



CANTEEN CEO CLAUDINE YOUNG



Staples Rodway Women in Business regularly interviews interesting women who have achieved success in their field. With this issue being all about "The Art of Giving", we decided to look to an organisation that we are a major sponsor of, CanTeen, and interview their very capable CEO Claudine Young. CanTeen is a New Zealand wide organisation that supports young people and their families who are affected by cancer.

Claudine moved to NZ from the UK 12 years ago. After starting in hospitality, she went on to train and work as a social worker, before being drawn to the Not-for-Profit sector. She has worked in a wide range of areas within this sector including disability, mental health and, more recently, for IHC in New Zealand.

Q: Why did you decide to work in the Not-for-Profit sector?

A: After some tough social services placements in the UK inner city I decided that's quite a tough place to work and wasn't where I wanted to take my social work skills. I wanted to work in the Not-for-Profit sector, so that's where it started.

Q: How did you end up running CanTeen?

A: I joined CanTeen 4 years ago, as the GM for Member Services, CanTeen's operational division. CanTeen were looking for somebody who could bring some more professionalism and consistency to their services, while raising the quality of youth work services for the programmes that they provide to young people.

CanTeen always knew that young people enjoyed the activities they did with us, but we needed to ask if we were really changing the lives of young people. I was brought in to implement a practice framework which would bring that quality and consistency to our work and also to increase the amount of advocacy work CanTeen was doing. We knew youth cancer survival statistics lagged behind other countries and we wanted to be part of changing that.

CanTeen is unique I think in NZ in that we work in partnership with young people and they are truly involved in our



Interview by Claire Dilks & Nicola Hoogenboom
STAPLES RODWAY WOMEN IN BUSINESS
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organisation. They are on our board and have leadership roles in our local branches. They also take a role in our fundraising and marketing, sharing their stories to connect people to our cause and showing the impact of what we do.

I held the GM job for three years and then last year when the previous CEO resigned I was asked to take over in an acting role for 6 months, before being confirmed in the role in July this year.

Q: You mentioned the board, how does that work?

A: It is certainly unique. Our board has 10 people, 5 of whom are young people under 25 who are members of CanTeen due to their own cancer or cancer of a sibling or parent. They include our current President and Vice-President.

It does mean our board meetings are quite unique because they tend to be quite workshoppy. They are not stuffy board meetings and tend to be quite entertaining and lively – very CanTeen!

They take on a workshop format because it is a learning process, as well as a decision-making process, so we take a topic, explain it and make sure everyone understands what's being talked about. Then the young people on the board have an opportunity to talk amongst themselves and to each other to check out their understanding and form a view.

What the members really bring to the group is a perspective of having lived with the experience of cancer. We help them to develop their understanding around some of those other skill-sets that are required such as fiduciary and governance responsibilities, which gives them some amazing skills for life.

Q: How is CanTeen funded?

A: We don't receive any government funding at all, so we rely on donations from the community, corporate partnerships, philanthropic giving and community grants.

Our marketing and fundraising team have really significant targets that they have to reach and every year we set up a whiteboard in their office. It's good to have that visual motivation of where we are and where we want to be. Sometimes it's quite stressful as well, having a visual reminder!

My time is spent doing things that are great to do, like phoning our wonderful supporters and saying thank you. It's important to us that we phone and thank people personally. We really value our supporters, because we know they have a choice about giving to CanTeen and we don't exist without their support.

Q: Were you part of setting up Staples Rodway's sponsorship of CanTeen?

A: It was set up before I started I think. Sponsorships aren't just about fundraising for us. It's about the other things that we can't necessarily deliver ourselves, such as tapping into corporate expertise. The fundraising is absolutely vital, of course, but it's also the additional things that people do. For example, Jo-Anne Randall, an Associate Director at Staples Rodway, recently held a workshop for our new member directors. They had attended one board meeting and she came in the next day and did some practical finance training that really helped them and empowered them to under-



stand the financial reports. That was fantastic for them and a great way for Staples Rodway to 'add value' to their financial support of CanTeen.

