

SPECIAL 'THANK YOU' PUBLICATION FOR ALL OUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS

London Evening Standard



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December 2010

THE DISPOSSESSED FUND

£5M

■ OUR APPEAL TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF LONDONERS HAS REACHED AN INCREDIBLE NEW TOTAL... THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY

■ PRINCE WILLIAM HAILS 'EXTRAORDINARY' RESPONSE

PRINCE WILLIAM has described as "truly heartening and extraordinary" London's response to the Evening Standard campaign to help those in need in London.

As the Evening Standard announced that its campaign, The Dispossessed, has raised £5 million since it was launched just five months ago, Prince William said: "Londoners' overwhelming response to the Evening Standard's rallying call for The Dispossessed has been truly heartening and extraordinary."

"Your widespread generosity reflects the ethos of this campaign – that fighting poverty, in every form, is a challenge that we must all rise to meet."

"As the patron of Centrepoin, one of this country's leading homelessness charities for young people, I know just how devastating a lack of hope can be for

individuals, and for the communities around them.

"The Dispossessed Fund now exceeds £5 million, which is an amazing achievement. Your money will enormously help the local heroes who work tirelessly to lift people out of the grinding poverty that can blight our great capital. The money will restore hope and dignity to so many people."

"The work is far from over. There are still four children out of every 10 living below the poverty line here, in one of the richest cities in the world – a fact that is as shocking as it is unacceptable. But, so many congratulations on all your tremendous support so far."



HOW YOUR MONEY HELPS INSIDE **FATHER WHO HELPED MURDERED SON'S FRIENDS** BACK PAGE

Thank you Our Dispossessed Fund donors

We appealed for £1m

THE DISPOSSESSED FUND

The Evening Standard's mission to tackle the pockets of poverty that blight London has scaled new heights. **Joe Murphy** and **Mark Prigg** report on the community projects being helped to transform lives

Front page news: the Evening Standard launched the Dispossessed Fund on July 20, top left. We reached £500,000 on July 30, before reaching our original £1 million target on August 13. The total reached £4.5 million on September 14

WE appealed for £1 million to change the lives of the most needy. And you answered fivefold.

The vital mission of making our great city even greater has reached new heights with the news that the Evening Standard's Dispossessed Fund has topped £5 million.

The achievement blows away the original target of £1 million when the fund was launched five months ago with the aim of tackling the pockets of misery and hopelessness that disfigure our wealthy capital.

The £5 million barrier was broken following a major donation from investment bank JP Morgan.

Prince William launched the fund in July with a "call to arms" following our award-winning series of articles exposing dire poverty.

David Cameron hailed the "remarkable milestone" in a campaign that deliberately focuses help through very small community-based projects to achieve results where Whitehall's long arm often fails to reach.

At Christmas, it might be tempting to raise a glass to the "Prince and the Paper" and assume the work is done. In fact it is just beginning.

The fund is to be a permanent asset to London. Every penny will go to inspirational local charities that seek out Londoners who need and deserve your aid to transform their lives with effective, practical help.

People such as Nabil Ahmed who was orphaned at 15 when he was about to tackle his GCSEs and put aside his own ambitions to care for his two disabled brothers. Nabil's story could easily have ended in despair and abject poverty if he had not been found by City Gateway, a Tower Hamlets charity that helps give excluded Londoners training to get into work. Now 18, he has a job with RBS and a bright future.

What price for this precious gift of hope? The answer is amazingly little. The fund has granted £4,000 to City Gateway: not a fortune, but a sum that its charismatic founder Eddie Stride will use to transform lives.

We are now highlighting the charities which have been given grants, the superb work they do and the lives that have changed for the better.

A grant of £9,691 to the Aspire Foundation will enable 20 homeless people to launch their own businesses. People who were down and out will take control of their own destinies.

Another grant from the fund, of £10,000, is ensuring that 100 people, including migrant workers, former offenders and the homeless, get a daily hot meal, life skills and help into work through a frontline charity called Upper

HOW OUR CAMPAIGN WON THE HEARTS



BLBC (BRITISH LONDONERS BUSINESS COMMUNITY)

The BLBC tackles gangs, guns and knife crime by holding "community unity" meetings in which they ask parents and grandparents to take responsibility for their teenage children and their communities. Their mantra FUBU ("for you by you") has been taken up by hundreds of residents on estates in Brent. **Now:** A £5,000 grant from our fund has assured the group's future and will help them hire venues and publicise

meetings. Co-founder Michael Saunders, 53, says: "Since the Standard article, a councillor for Queen's Park ward has asked for our advice on rival postcode gangs, our MP has been in touch and the Brent Safety Network Team has contacted me to give a talk. We were invited by community radio stations, including one in Peckham, to explain our approach to gangs... It's a good start – there's a real appetite for our approach because we empower local people."



VINCENT MADUABUEKE

The 19-year-old dance student couldn't afford the £19 fee to apply to college. He was living on benefits of £50 a week in Islington, and applied for 32 jobs without being granted a single interview.

Now: The extraordinary response of hundreds of readers has transformed his life. One person working for Middlesex University arranged to have his Ucas fee waived, while

another at welfare-to-work agency Talent got him a Saturday job. He also received cheques and book tokens.

Mr Maduabueke said: "I got offers from three universities, and decided to take a gap year before starting at Roehampton in 2011. I currently work as a sorter for the Royal Mail and as a student ambassador at City of Islington college. I've also started my own dance group, God's Gift. The response to my story has made me feel more confident and optimistic about my life."

"This is a remarkable milestone in a campaign that is already changing the lives of people for the better"

David Cameron

Room in Hammersmith. William said: "Your money will enormously help the local heroes who work tirelessly to lift people out of the grinding poverty that can blight our great capital."

"The work is far from over. There are still four children out of every 10 living below the poverty line here, in one of the richest cities in the world – a fact that is as shocking as it is unacceptable. But, so many congratulations on all



Our Dispossessed Fund donors **Thank you**

to help the poor. You gave £5m

OF LONDONERS . . . AND THE SUPPORT OF YOUNG ROYAL



NABIL AHMED

The 18-year-old orphan, who looks after his two disabled brothers, was trying to escape the cycle of poverty and had begun a six-month apprenticeship in event management with Tower Hamlets charity City Gateway. He faced the prospect of returning to life on the dole when his apprenticeship finished last month.

Now: City Gateway's chief executive Eddie Stride said: "Royal Bank of Scotland have offered Nabil a job in event management off the back of the Standard article. He'll be earning the equivalent of £20,000 a year."

Nabil said: "It took a lot to speak out because I prefer to keep my problems private, but I'm glad I did so because it has changed my life. I've received a number of job offers, cheques totalling £150, as well as offers to buy in additional help to lighten the load of looking after my brothers."

"A City banker who got hold of me via the Standard has become my mentor. We meet monthly to discuss what's happening in my life and he gives me £100 a month to pay for evening care for my brothers. It's amazing and weird that Londoners I've never met have responded so compassionately to my story."



SANDRA SANCHEZ

The single mother of three from Hounslow catches a 4am night bus to earn £6.95 an hour as a Treasury cleaner and struggles to pay the rent. Her daughter Thiare, 14, said that if her Spanish-speaking mother was paid £7.85 an hour, the family wouldn't have to "eat lentils for a week".

Now: Ms Sanchez, 43, has received an increase of 20p an hour. Readers gave £500, which she used to reduce her £4,500 debt, another sent £500 for a laptop for Thiare, and several offered free English tuition. Matthew Bolton, of the London Living Wage campaign, said: "Sandra's story has put pressure on the Treasury to pay a living wage."



JOY MARLOW

The degree-educated office manager fell on hard times and ended up sleeping rough at Heathrow. Ms Marlow, 52, was categorised as "low priority" by social services, but thanks to Broadway Homeless Services and the Hillingdon Women's Centre's free legal advice and counselling she is no longer homeless.

Now: Readers sent cheques of £500 to the HWC, which faces hardship because of cuts, while the John Lewis Partnership contacted Ms Marlow to discuss finding her a position.

Ms Marlow said: "I'm still looking for a job. The HWC are central to rebuilding my sense of usefulness and wellbeing. There is still a long way to go."



MUSIC AND HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY

The weekly music workshop for disabled people in Tottenham faced closure until the Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund stepped in.

Now: Our £4,320 grant paid for the group's drummer and facilitator to continue until April.

The group's founder, Caroline Smart, 53, above, a multiple sclerosis sufferer who is unable to walk, says: "We received donations of £1,025 which allows us to further extend our group until June. I've also had emails offering administrative help which will become essential because my MS has deteriorated in recent weeks."



CHOIR WITH NO NAME

The choir for homeless people in King's Cross offers people who have hit rock bottom a sense of community, confidence-building and a hot meal once a week.

Now: A £4,650 grant from the Dispossessed Fund paid for the post-production costs of an album to showcase the group's work.

The group's founder, Marie Benton, 35, above, said: "Thanks to the Evening Standard, we are about to release our

CD called Album With No Name. We've had calls from four production companies wanting to make short films or documentaries about us and we're currently assessing the offers.

