

Homeless For A Night

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The Rock Trust works with young people in Scotland who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. On Friday they held one of their main fundraising events – The End Youth Homelessness Sleep Out.

Eleven of us from the MediaCom Edinburgh office decided to get involved and took part in the event. So at 7pm we arrived at Festival Square with our sleeping bags, a happy go lucky attitude and enough layers to climb Everest let alone spend 12 hours on an Edinburgh pavement.

In the interests of disclosure, I should say that this was not 12 hours of interminable misery, there was a bar and a disco to keep us amused until 11pm and even a 'bedtime story' with which to send us off to our spot with. A number of my friends have mocked this state of

affairs (although they still sponsored me so fair enough) but as the Rock Trust themselves say, the primary purpose of the event is to raise money and awareness of youth homelessness and not match the danger and hopelessness faced by young people in these difficult situations.

Despite the fun and games that went on to begin with, it was no laughing matter when it came to trying to get some sleep. Despite the fact there were 150 of us doing it and that thanks to the security and set up I at no point felt in any danger, there were low moments of hopelessness. Lying with your eyes closed trying to sleep with the sound of cars and ambulances whizzing past, with the various drunken arguments and conversations from people rolling out of nightclubs and with near misses of feet on my head (as I was stepped over while people tried to get to the toilet) creates a sense of vulnerability that I have not experienced before. And then the rain started...

I had to do this for just one night and safe in the knowledge that there were people staying awake to keep an eye on us all and that at the end of the night I could go home climb into a hot bath to soak the grime away before curling up in a warm bed until lunchtime. Having to do this night after night with no safety net, no help and no knowledge of the next time you'll be able to sleep safely and comfortably doesn't bear thinking about. It has really helped me to understand how little I and the general public understand what it is to be homeless and how we treat people in this situation.

On the upside Mediacom raised over £5,000 and The Rock Trust have raised over £60,000 which will all go towards helping people in this dire situation

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