

## News Release

### **Community Foundations Commended For Role in £10.6 million Fund to Help Disadvantaged Young People**

Tiverton charity, Devon Community Foundation is one of seven Community Foundations across the South West which have been commended in an independent report on the impact of the government's multi-million Local Network Fund, designed to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and young people.

The Fund was set up in 2001 to help disadvantaged young people between 0 – 19 tackle issues relating to poverty and isolation, to achieve new goals and play a role in moulding and delivering youth services. In its first five years, the Fund helped more than 380,000 young people in the region and was so successful that it was extended to run until March 2008..

The Community Foundations have been responsible for awarding over 2,077 grants totalling over £10.6 million to small charities, voluntary and community groups working at grass-roots level to improve the lives of disadvantaged children.

Over 30,000 volunteers have been involved in setting up and running everything from youth clubs, arts and music projects and rural transport schemes, to support for young carers, victims of domestic abuse, the homeless and those with special needs.

Devon Community Foundation managed one of the largest grant programmes, awarding over £4,208,577 to 893 projects being run by small community and voluntary groups over the last five years.

Melanie McLoughlin, Director of Devon Community Foundation explains, "Small local groups are often best placed to see what's needed to help in their local communities and to provide direct, practical support. However, they are often off the radar when it comes to competing with larger charities for funding and miss out.

"As well as making the grant application process much simpler for small groups, we also provided support and advice on managing, financing and developing projects to ensure maximum value was gained from the grants and that young people were involved as much as possible in decision making."

As well as commending the Community Foundations as an excellent delivery partner, 'local, knowledgeable, cost-effective and accessible', the report also highlighted their role in pump priming pilot schemes which blossomed into major success stories.

In Devon, these included the Storybook Dads scheme which, following an LNF grant in 2003, has now expanded into a successful award winning charity helping fathers in prison to stay in contact with their children by recording bedtime stories for them. It recently won the Children and Youth Category at the National Charity Awards.

Other successes include the Devon Wheels2Work community interest company which grew out of projects supported by the Local Network Fund in Honiton and Holsworthy which lend young people in isolated rural areas mopeds to get to work , training and job interviews. The scheme now runs across Devon.

Melanie adds, "Following our work with the Local Network Fund we now have a database of over 2,500 local groups providing valuable support for vulnerable, isolated and deprived young people across Devon. Our aim is now to work with local businesses and philanthropists to build our Devon Giving Fund to ensure the work of these small voluntary and community groups can continue."

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