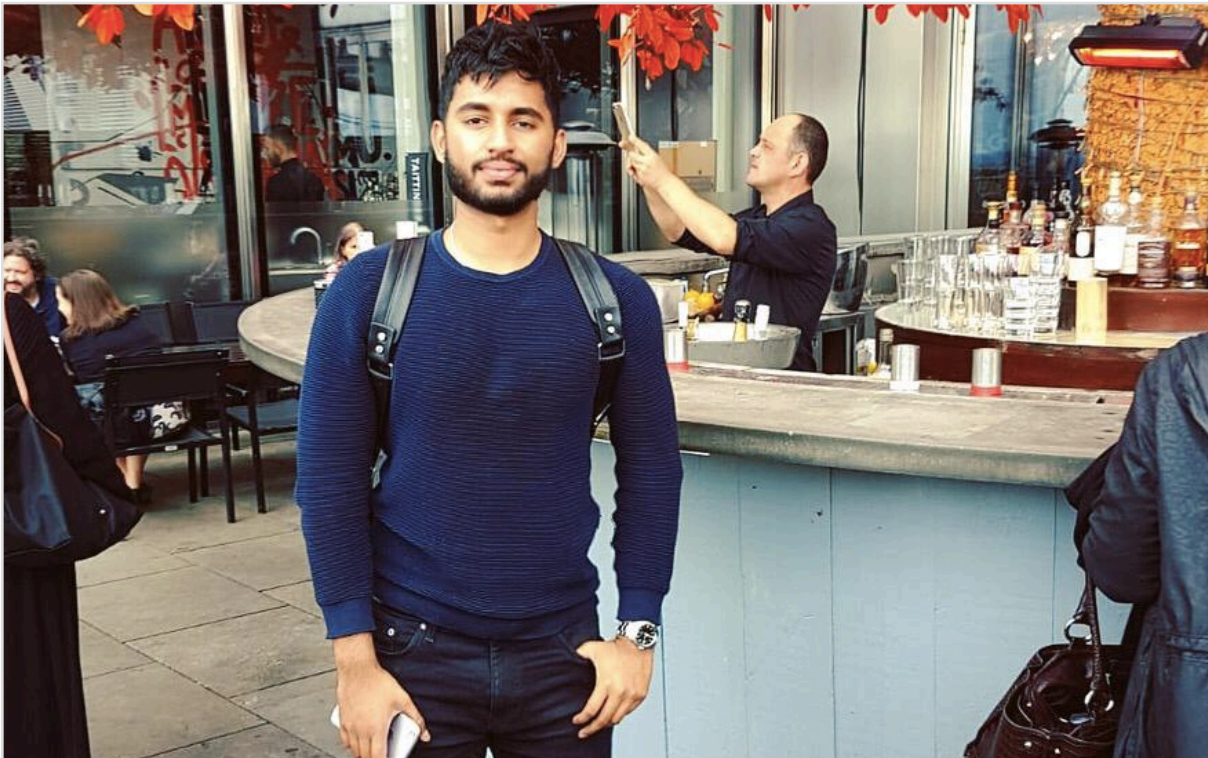


Kiraj Potavadoo



1. What year are you in?

I'm in the third year of the MPharm degree.

2. Where did you volunteer?

I volunteered for a charity called Cancer Research UK, in their Norbury branch.

3. Can you tell me a bit more about the charity?

The charity helps to fund cancer research with the aim of reducing the number of deaths as a result of cancers. It is only able to function as a result of donations from the community which are facilitated through their charity shops and fundraising events. The charity also provides information about cancer and runs campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the disease.

4. What made you decide to start volunteering

I wanted to help the community and give back to those less fortunate. Having known many people diagnosed with cancer, I understand its burden on society and therefore felt that my role as a volunteer would help to alleviate some of these burdens.

5. What was the best thing about volunteering?

The best thing about volunteering was meeting loads of new people; whether it was working with them or serving them on the shop floor. Familiar faces often returned to the store just to say hello.

6. What was the most challenging thing about volunteering?

Finding the time to volunteer was quite challenging, particularly as my school timetable did not allow much flexibility. Some weekends I was also quite drained and tired therefore was less reluctant to want to volunteer. However, the cause was a major incentive and motivator which encouraged me to continue.

7. What advice do you have for people who maybe would like to start volunteering, but are worried that it may interfere with their studies?

Time management is key. If you are able to spend less time procrastinating, volunteering a few hours a week can easily fit into your timetable. Additionally, the act of volunteering itself is so rewarding that it acts as an incentive to carry on.

8. Do you feel like you've made a difference volunteering?

I think I did make a difference. I helped to recruit a lot of charity donors to cancer research who now donate a fixed sum of money each month. I think it's important to recognise the significance of every little contribution and its potential to make a huge difference in the grand scheme of things.

9. How has volunteering helped you with your Pharmacy degree?

Working with a variety of different people helped improve my team working skills which I have been able to utilise in various group work tasks throughout my MPharm degree so far. It has also helped my personal development; particularly with regards to empathy and sympathy.

If you've been inspired by Kiraj's experience, you can find out more about volunteering with Cancer Research UK on the UCL volunteering website and here: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/>