

Honorable designs on Cancer

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Can Good Design Help Raise More Money For Cancer?

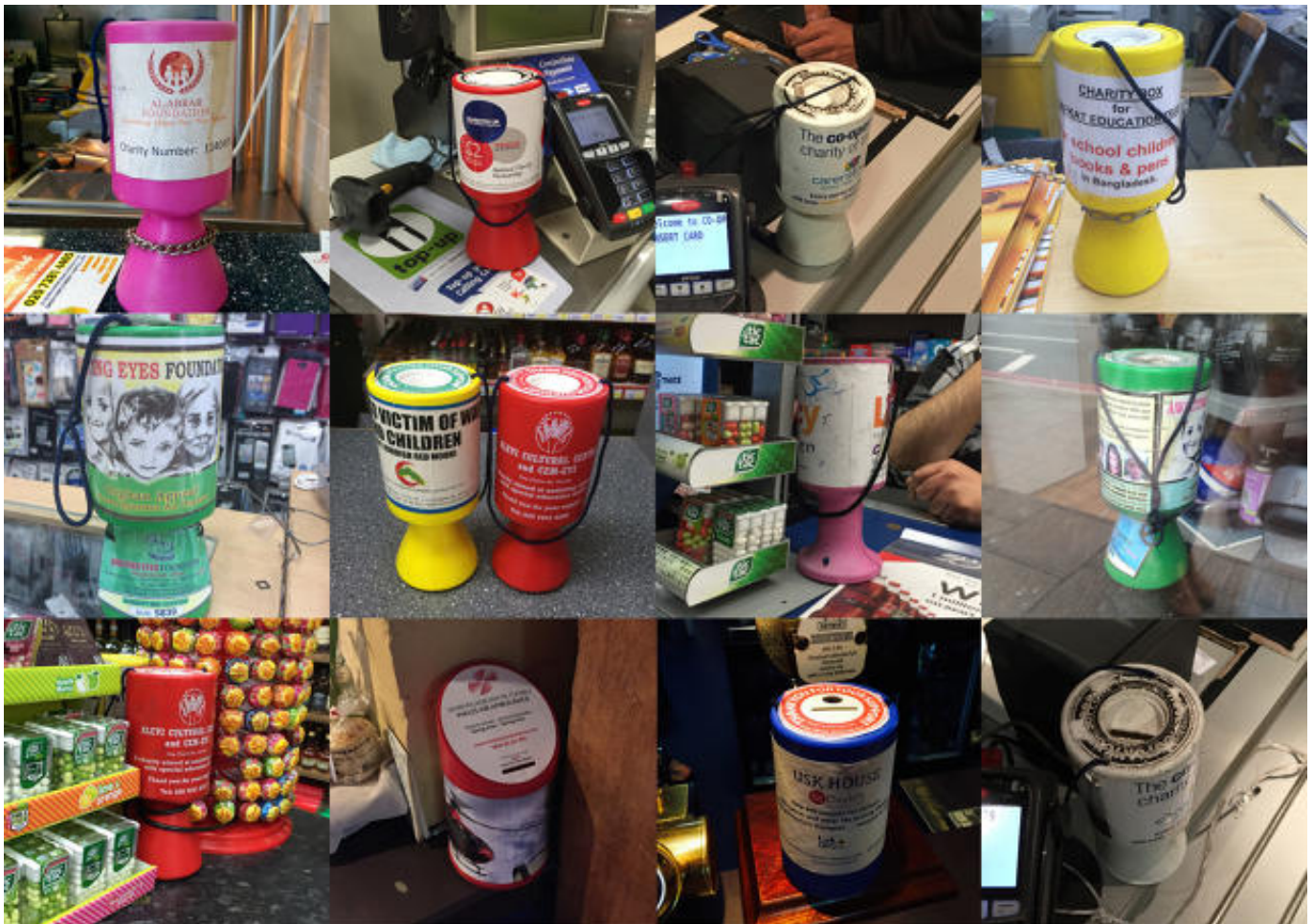
In Britain, [Maggie's](#) is a nonprofit charity aimed at giving cancer patients support, information, and advice. It was named after **Maggie Keswick Jencks**, the wife of architectural critic Charles Jencks, and as such, it's got a deep bench of **designers** who have worked with the charity, including Frank Gehry, Norman Foster, and Thomas Heatherwick.

The latest talent to help **Maggie's** is **Benjamin Hubert**. His agency, [Layer](#), set out to help **Maggie's design** a new Change Box that wouldn't just stand out from the sea of non-descript charity coffee cans, but actually encourage people to give more than they already would.



Instead of having a can-like **design**, the new **Maggie's** change box looks almost like a silicon vase, dangling from a handle. It's soft and inviting, bowing almost humbly towards the giver. "We wanted to give it personality, without turning it into a cartoon character, so we gave it a little hint of bowing," **Hubert** says. And rather than opting for an array of stickers or mottos to **brand** the box, Layer's **design** limits itself to tastefully imprinting **Maggie's** in the inner lip of the Change Box mouth, as well as the charity's slogan across the base: "People with cancer need places like this."

Originally, **Hubert** tells me, **Maggie's** approached Layer to **design** a chair for their centers. "We said, sure, we *could* do that, but we think **design** can be used a lot more powerfully than just making chairs," he says. "We asked if there was anything else we could do for **Maggie's** that would make a bigger impact?"



Ultimately, **Maggie's** and Layer mutually rested upon the challenge of **designing** a better charity box. In the U.K. as in America, most charity boxes are tatty, plastic boxes that are placed near store counters. After hitting the streets though and photographing as many people as they could interacting with these boxes, Layer found out: people didn't. To most people, charity boxes had become essentially invisible: mere "background noise," **Hubert** says, "disappearing between the newspapers and [Chupa Chups](#)."



The company is just now rolling out 300 of the new Change Boxes across the U.K. After that, Layer will examine the results, and if necessary, see how the **design** can be altered based on how it performs. "The true test of this is measuring how the donations come in," says **Hubert**. "The real reason we did this was to help raise more money, not just raise **brand** awareness."

[All Photos: via [Maggie's](#)]

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