Manchester charity celebrating after receiving biggest ever donation

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A Manchester charity is celebrating after receiving its biggest ever donation – from a company almost 200 miles away.

Back on Track run a training centre in Manchester's bustling Northern Quarter, supporting disadvantaged adults in recovery from homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, and offending. Yet it was far away in leafy Buckinghamshire that Chief Officer Siobhan Pollitt was handed a donation of just under £4000 by Andy Page, the Managing Director of Otsuka Pharmaceutical UK.

The donation came about after Gary Cripps, Otsuka's Commercial Business Manager, raised £3809.23 for Back on Track and suggested to his employer that they match his total.

Gary recently fulfilled an ambition by scaling Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, braving freezing temperatures and low oxygen levels at the summit. He didn't have to think twice about which good cause to donate the sponsorship money to – his late partner Stuart had been a highly valued volunteer for Back on Track.

'Stuart lived in the moment every day. He would have said "Go for it Gary because you're only here once". So that's what I did!' Gary's incredible fundraising efforts put him in JustGiving's top 1% - meaning Otsuka had a whopping total to match.

Siobhan said 'Huge thanks to Andy Page, Gary Cripps and the team at Otsuka for their incredible generosity. This kind of amount makes a massive difference to a charity of our size. And although Otsuka might not be local to us, we have a lot in common - we're both passionate about enabling every individual to reach their potential in life.'

She also paid tribute to Stuart. 'He was a fantastic volunteer for Back on Track – and this is a great way to honour his memory.'

Back on Track are using the windfall of almost £8,000 on a 12 month project called the Moving on Group, which will work in partnership with local employers to create employment opportunities for disadvantaged people.

To find out more about the charity's work visit www.backontrackmanchester.org.uk

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