

NEWS RELEASE

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LOCAL COMPANIES ARE BUSINESS CHAMPIONS

Four local companies have been recognised as Business Champions in the Community by Essex Community Foundation, one of the foremost community foundations in the UK.

e2v technologies, Essex & Suffolk Water, Gray & Sons (Chelmsford) Ltd and Moody Homes are among the first Essex-based companies to invest in the Skills Investment Fund which will help develop the skills of local people. Framed certificates were presented to the companies at the Foundation's annual reception held at Ingatestone Hall (29 March).

Essex Community Foundation launched the Skills Investment Fund after research it had commissioned identified a shortage of vocational and life skills throughout the county.

Bob Sherer, Development Director at the Foundation said "The success of businesses rests on the availability of skills, and we believe that there is an opportunity for business leaders to take ownership of this issue and make a real difference to the skills base throughout the County."

"We are grateful to those companies that have already agreed to support this initiative, but we will need to secure a broad range of champions from the business sector to have impact." He added "if we can encourage 300 local companies to become Business Champions, in three years time we will have a charitable fund worth nearly £1 million to address this gap."

Essex Community Foundation is an independent charitable trust managing Funds on behalf of companies, individuals and public agencies. Lord Petre, the Foundation's Patron hosted the annual reception which brought together nearly 100 invited guests to celebrate the Foundation's achievements during the last 12 months. Charles Clark, Chairman of Essex Community Foundation talked about the Foundation's growth in the last year, attracting more donors than in previous years. He attributed the increasing interest in charitable giving and philanthropy to the changing attitudes to wealth among people who have built successful companies.

To find out more about Essex Community Foundation or how to become a Business Champion please visit the Foundation's website www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk or call Bob Sherer on 01245 355947.

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Notes to Editors:

Essex Community Foundation was set up in 1996 and has established a grants programme which has seen more than 2500 Essex based charities and community groups receive over £8million in grants. Funds are distributed on behalf of a wide range of donors who want their charitable giving to be accessible to local charities.
www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk