

Out of darkness cometh light

Michael O'Connor, Chairman of the Worshipful Company of Environmental Cleaners' Charitable Trust, says that it's time to make more of the help we give to others.

The City of Wolverhampton's motto is 'Out of darkness cometh light'. Following the recent spate of terror attacks, this saying could also be associated with London and many other cities across the world. In the face of atrocity, we have seen people respond in the best way possible. Through their bravery, generosity, care and, in many cases, humour, our humanity has indeed come to outshine the darkness.

This really should come as no surprise. On the whole, people are good, kind and caring but it doesn't always seem that way – either because such behaviour doesn't normally make a good story in the media or people would rather keep their actions private. At the Environmental Cleaners we think more should be made of the good work people do for each other, after all, one of the primary purposes of a Livery Company is to look after the community it serves.

For us that means supporting education, the military and especially 'looking after our own', for example our members who have fallen on hard times or the dependents of members no longer with us.

Charity an essential component

There are many aspects to being a Member of a Livery Company and people have different reasons for joining, but making a contribution to our Charitable Trust is an essential part of membership of the Environmental Cleaners. We distribute approximately 4% of the Trust's capital every year to good causes, so we need to make sure that our investment returns are well above this level to grow our capital and continue this valuable work.

We have now raised over £1m through the Trust and Members' continuing contributions greatly assist with building up the capital base, to ensure future and growing investment income.

Supporting education

Among the recipients of our educational funding is Treloar's School and College which enables children and young people with physical disabilities to learn, achieve and gain an education. Treloar's work has a life-changing impact on students and it must raise £1.5m annually to support specialist services, including assistive technology, visual impairment, speech and language therapy, dietetic support, chaplaincy, work experience and transition support and music therapy, together with specialist medical equipment, vehicles, outdoor

spaces and sporting equipment. Around 170 children and young people currently live and learn at Treloar's.

Treloar's specialist services, facilities and residential houses are crucial to students leading a fulfilled and independent life and that success has been quantified by an excellent Ofsted inspection. Without donors, such as the Environmental Cleaners, Treloar's would not be able to educate students in such a holistic way and provide opportunities that would be unlikely to come from elsewhere.

Supporting the military

Each year, the Environmental Cleaners' holds a Military Awards Ceremony to recognise the work and achievements of medical staff in the military. It celebrates military doctors, environmental health technicians (EHTs) from the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and the RAF Environmental Health Cadre, and the WCEC's affiliated Cadet Units. Winners of the awards have gone on to have successful careers, including:

- Sgt Stuart Steele who went on to be commissioned within the RAMC and is now Officer Commanding the Environmental Health Training School in Lichfield.
- Cpl Damon Beaufoy has just finished a successful posting as Sgt Major Instructor at Lichfield and has just been promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 (the equivalent of an RSM).
- Cpl Sue Johnson (now McFarlane following her marriage) has completed successful tours of Iraq and Afghanistan, represents the Army at triathlon and road cycling, and has just been commissioned as an officer in the RAMC and became Captain McFarlane on 3 April 2017.
- LCpl Donovan Davey has recently been commissioned into the Royal Navy and is now Lt Davey RN.
- Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) Bullivant is currently the Officer Commanding of the RAMC Joint Services Health Unit in Cyprus and is shortly due to be promoted to Major and posted to the UK NATO HQ in Gloucestershire.
- Cpl Amponsah is now Staff Sgt Amponsah and has recently completed tours of Iraq and Kenya.
- Sgt Claire Steele is now Staff Sgt Steele and is currently Environmental Health Team Leader in one of the RAMC's two Operational Divisional HQs.

The Charitable Trust also presents annual bursaries to its military affiliates to support their vital work and promote environmental health.

The Trust has recently supported medical assist with detection dogs, and the new square at the National Arboretum with a York stone slab engraved with Company armorial bearings as well.

Supporting the City and beyond

Within our own industry, we assist in sponsoring, on an annual basis, the city and guilds awards and our own Founder's award. The Eric Hill Memorial Award goes to the college, training provider or company that has produced the greatest number of successful candidates in Cleaning Science and Cleaning Services Supervision qualifications during past year.

We support the City of London's annual Sustainable City Awards as part of its expert judging panel, and sponsor the Environmental Management in Small Business category. We also present a certificate and cheque to the Square Mile's Outstanding Sweeper of the Year, and the runner-up, in the City of London Corporation Clean City Awards

As a City institution we ensure our support reaches those in need in London and we've also made donations to hospitals, hospices and a number of national charities (including the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity and the British Heart Foundation) chosen in memory of members who have died recently.

The Board of our Charitable Trust invariably has difficult decisions to make when allocating funding, but we always look to bring light where there is darkness and show that whatever the issue, people care and will help.

www.wc-ec.com

The Worshipful Company of Environmental Cleaners is registered with the Charity Commissioners as No 271058.