"Another reader got in touch to talk about collaborating on a lunchtime choir with bankers. Best of all, the effect on our choristers has been enormously positive. They are thrilled by the attention we've received and by the numerous opportunities that have come our way."

your tremendous support so far." It is an ethos that chimes with the latest political ideas about how community groups can be at the vanguard of social change, including the Prime Minister's Big Society crusade.

Mr Cameron said: "This is a remarkable milestone in a campaign that is already changing the lives of people for the better and tackling extreme poverty in our capital city. The Govern-

ment is proud to have matched the generous donations by readers of the Evening Standard, knowing that every penny will go to community-based schemes that give people the means to help themselves and to help others."

Charles Harman, head of UK investment banking at JP Morgan, said: "We congratulate the Evening Standard on achieving this monumental figure and are delighted to play our part. The

Dispossessed Fund is a terrific cause which strikes a chord with so many Londoners."

It all began as a compelling piece of journalism when our writers and photographers shone a spotlight on the continuing scandal of poverty in London. David Cohen, our award-winning feature writer, uncovered pauper graves in north London and the bleakness of flats a stone's throw from Canary Wharf.

This led to William's call for action and the launch of the fund itself on July 20. Since then, more than £2 million has been donated by the public and businesses. This money has been matched by the Government, which has also made available an extra £1 million from their Grassroots project.

Boris Johnson said: "This huge sum shows how Londoners really care and what makes our city so great." Stephen

Hammerley, chief executive of the Community Foundation Network, which is administering the fund, said: "This is a remarkable milestone for the Evening Standard, for all of the readers who contributed to the fund."

"But most of all it's a critical milestone for all those working to help people who are dispossessed and who are now being supported by money directed to them by the Evening Standard."

Thank you Our Dispossessed Fund donors

A father overcame his grief to mentor young Londoners – now our fund will help them guide children away from violence

THE DISPOSSESSED FUND

David Cohen

THE idea of mentoring children caught up in gang culture took root the day Les Persaud buried his 16-year-old son Stefan. The funeral was over and the house was full of Stefan's friends talking angrily about avenging his savage murder.

Mr Persaud knew they were hurting. They had been with Stefan when a minor row between him and another Croydon teenager, Tyrone Bailey, escalated. The group ran from Bailey and his Till Death gang, not realising that Stefan had turned back, unarmed, to face his tormentors.

The gang grabbed him, smashed his skull with bricks and a hammer, stabbed him repeatedly and dropped a paving stone on his head. Stefan, who had dreamed of becoming a lawyer, died 17 days later. Mr Persaud, devastated, could not help worrying that his son's volatile friends were about to make things worse by doing "something stupid".

"I found the strength to gather his friends together," said Mr Persaud, a 44-year-old IT expert. "I said, 'Please, I don't want to go to one more hospital or attend one more funeral – I don't want you to avenge my son's death. We will get over this together. I will become your Alex Ferguson."

"I don't think they had the faintest idea what I was on about. A few days later, I asked them to meet me at McDonald's in Croydon and 15 of Stefan's friends from Stanley Technical High School turned up.

"I told them that I would mentor them to reach their potential like my son never had, that if they liked, we'd meet every Tuesday night and I'd do my best to keep them away from crime and get them into college."

Mr Persaud was as good as his word. Of the 15 he began to mentor five years ago, 12 have completed college (five going on to university), two are training to be FA coaches, and none has fallen foul of the law. Mr Persaud and his son's friends, now in their early twenties, still meet every Tuesday for two hours.

But their focus has changed. Led by Mr Persaud, seven of the boys recently formed a group called Potential to give back to local youngsters what he had drummed into them – that life is all about making the right choices.

Their groundbreaking programme, the Options Project, is going into three Croydon primary schools and gives 11-year-olds strategies for coping with knives, guns and gangs. Mr Persaud has been attempting to raise the funds that will allow them to sustain and expand the scheme on a permanent basis. Now, thanks to the Dispossessed Fund,



Life lessons: Les Persaud and the group he mentored, friends of his son Stefan, below, who was killed aged 16 by a gang

'The murder of my son inspired me to help his friends lead a better life'

their plan has lift-off. We have approved a £3,700 grant to Potential that will allow it to go into 10 more primary schools, reaching another 300 children. Their grant is one of 12 – amounting to almost £70,000 – which the fund has approved.

The decision to give up time with his wife and two younger children, now 11 and nine, to help guide Stefan's friends into adulthood was a defining moment. "These guys had just seen their friend die," Mr Persaud said, his eyes welling with emotion. "Stefan was a bright, diligent boy – I never worried about him. And then one night I got a call to say, 'Come to the hospital, Stefan's been attacked', and my world crumbled."

