

PRESS RELEASE

31st March 2010



TIME RUNNING OUT TO HELP CHARITY WIN OVER £1 MILLION EXTRA FOR DEVON'S VOLUNTEERS

Local charity, Devon Community Foundation joined with the White Rabbit from Alice in Wonderland, community groups helping disadvantaged people and local supporters at a Mad Hatters Tea Party at Crealy Park to mark just one year left to go to secure an extra £1.25 million match funding from the government for local causes.

Devon Community Foundation, which in the last seven years has made over £7 million in grants to thousands of local voluntary and community groups helping local people in need, is taking part in the government's Grassroots Challenge match funding initiative.

The Challenge is designed to stimulate investment from local philanthropists, organisations and businesses in grassroots community projects tackling local issues by matching every donation made to the Foundation £1 for £1. With gift aid, every £100 donated becomes £256.

To date, Devon Community Foundation has raised £550,000 which has secured a matching £550,000 from the government. However, it still has £700,000 left to raise by March 31st 2011 if it wants to secure the full amount of match funding available – which is why the White Rabbit has been called upon to tell people not to leave it too late to help the Community Foundation win the extra cash for Devon.

Martha Wilkinson, Chief Executive of Devon Community Foundation, which is one of 56 similar charitable foundations in the UK tackling social exclusion at grassroots level comments, "We've been blown away by the support to date which has come from companies like Barclays, the Royal Mail, Otter Nurseries, Kitson Hutchings, Savills, Coutts, Two Four Productions, as well as major donations from private individuals.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for people in Devon to help secure extra cash for Devon's volunteers who are on the frontline helping those in our communities who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and disabled.

"With the public purse strings tightening, it's increasingly down to the voluntary sector to support some of the most vulnerable people in our local communities so it's essential we make the most of this offer to secure extra funds for them now."

Philip Milton, who has made a substantial donation to the Foundation's Grassroots Challenge comments, "The Grassroots Challenge is a fantastic opportunity to increase the value of charitable giving and make sure it has a real impact locally in Devon. The offer is just too good to miss for people who want to give something back locally – and to see the results of their giving in their local community."

Community groups who have been supported by the Foundation to date with Grassroots Grants also attended the Mad Hatters tea party, including the Cycle Coaching South West group which received a £4,575 grant from the Foundation to help young people on the Forches estate in Barnstaple by teaching them to repair and ride bicycles.

David Luggar of Cycle Coaching South West "The grant from the Foundation helped us provide a real focus for positive activity on the estate. The change in many of the young people from being anti-social and disruptive to considerate and motivated teenagers is incredible. Now

three of the young people have been selected by British Cycling to undergo further training which gives them a chance to be selected for the Olympic team.”

Other groups supported with grants from the Foundation who attended included:

* **The Onward Community Groups from Plymouth**, which with grants of £1059 from the Foundation set up a football team and junior warden group in the Greenbank area of the city, helping to cut anti-social behaviour by 50%: **the Honiton 729 Gateway Club** which helps build confidence in those with learning disabilities: **The Ladysmith Action Team from Exeter** which with a grant of £5,000 from the Foundation helps Exeter’s multi-ethnic population to integrate by combining a toddler group with English language classes for parents: and the **Cullumpton Family Centre** which helps families on a low income to learn healthy eating and budgeting skills and supports them in good parenting..

Martha Wilkinson, Chief Executive of Devon Community Foundation added, “We’d like to thank everyone who has made this event possible, including Crealy Park, the University of Exeter Theatre Company and local company Daisy Cakes me. We really hope it inspires local people and companies to get behind this bid to secure extra cash for Devon’s volunteers and make our communities better and more caring places for everyone.”

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