



We are privileged to care for our patients and their families, at probably the most difficult time in their lives, but we can only do this with the help of people like Polly and the generosity of our local community.

We have to raise over £20,000 every day in order to provide care, free of charge, to our patients and their relatives.

For further information about how to support Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, contact our Fundraising team on:

01252 729446
support@pth.org.uk

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Our volunteers are inspiring...

“I really enjoy the interaction.”



Polly's Story
Volunteering as an Occupational Therapist

April 2017

Phyllis Tuckwell[®]
Hospice Care 
...because every day is precious

Polly's Story



Qualified Occupational Therapist (OT) Polly has been volunteering at Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care since 2014.

"I started when I came back from America," she says. "We'd lived in Chicago for two years and I'd done

some volunteering at a school there, mainly as a way of meeting people. Just before we'd moved there though, my mum had been diagnosed with endometrial cancer, and we'd had such a positive experience with the Macmillan nurses, that the idea of volunteering at a Hospice was in the back of my mind. I had already done some work in the past at St Michael's Hospice in Basingstoke, as a wheelchair service Occupational Therapist, so when we moved back to the UK, volunteering in Hospice Care seemed like the right thing to do."

Polly contacted Julia Morpeth, Voluntary Services Manager at Phyllis Tuckwell, who showed her a long list of vacancies. *"I told her I'd do anything,"* says Polly, *"but I knew I wanted to have contact with patients and, when we got chatting, helping with Occupational Therapies seemed like the best route to go down."*

Polly started helping out at Phyllis Tuckwell's Relaxation group session – setting up the room, bringing the patients in when they were ready and staying there throughout the sessions, helping the OT's. She has also helped with the weekly Physiotherapy exercise group which helps patients strengthen their muscles and build their stamina, which many find their illness

and also often their treatment impact on. As well as helping patients grow in confidence and retain their independence, the sessions have also brought together a group of people who previously did not know each other, but who have now formed a very strong friendship, supporting each other through their illnesses and treatment.

"No matter how poorly I feel, I always make the effort to come," said one patient at the exercise group. ***"It gives me a boost for the rest of the day, both emotionally and physically. If I miss one, I feel like I've missed out – we all chat about how we're doing, both exercise-wise and treatment-wise. Having volunteers here really makes a difference – we really appreciate it."***

"I really enjoy the interaction with everyone I come into contact with - from the patients and staff, to the volunteer drivers who bring the patients to the group every week," says Polly. *"I don't do it because I feel I ought to or because it's for a good cause – I do it because I want to. Sometimes I think I look forward to the weekly sessions more than the patients themselves do!"*

As well as volunteering for Phyllis Tuckwell, Polly has also run the 2016 London Marathon to raise money to help support its care. *"This was my third marathon,"* she says. *"And my last!"* Polly first ran the London Marathon seven years ago, then three years ago completed the Brighton Marathon. When

she applied to run the London Marathon again in 2016 she didn't manage to get a ballot place, so instead registered through Phyllis Tuckwell. *"Once I had my place, it made sense,"* she says.

"I realised that actually I wanted to raise money for something I felt passionate about, and that something is Phyllis Tuckwell. And when I found the training tough, I would just think about our patients' situations and how much they have to deal with on a daily basis. It put things into perspective."

Polly found the support from patients at the exercise group immensely motivating. Just as they helped each other through their treatment, so they helped Polly through her training, asking her at each session how it was going and how she was progressing. *"They all sponsored me, and on the day they were all tweeting me, wishing me luck,"* she smiles. So far Polly has raised over £1,400 for Phyllis Tuckwell, with money still coming in.