At the Old Bailey in 2006, witnesses described how Stefan was attacked by 10 boys "like a pack of animals". Three were convicted of murder and will

serve a minimum of 14 years. A fourth was found guilty of manslaughter.

Junior Moore, 22, now doing a BA Hons at Ravensbourne college in south London, said: "I came to see Les as a father figure. Most of us do because, unlike Stefan, we were brought up by single mothers and never had fathers who got involved in our lives.

"When I thought of doing something silly I'd visualise Les's face and what his response would be. He'd done so much for us and only asked one thing in return – that we stay out of trouble. We didn't want to let him down."

The catalyst was an approach by Croydon police whose Safer Neighbourhoods Team asked in 2008 for advice on teenage violence. Out of meetings that ensued, they devised the Options Project to go into primary schools and deliver five one-hour sessions to Year 6 students.

"Each week is a different subject," said Mr Persaud. "The first session is how if you're with a group that attacks somebody, you're jointly responsible even if you do nothing. The message is clear: choose your friends carefully – you could ruin your life because of something they do. We also cover knives, guns, gangs, conflict management, how to respond to perceived insults, and when to seek help from adults."

Funding had been a stumbling block until Mr Persaud heard about the Dispossessed Fund. "I thought, 'That's us! We're doing exactly what the fund is about.' We're intervening at a critical age because these 11-year-olds are still open to listening to adults. There is no doubt in my mind that what we've done has saved lives."

What does he think Stefan would say were he to see what has been achieved in his name? Mr Persaud smiles. "I think he would be very happy that five years on, his dad is still hanging around with his friends, keeping them out of trouble."

HOW THE FUND KEEPS ON GIVING

SO FAR £1 million of the £5 million Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund has been handed out to more than 250 community organisations. Here we announce the first of the new round of grants from the remaining £4 million pot which has been endowed as a permanent fund. The income from this, estimated at £200,000 a year, will be given out annually.

IMPROVING MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

MERIDIAN MONEY ADVICE

What they do: Provide practical support for 1,000 poor people to reduce their debt and negotiate with creditors.

Amount awarded: £10,000.

Where: Greenwich.

Key area: Tackling financial stress, improving mental health.

How grant will be used: To fund a specialist adviser to work with people with mental health problems. The adviser will ensure clients get their welfare benefits and develop debt strategies.

How it can change lives: Reduces stress and anxiety.

BREATHE EASY BARKING AND DAGENHAM

What they do: A support group for people living with lung disease, it has grown from six to 98 members since being founded by a nurse in 2006.

Amount awarded: £2,670.

Where: Barking & Dagenham.

Key area: Improving mental and physical health.

How grant will be used: To fund 15 monthly "power of music" sessions to exercise the lungs and improve breathing, each session led by a choirmaster and a pianist, and with a concert at the end.

How it can change lives: Offers a sense of community to isolated members of society, most of whom are disabled and on low incomes.

The Buckhurst Parkinson's Support Group

What they do: Support, advice and assistance for Parkinson's disease sufferers and their carers.

Amount awarded: £2,500.

Where: Redbridge.

Key area: Improving mental and physical health.

How grant will be used: To provide a weekly keep-fit class designed for up to 50 people with Parkinson's who live independently.

How it can change lives: Regular exercise improves mobility and has a positive effect on morale.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

How was the money raised?

More than £2 million has been donated by generous readers and businesses across London and beyond. This money has been matched by the Government, which has also made available an extra £1 million from its Grassroots project.

How much has been given away?

So far £1 million of the £5 million

Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund has been given away in small grants to more than 250 community organisations across the capital.

What happens to the rest?

The remaining £4 million pot has been endowed to create a permanent fund to help the capital. The income, an estimated £200,000 each year,

will be given out as grants. This process is under way with an Evening Standard advisory board, headed by Editor Geordie Greig, agreeing grant applications for charities who apply.

How will the fund be managed?

Our partner, the Community Foundation Network, will manage the fund on behalf of the Evening Standard.

CFN is one of the leading independent grantmakers in the UK. It is responsible for collecting donations online, liaising with the Government to organise match-funding, and managing the grant allocation process through the local charities listed on the fund's web page.

Where will the money go?

It is being distributed to small charities

fighting poverty in five key areas: education; unemployment; tackling gangs, guns and knife crime; improving health; and homelessness, pensioner hardship and the working poor.

How do I apply for a grant?

All applications have to be made online. Go to www.standard.co.uk/dispossessed