselves ‘sofa surfing’ – staying with friends or family, without a place to call home. Alternatively, they could find themselves in unsafe or overcrowded accommodation. Being homeless disrupts education and a lack of qualifications means you can’t go to college or will struggle to find a job. And with no fixed address, finding a job becomes yet more difficult. Also, there are very practical problems – how do you wash your clothes? Or even keep yourself clean? Homeless people suffer more health problems.

Across London, each year 6,000 people are training through the YMCA, 1,000 people volunteer on one of our projects and over 12,000 people are helped to find employment. Last year in London the YMCA helped 1,000 young offenders and those at risk of offending gain new skills and resettle into the community. The YMCA in West London has been transforming the lives of young people since 1870.

Why do we need your help?

Although we receive public funding to cover the costs of giving a person a roof over their heads, in reality this is just the beginning. Our young people have the same dreams as everyone else but they need our help and practical support to achieve them, whether that’s help with education, job searching and interview skills, employment skills or how to run weekly budget.

“The YMCA is like an electricity transformer. It takes negative power and turns it into positive.” (West London YMCA resident)

All of these vital activities help us to achieve our goal of **transforming young** lives but we rely on charitable grants and donations to fund them.

Setting up an online sponsorship page

Justgiving.com is a really easy and fast way to collect sponsorship – you can set yourself a target, let all your friends, family and colleagues know about it, and watch as the donations flood in.

Justgiving.com makes it really simple to let people know about what you’re doing – you can email your page to family and friends around the world or add the Justgiving application to your facebook page - all of which saves you the time and effort of trudging round collecting sponsorship. Why not add the link to your Justgiving.com page to your e-mail signature, so everyone you email will have the chance to sponsor you. Also, check out and use the latest JustGiving iPhone app.

Sounds great! So, how do I go about it?

Creating a fundraising page will only take five minutes.

Visit www.justgiving.com and learn how.

You can add photos and information about the sleep out, and your own personal message about why you are doing it. It will help if you include some information about what the money raised will be used for. If you need any assistance with this, email communications@londonymca.org, and we will send you some suggested text.

Remember to update your page regularly so that everyone can see how your preparations are going.

Top Tips for maximizing Justgiving donations:

- Divide potential sponsors up into sub-groups and tailor an e-mail to each one. For example, you may want a different approach for work colleagues than you would use with your extended family.
- Not everyone who wants to sponsor you will be able to find the time to do it on the first occasion you ask. It really is worth sending a couple of further e-mails, to give everyone an opportunity to support you.



How to raise money to help West London YMCA break the cycle of youth homelessness

STEP 1: Get registered! Complete your registration form for the event - see posters for contact details.

STEP 2: Sponsorship. Consider setting up an online sponsorship page with Justgiving – it's free and easy, so see the next page for details of how to do it. Tell everyone you know – friends, colleagues, family – that you're sleeping out and raising money to help transform the lives of young people. Approach them directly, send an email, telephone them—use whatever means work for you. As well as the traditional sponsorship form, you can direct people to your Justgiving page, put something on your social networking site, add a footer to your e-mail – or even wear a badge with 'I'm sleeping out for West London YMCA', so that they really get the message.

STEP 3: Use the traditional sponsorship form in this booklet. Make sure you go everywhere with your sponsorship form so that you can sign up sponsors when the opportunity arises. And don't forget to ask people who pay UK income or capital gains taxes to Gift Aid their donation. This allows us to claim from the Government an extra 28p for every £1 that they sponsor you.

STEP 4: Remind all your sponsors that the Sleep Easy is coming up, so they know you'll soon be asking them to honour their pledge — you could even let them know the weather forecast for that night so that they realise the commitment you are making. Don't forget to shout about it once you've completed the Sleep Easy— you'll have done something amazing and so it's only right you tell everyone!

STEP 5: After the event, make sure you continue to go everywhere with your sponsorship form and an envelope to collect your sponsorship money.

You may be able to ask additional people for sponsorship; it doesn't matter that you have already slept out. Return the sponsorship forms and money collected to your event organiser.

Asking for sponsorship can feel a bit awkward and embarrassing. Don't be shy. Most people will be only too willing to help when they realise what you are doing.

Although part of the wider YMCA movement, we are a separate charity generating our own funding.

West London YMCA makes a positive, practical difference to young lives
YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Bring these along on the night of your Sleep Easy event

Sleeping out is tough! We recommend you bring some things to help make the night a little more comfortable:

- Waterproofs and umbrella (just in case...)
- Sleeping bag and pillow.
- Warm clothes: bring plenty of layers— if you are too warm you can always take some off.
- Thermal underwear if you have it.
- Hat, gloves and torch.
- An insulated sleeping mat or groundsheet
- Some snacks to sustain you and a flask of a hot drink
- A sense of humour.



What is the event organiser's role?

- Keep a register of who is expected to sleep out.
- Provide a safe place to sleep out. It might be a church garden, school grounds, or a private outdoor space. It will need access to toilets.
- Organise some cardboard boxes with which to make a shelter for those not providing their own.
- Make sure there's access to drinking water and indoor shelter.
- You may like to ask anyone not sleeping out to contribute by cooking breakfast, or some hot food or soup in the evening.
- After the event, please ensure that all sponsorship money not raised online is collected and passed to West London YMCA. Cheques should be made payable to "West London YMCA".

Please contact Corporate Communications at West London YMCA to let us know about your event:

0300 11 11 500 ext. 6569 or communications@londonymca.org

West London YMCA can provide publicity and information booklets, or templates for you to create your own.

For assistance with cardboard boxes for your event, please contact Communications@londonymca.org.

