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Press release

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Inaugural community awards are launchpad for new regional charity arm

A new era of community and charity support arrived in the city last week as The Edgbaston Foundation was officially launched at a glittering gala awards dinner.

More than 300 of the city's professional and business leaders supported the inspiring event which raised more than £10,000. Held in the Great Hall at the University of Birmingham it was compered by ITV Central's Llewela Bailey.

Working under the remit of the Birmingham Foundation, the new charity arm will enhance the current charity and community support work undertaken in the Edgbaston district which includes nearby suburbs such as Harborne, Quinton and Bartley Green.

The event, funded by key sponsors including the One Edgbaston Partnership, Calthorpe Estates and The University of Birmingham, also played centre stage to the launch of the first Edgbaston Foundation awards, presented to spotlight those working already making a significant difference to those living in the more deprived districts of the area.

The One Edgbaston Partnership Award for Corporate and Social Responsibility was handed to The Lovell Partnership for the Quinzone Academy project at Four Dwellings secondary school. As well as making regular visits to the school, the Lovell team help to fund the academy which provides children with vocational skills such as construction.

The Calthorpe Estates Community Award went to Friction Arts. This organisation promotes art in the local community, encouraging local residents of all ages to participate by performing, painting or simply enjoying different art forms.

The final accolade of the evening, The University of Birmingham Volunteering Award, was won by The Saturday Morning Play Scheme. This is a student organised play group for children with special needs and disabilities. Each week the students take them to fun places around the area such as Think Tank, the Sea Life Centre and Whacky Warehouses!.

Roundy Rudell, chairman of the Edgbaston Foundation and a leading local businessman, said: "It is great that we can recognise the efforts of those making a difference in this area by these awards. It is our intention that they become established as an annual acknowledgment by the Edgbaston Foundation and regarded as a highlight in the city's social calendar."

"There are many opportunities for the Edgbaston Foundation to have a direct impact in this area and to make a tangible contribution to the local community. And the good news is that those who get involved along the way can also benefit from fulfilling their corporate social responsibility obligations in an efficient and effective manner.

"The next crucial step is to engage the wider business community and mobilise their support to ensure that we deliver on this fundamental aim."

David Bucknall, chairman of the Birmingham Foundation said: "2008 represents a milestone in the history of the Birmingham Foundation as it is the charity's tenth anniversary. It is with great pride that we can demonstrate its continued success by creating a desire in others to join our efforts in a very focussed approach.

The Birmingham Foundation has assisted many charity and volunteer organisations in and around Edgbaston. In the last twelve months children from Edgbaston and Sparkbrook were involved in a £6,000 project to design and build a play area at Martineau gardens, a two and half acre green space in the heart of Birmingham's inner city.

Chief executive of the Foundation, Derek Inman added his support by adding: “The launch event clearly showed that there is already a great deal of support among business leaders and Birmingham’s professional community for the Edgbaston Foundation, and I am looking forward to seeing the benefit to our communities in the future.”

Other recent projects included a workshop to create a theatre production at the Royal Shakespeare Company, funding the basic running costs for a local junior football team, providing water sports activities for young people aged between eight and 19, and providing a grant to help a Teddy Bear Hospital Society launch a service which addresses the fears that children between the ages of three and seven may have of doctors and hospitals.

Ends

Pictured: Professor Michael Clarke from the University of Birmingham presenting the award to Tom Cooke and Laura Stirling from the Saturday Morning Play Scheme.

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Notes for editors

For further information on Birmingham Foundation go to www.bhamfoundation.co.uk

The Birmingham Foundation is a charitable trust set up in 1995 raising funds from businesses and individuals to promote and support local voluntary / community groups and projects within the area of Greater Birmingham. It serves as a conduit between the region’s donors and doers and provides support through a programme of constructive grant making for people living within deprived and disadvantaged areas of Birmingham and the Black Country, reaching individuals through small grass-roots groups. During the last 12 months The Birmingham Foundation has awarded more than £3.3 million in grants to more than 900 local voluntary and community projects.