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Ben Dortimer

Mirabel Chair

Ben Dortimer, who runs the successful Micador arts and design products company, remembers when he was just starting out and looking to donate a small slice of his meagre salary to charity. He was introduced to Jane Rowe and that was that.

‘I found Jane utterly inspiring, but also completely different to how I imagined the founder of a charity would be,’ Ben said. ‘Much more like me, than like a corporate person. I’d found my charity. I started with a \$150 personal donation in 2001 – I still have the cheque stub – and started regularly donating art supplies for grief therapy sessions.’

Ben helped produce Mirabel’s book featuring children’s art, *A Rainbow of Feelings*, joined the Board in 2007, became Treasurer in 2012 and then Chair in 2014.

‘I believe powerfully in Mirabel’s purpose and in the way we can bring hope to children and help break the cycle of dependency. But if I’m honest, it’s Jane that got me hooked and Jane that keeps me so dedicated. She still inspires me and makes me want to be better every time I talk to her.’

‘I try hard to protect and support her and of course, her legacy, Mirabel.’

Ben finds inspiration in Mirabel camps. ‘These kids start out isolated and scared, and eventually realise there’s other kids there that are just like them. “Oh, I live with my grandma too,” becomes openness and sharing and hopefully friendship,’ he said. ‘Also, the carers’ responses to how the kids change in such a short amount of time, with this sense of hope and belonging, always deeply moves me.’