Q: So, what does CanTeen do?

A: Our mission is to support, develop and empower young people living with cancer.

Early on when any young person comes to us, it is very much about support, so we have youth workers who work alongside young people one to one, helping them to understand the changes that are happening to them, helping to overcome the impact of the emotional changes and the physical changes. We also connect them with other young people dealing with cancer, as we know the value for young people being able to talk to others who have had a similar experience, which we call peer support.

We have national workshops with a therapeutic/counselling focus where we dig deeper and help people to really understand the experience they've gone through, the experiences their families have gone through and to build skills to cope with that. They get take away skills and tools to help them cope when they go back to their homes and families after the weekend.

Once people start to get better, we start looking at how they can give back to other young people, the organisation or their wider community. It is about growing healthy, strong young people and reducing the long term impact of cancer on their lives.

Leadership development is about giving back, developing generosity and mastering skills and confidence for young people. One way they give back in CanTeen is by training to provide peer support to other young people new to CanTeen who are currently dealing with the shock of their own cancer or the diagnosis of a sibling or parent. They're trained to have quite bold conversations about cancer and what young people are going through.

We've also got a leadership programme called Listen Up, our advocacy programme that's about speaking up on behalf of other young people and about making improvement in services that young people receive.

Other leadership activities include helping with fundraising, helping to organise camps, activities, daytrips and also the general day-to-day running of the branch.

As they get older and more experienced they can go on to representing the organisation further and move into leadership and governance as a final step.

Q: What are your proudest moments?

A: I am proud of the huge shift in the way we deliver support to young people one-to-one. In my first year, we delivered around 980 one to one sessions to young people. In the two years since, we're now up to around 3,800, which is a huge growth, with no increase in resources.

Q: What did that mean for CanTeen?

A: In our extremely competitive fundraising environment, it's important for us to be really efficient. We still wanted to support the same number of young people, but in a more effective way. We asked "How can we do things smarter? How can we make better use of the resources we have?" While we've reduced the amount we were spending, we're delivering a lot more.

Q: Aside from income, what do you see as CanTeen's major challenges?

A: When I began, we ran a pilot to look at providing services to young people who have a parent living with cancer or lost a parent to cancer, which we call 'offspring'. We knew that our services could really help these young people and that, with no tailored services for them, they were largely coping on their own.

The challenge is that supporting this group of young people will significantly increase our membership. We do currently help some offspring, but don't market our services because we wouldn't be able to cope with the number of referrals it would bring in. Our referrals are around 350 a year,

split reasonably evenly between patients and siblings. When offspring fully start to come through, our referral rate will likely shift to 3,000, which is huge. To make that work we either need to generate far more income over the next few years or find other ways to deliver support to those young people through digital innovation and up-skilling the community around young people, such as schools, churches and friends/family groups.

If our mission is to support every single young person living with cancer, we need to make that happen.

Q: What is coming up in the future for CanTeen?

A: Next year is our 30th birthday and we're looking at how we can celebrate that. Some of our early members could be in their 50s now! I think it's likely there will be some kind of reunion, be it physical or virtual. The wonder of social media is that it's global and with the right network it can go anywhere.

We'd also like to extend the Thump Cancer awareness campaign we launched this year, which raises awareness of the five signs of youth cancer. The next stage is developing a school education and awareness programme. We are working with CanTeen Australia as they have a successful school campaign, and we want to adapt that to suit the New Zealand environment and launch it in the middle of next year.

This will be about recognising signs of cancer; preventing cancer later in life; how they can support others who have cancer or family members who have cancer; and where they can go for help.

Q: How do you deal with the emotional side?

A: There's no doubt that sometimes CanTeen is a tough place to work. For the very sad and difficult times, we acknowledge them and encourage young people to talk about things and to have counselling. It is the same for our staff, who have access to counselling. We have developed a culture here that is support-



Claudine with a group of CanTeen cheerleaders at last year's Round the Bays

ive to people and understands that sometimes these things are difficult to deal with, particularly for our front line staff.

