

NEWS RELEASE

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£40,000 available for Charities in Southend

Voluntary and community groups in Southend are being encouraged to apply for funding for projects that must benefit local people.

£40,000 has been allocated from the European Social Fund Key Fund programme, which is managed by local grant making charitable trust, Essex Community Foundation, and matched funded by Southend Borough Council.

Since the Key Fund programme was launched in Essex in 2001 over £262,000 has been distributed in grants to voluntary and community groups in Southend, which are helping people to gain new skills and improve their job prospects.

Charities in Southend which have previously received grants from Key Fund are:

- DIAL, were awarded £1,500 towards training costs and expenses for volunteer advisers;
- Homestart - South East Essex, £10,000 to cover the costs of recruiting, training and supporting 10 additional volunteers;
- HARP, £4,500, to cover the costs of a week's residential course for young people living in temporary accommodation.

"The Key Fund programme in Essex has been extremely successful" said Debbie Kiddier, Grants Officer at Essex Community Foundation. She added "The current programme will come to an end in December 2007, but there is still some money available to support voluntary and community groups in Southend which are helping people who are disadvantaged in the labour market. We would urge groups to contact us as we are keen to ensure that the remaining money available is distributed".

Grants of up to £10,000 are available. Application forms can be downloaded from the Foundation's website www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk or please contact Debbie Kiddier on 01245 356018 or by e-mail debbie@essexcf.org.uk for further information or discuss a grant application.

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For further information contact

Debbie Kiddier/Caroline Taylor
Essex Community Foundation
Tel: 01245 356018 Fax: 01245 346391
E-mail: grants@essexcf.org.uk
www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk



121 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0QT
T. 01245 355947
F. 01245 346391

Cont ...

E. general@essexcf.org.co.uk
www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Patron: The Lord Lieutenant of Essex

Chief Executive: Laura Warren



Notes to Editors:

European Social Fund – Key Fund Programme launched in Essex in January 2002 under the banner *Unlocking Potential* to give grants to voluntary and community groups working with disadvantaged people in our communities to improve their skills and employability. Those being targeted to benefit from the Key Fund include young people who are not in education, employment or training, lone parents, people with physical, learning or sensory disabilities or mental health problems, minority ethnic communities, and people that have been out of work for a considerable time.

Essex Community Foundation manages the Fund on behalf of six funding partners, Business Link for Essex, Connexions, Essex County Council, Learning and Skills Council Essex, Southend Borough Council and Thurrock Council.

Southend-on-sea Borough Council recognises the important contribution that the voluntary sector makes to the lives of local people, especially disadvantaged groups and individuals. The Council will continue to work with the voluntary sector in order to focus on the changing needs of this vibrant community, whilst at the same time recognising their need to be independent.

Essex Community Foundation was set up in 1996 and has established a grants programme that has seen around 2,500 Essex based charities and community groups receive over £8 million in grants. Funds are distributed on behalf of a wide range of donors who want their charitable giving to be accessible to local charities. A full list of funds can be found on our website www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk