

NEWS RELEASE

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HIGH SHERIFF REWARDS LOCAL CHARITIES

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The Moulsham Youth Club Project in Chelmsford was among 50 community projects, charities and individuals to receive awards from the High Sheriff of Essex Sarah Courage. Grants totalling £22,000, and certificates, were awarded to fund projects and recognise the work being undertaken by organisations which are supporting local people and helping to make Essex communities safer from crime.

Since the High Sheriffs' Fund was established with Essex Community Foundation in 1997 it has distributed 317 grants to local charities totalling £220,460.

A special ceremony, sponsored by Essex County Council and organised by Essex Community Foundation, was held at the Fennes Estate, Bocking (4 March). Around 260 invited guests including the Chairman of Essex County Council, Cllr Bonnie Hart, Chief Constable, Roger Baker, Chief Fire Officer, David Johnson and many past High Sheriffs of Essex, attended the event.

Sarah Couarge paid tribute to all the organisations represented at the event. She said "I have met so many outstanding, dedicated, hard-working volunteers during my year and I have been truly astonished at how well they are meeting the ever-increasing demands for their services. They are quite literally keeping the candle of hope alight for those vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our great County of Essex and the High Sheriffs' Awards gives a great platform to be able to recognise them for their tremendous commitment."

Steve Scruton, the leading radio personality from BBC Essex, compered the event. In his own professional style, Steve invited winners to receive certificates and cheques from the High Sheriff and talked to them about their work, helping the audience to gain a greater understanding of the varied activity that is taking place across Essex to make our communities safe from crime and the fear of crime.

The special High Sheriffs' Shield was awarded to Ignite based in Loughton, recognising their support of young people in the area. Ignite runs an after-school club and evening drop-in sessions as well as homework/revision clubs and arts/sports workshops. They support some 125 young people every week through their diversionary activities. The group also received a cheque for £500 to buy a table tennis table.

The Essex County Fire and Rescue Shield, which recognises the work of an organisation's support of young people was awarded to Brentwood Crossroads Caring for Carers. As well as the Shield they received a grant for £1,000 to enable them to arrange activities for young carers to give them a break from their caring responsibilities.

The Volunteer Centre of the Year Award, launched at the Awards in 2002 by George Courtauld, was won by PARC (Essex), which provides play and recreation facilities for children with disabilities and respite for their families and carers. The award recognises an organisation for the support, respect and training that it gives to its volunteers and includes a cheque for £1,000. Anne Kershaw nominated PARC. She said "I feel very much a part of the team and they encourage me to take up any training which I feel would be valuable to me and the families which PARC supports".

The Essex Police Cup was jointly won by Dennis Kerner and Norman Shields for their tireless work within the local community as key members of the Peartree Plus Residents Association in Southend. Frank Gulley, Headteacher of Temple Sutton Primary School nominated them. He said "they live and breathe community safety and their work makes the area a better place".

The High Sheriff's Cup was won by Chelmsford CHESS for their work helping single people who are homeless. Through the day centre they provide information and support and the nightshelter enables them to provide emergency overnight accommodation.

Childcare, based in Rayleigh, won the Essex County Council Bowl. The award recognises the group's partnership work supporting disadvantaged children across Essex by providing professional social workers in schools where behaviour and attendance is an issue.

The High Sheriffs' Fund is managed by Essex Community Foundation, an independent charitable trust investing and distributing funds to local charities on behalf of individuals, companies, trusts and public agencies throughout Essex. Since the High Sheriffs' Fund was established in 1997, it has distributed 317 grants to local charities, totalling £220,460, all helping to make our communities safer places to live and work.

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For further information contact

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Notes to Editors:

Essex Community Foundation was set up in 1996 and has established a grants programme which has seen nearly 3,000 Essex based charities and community groups receive over £11.2 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. www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Community Foundations are independent charities committed to supporting projects that engage local people. Since the 1980s, a nationwide network of Community Foundations has developed, endorsed by many major public figures and leading companies.

There are 1000's of charities and voluntary groups working for the community to create a richer society for all. Community Foundations build endowed funds and make grants to these organisations.

- There are 55 local Community Foundations in the UK covering 94% of the population
- Collectively they manage endowed funds of circa £200 million
- In 2006/07 Community Foundations distributed grants totalling £75million.