The bottom line for us is having the right levels of support around us and a culture where it's okay to talk about things and it's okay to cry. After someone passes away, our youth workers send out a story or a bio about a young person to all our staff, including things that they loved or things that they achieved. It is a nice way to just remember that person. After that you've just got to sort of put that to one side and move on.

But you know, we also celebrate things like the end of cancer treatment for people. CanTeen is about the future, about building hope and resilience. It's about celebrating and valuing the good things in life and being grateful.

Q: Do you have any tips for women?

A: I think it's to find somebody to support you and to be your mentor. If you can, find another woman you admire and learn from. Most women would like to support other young women going into leadership, so don't be afraid to ask somebody to meet with you for coffee from time to time and help you out.

Get somebody to be your champion.

I have recently joined the CEO Institute which has been great as a peer group of support. I work quite closely with Robyn Kiddle, the very experienced CEO of the Child Cancer Foundation and she's been a great help. I think it's good to talk and share with people who are doing similar roles and facing similar challenges, so you feel like you're not going completely mad!

Q: Who do you look up to?

A: This might be a bit cliché, but the people that I really look up to are the young people CanTeen supports. There are some young women who are on our board at the moment, our current President Lucy and our Vice President Anna, who are astounding young women. I really admire them, not only because they've overcome so many challenges, but because they're achieving now in their own right professionally. They're on boards, they've been presidents and they're really well rounded, intelligent, engaging and inspiring young people.

FRIENDS OF THE CANCER SOCIETY

STAPLES RODWAY WELLINGTON HAS LONG supported the Friends of the Cancer Society and when we were asked to talk about The Art of Giving, they came immediately to mind. Here is their story.

The Friends of the Cancer Society fundraising group (FOCS) consists of five members: Judith Langridge, Chris Dunphy, Robyn Turner, Erica Newell and Ann-Louise Gower. They have been staging Black Tie Balls for the Cancer Society Wellington Division for over 10 years - raising a staggering \$1m over that time.

The participation of the Diplomatic Community in the last two events greatly enhanced the tenor of the Balls and raised a record \$254,000 & \$240,000 respectively. The Diplomatic Community were grateful to "give back in a small way to the gracious Wellington community, which we all call our temporary home".

The success of these events would not be possible without the backing of businesses like Staples Rodway Wellington, who have been supporting FOCS since its inception and have been the lead sponsor of the last two Balls. Their patronage and that of a core group of loyal sponsors have ensured that the direct costs of the Balls were covered, which allowed for all ticket sales and auction proceeds going directly to the Cancer Society, without deduction.

For the FOCS team and their sponsors, the cause is very meaningful. Nearly everyone has been touched by cancer in some way, so there is a real motivation to do as much as possible. The money raised has enabled funding for special projects and services that have had a direct and meaningful impact on New Zealanders affected by cancer.

These events also present the opportunity to get across the message of the need for ongoing support for the Cancer Society. The big challenge the Cancer Society faces is that a lot

of people assume that they are government funded. However, they receive no direct government funding and therefore rely on other fundraising streams to provide free services in Risk Reduction, Health Promotion, Supportive Care & Information, and Research and Advocacy. The Cancer Society is the only charity that supports ALL Cancers.

Wellingtonians have been incredibly generous in their ongoing support of these Balls. Events like these are important for the Cancer Society. People do respond favourably by supporting causes they believe they can have an impact.



*Staples Rodway Wellington
Director Robert Elms & Judith
Langridge (FOCS) at the Ball.*

This generosity is evidenced across New Zealand. According to a Giving New Zealand report published in 2015, New Zealanders give around \$2.8 billion annually to charitable causes, 50% of that is from individuals. In the Giving Index 2016 New Zealand was ranked fourth in the world out of 140 countries.