BUILDING RESILIENCE:

STUDENT WELLBEING APPEAL

ROBINSON COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
OUR COLLEGE

Students arrive every year at Robinson from across the country and around the world, eager to further their studies and equip themselves for the future. Our alumni often say that time spent at Robinson was among the best years in their lives. Life-long friendships are forged, horizons are broadened, and talents flourish.

But going to University can be challenging – financially, academically, socially, and sometimes in terms of physical and mental health too. Robinson has always recognised that, but we know we could do more.

We are determined to remain at the forefront of Cambridge colleges in thinking imaginatively about wellbeing. The anxiety and isolation associated with the pandemic, and the economic pressures facing many families, mean that our sharp focus on this subject must continue. We must invest in our students’ ability to make the most of their time with us. *This appeal asks for your help in strengthening our ability to do just that.*
During 2019/20, approximately 2,000 students across Cambridge presented to their college’s staff with a mental health difficulty that required referral or signposting for support; 570 of those students were experiencing a mental health crisis that required urgent action.

This aim can be achieved with the creation of the new post of Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare to head up the dedicated Welfare Team (comprising our Tutors, the Nurse, the Chaplain and the College-based Counsellor) at Robinson. In addition to this, work will soon begin to convert an existing space in Thorneycreek House into a dedicated Wellbeing Centre that will meet the needs of the students and this expanded team.

We are clear that strengthening wellbeing is not simply a question of providing medical interventions. Much of the best work in this field is preventative. For example, academic underperformance is very often linked to issues such as a poor routine, low confidence, poor diet, or poor sleep. We expect the strengthened Welfare Team to provide coaching and support in these areas, helping our students build the resilience and strength they need, and making sure that concerns do not become crises.
As we all continue to deal with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, student welfare has never been more important. We believe that the creation of a Welfare Team will be transformative for our students, enabling them to thrive academically and socially and to make the most of their precious years at University. We couldn’t be more excited about these developments designed to support our students in the best possible ways.

Dr David Woodman, Senior Tutor
NETWORK OF SUPPORT

The Welfare Team will hold the primary responsibility for responding to the everyday needs of our students. This will include the provision of daily drop-in sessions, the resources to respond to any student within 24 hours, around-the-clock availability for critical cases and emergencies, and an ability to source the right external help quickly and effectively.

Duty Tutors and Porters will continue to play their vital part in our support network, but we are determined to deploy qualified and experienced mental-health professionals to deliver specialist help where that is needed. **We need resources to ensure that support is provided at the right level and at the right time, so that students can achieve their academic potential.**

> I’ve been involved with sport in Cambridge since the beginning of my first year - so can vouch for the importance it holds for my mental wellbeing and managing the pressures of academic life here. Exercise has a unique power to distract and destress - training is the most important part of my week, as it’s only when I’m running around that I can completely take my mind off academics.

> The expanded welfare team will not only be better equipped to point students in the direction of sports societies, but also encourage being outdoors more generally - we have all been cooped up for a long time, and fresh air and boosted endorphins are more important than ever.

George, (MML 2018)

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Many students find that physical activity helps maintain positive mental health. Exercise might be helpful in its own right or in combination with other treatments. Recent studies have shown that sporting participation enhances rather than detracts from academic excellence. With limited facilities of our own, Robinson has recently introduced subsidised membership for our students at the nearby University Sports Centre. Gifts received in response to the Appeal could expand the level of support we are able to offer. **Finances should not be a barrier to health whilst studying.**
**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

We invite you to help provide the vital support our students need and deserve, putting Robinson among the most forward-looking and imaginative colleges in Cambridge in its approach to welfare and wellbeing.

**COSTS AND TIMESCALES**

All gifts will help us respond to the immediate need to appoint a Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare and provide a Wellbeing Centre for today’s students at Robinson. Support from alumni and friends will also allow the College to continue to provide additional counselling and nursing hours and make this a permanent team to help future students.

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- 1 gift of £6.75 per month could enable a struggling student to participate in sport at the University Sports Centre.
- 1 gift of £20.25 per month could help three students participate in sport.
- 30 gifts of £30 per month could ensure the continuation of extra counselling resources for Robinson students.
- 24 gifts of £45 per month could ensure the continuation of the additional resource for our College Nurse.
- 1 gift of £5k would help secure specialist mental health support for a student who needs it.
- 1 gift of £10k would help refurbish and equip the new Wellbeing Centre.
- 2 gifts of £30k could fund the Head of Welfare post for 1 year.
NAMING OPPORTUNITIES
Whilst gifts of any amount are welcomed and valued, this appeal allows us to offer some special opportunities to recognise the support from our alumni and friends.

All donors will have their names included in the list of donors on the College website unless they wish to remain anonymous.

HEAD OF STUDENT WELLBEING AND WELFARE £60,000+
A gift of £60,000 or more secures the opportunity to name the post of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare

WELLBEING CENTRE £75,000 +
A donation of £75,000 or more secures the opportunity to name the new Wellbeing Centre. Your chosen dedication will be displayed on the exterior of the centre.

DOUBLE THE IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION – THE HARDING CHALLENGE
For a limited time, philanthropists David and Claudia Harding have offered to match, pound-for-pound, every new gift (or renewed gift, if you last gave prior to July 2019) made by alumni and friends like you to this appeal, with equal funding to support those who need it most across the whole of Collegiate Cambridge.

To take advantage of the Harding Challenge, simply make your first gift (or first gift since July 2019) to this appeal.

ROBINSON COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1137494

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