

AlphaWeek Q&A: Gabriella Mueller-Evrard, Executive Director, A Leg To Stand On

5 March 2018 [Greg Winterton](#)

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A Leg To Stand On (ALTSO) recently announced that it will return to London to launch its inaugural 'Rocktoberfest' fundraising event. AlphaWeek's Greg Winterton spoke with Gabriella Mueller-Evrard, Executive Director of ALTSO, to talk about the London event, its results from 2017, and other future plans.

GW: Gaby, thanks for taking the time to talk to today. ALTSO announced this week that it will return to London after an 11-year absence with its inaugural 'Rocktoberfest London' fundraiser. Tell us a little more about the event, and why a return to London makes sense for the organisation now.

GM: Sure thing, Greg. Rocktoberfest is a live music show – in October - where the bands are made up of professionals from the finance industry. The bands themselves compete to raise funds for ALTSO, and those which raise the most are featured higher up the bill at the event itself. Our New York event has grown attendance from a few hundred in the inaugural event in 2003 to more than 1,400 people at our 14th annual edition in October 2017.

With regards to Rocktoberfest London, we did host an event back in May 2007, which was very successful. However, in the early years after the financial crisis, raising money for the non-profit sector was challenging for everyone, and we felt that we should consolidate around our main event in New York. Furthermore, in 2012, we launched Rocktoberfest Chicago, which recently had its 6-year anniversary. We've grown that event from about 100 guests to 500 in 2017. A return to London works for us now because we have established events in the US with

consistent backers, and people and resources on the ground in Europe which can help ALTSO to not only launch and produce a London event, but others in places like Paris as our organisation grows to reach more children in need.

GW: What are your hopes for the London event? Do you have any success metrics?

GM: Given this is our first event in London in 10 years, we don't have any hard targets with regards to the amount of money we want to raise, or the number of attendees; our goals are directed towards customer experience and engagement for ALTSO's mission to change the face of disability in the developing world.

Rocktoberfest-London provides a genuine opportunity for our global sponsors to maximise their visibility to their target markets now that we have a London event to go along with the New York and Chicago ones, while proactively supporting the life-changing treatments ALTSO provides its children. Given the London market isn't as familiar with ALTSO as New York and Chicago, we'll be educating the market with regards to the difference their participation makes, and the difference mobility makes – for themselves, and for the children ALTSO treats – the majority of whom come from families where the daily average income is less than \$3. All of the net proceeds benefit ALTSO's global medical programs.

GW: For those who perhaps might not be familiar with ALTSO - particularly those in the UK and Europe - tell us a little more about the organisation and its goals.

GM: ALTSO provides free orthopaedic care - including prosthetic limbs, mobility aids, and rehabilitation - to children suffering from untreated congenital or traumatic limb disabilities in the developing world. The provision of one simple prosthetic limb, which costs us an average of only \$250, provides access to education, future employment, and the chance to live self-sufficiently; for kids everywhere, mobility is so much more than movement. We've treated more than 16,700 children since 2002, and operate 10 programs in 9 developing countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

GW: How did the organisation do in 2017 from a fundraising and impact perspective, and what are your goals for the next 1,2,3 years?

GM: ALTSO's 2 Rocktoberfest events in New York and Chicago raised nearly \$900,000, which will allow ALTSO to treat more than a thousand children in 2018

through the provision of its new modular prosthetic limb, named The Joshi after ALTSO's pioneer prosthetist. Made of durable but lightweight materials and with modular components that are easily adjusted as the patient grows, The Joshi meets all international standards and is the highest quality, most effective, and most affordable device available in the developing world. It was, quite significantly, our strongest year to date.

We're got ambitious plans to double our fundraising in the next 3 years, to meet the staggering need for paediatric orthopaedic care around the world – a healthcare problem often overlooked because limb disabilities are not usually considered 'life-threatening'; we see first-hand how lack of access to care impacts the course of a child, and their family's life, but we've also seen how one simple treatment or device can provide self-esteem, access to school, and future employment, and the chance to live independently. We think that the launch of Rocktoberfest London will have a big impact for ALTSO's young beneficiaries, and that event is a strategic priority, but we have also launched other events in 2017, like 'Sweat for ALTSO' and 'Rock for ALTSO' which are smaller events, produced with our partners in the finance, athletic, and creative spaces, aimed at helping us all reflect on the difference mobility has made in our own lives, and we can pay it forward to ALTSO's children.

GW: Finally, give us the pitch for Rocktoberfest London and tell us how to get involved.

GM: We think that one of our USPs is that it costs only £250 to make a life-changing difference for someone who needs it, and by supporting ALTSO through Rocktoberfest, we can tell you directly the number of children you're helping from your donation, and the impact your support makes on not just the child, but their family and community. Secondly, it's great fun, and it's something different – we can't think of many other charity events that unite like-minded professionals from the financial community, where the constituents of that industry themselves are providing the (excellent!) entertainment.

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