



A (Charitable) Cause to Celebrate

Charles Russell Speechlys, a local business empowering young people in the community with vital skills through their Community Fund

A report by the Community Foundation for Surrey revealed that 10% of children in Surrey live in poverty, and over half of people in Surrey suffering from mental ill health had experienced symptoms by age 14. Local giving whether by individuals or by businesses is needed to continue to strengthen the communities we live in. We continue to be amazed by some of the family businesses we work with, who consistently ensure that charitable giving remains at the forefront of their corporate social responsibility programmes. We have the privilege of advising a large number of charity

clients, as well as businesses and individuals who support local causes, but we also ensure that we have first-hand experience of 'putting our money where our mouth is' and connecting with some truly inspiring projects.

In our Guildford office we are celebrating the third year of our own Charles Russell Speechlys Community Fund, through the Community Foundation for Surrey. It was launched in 2016 and focuses on employment, training and skills initiatives which support young people in Surrey to gain confidence and raise aspirations, providing

opportunities they would not otherwise have. It is too easy to forget that giving does not always need to be financial and our aim is to create a legacy for our community not just by handing out grants but also by giving our talents and time. Often the time we commit to support a cause we truly feel aligned with is invaluable to the organisation, and in addition has the added bonus of giving us that feeling that money can't buy! Our staff panel, who consider and award the grants we make, are really engaged and passionate about the projects which we have funded, bringing a real community feel to the office.

We strongly believe in building lasting relationships, not just with our clients, but also with the projects we support through our Community Fund through volunteering and providing ongoing support. We have been fortunate to see some of this support in action with one of our very first grant recipients, Godalming-based Skillway. We were delighted to initially provide funds to support their ongoing work with disadvantaged or disengaged young people in the local area, where they teach practical workshop skills including woodwork, furniture-making and metalwork.

The magic did not stop there and since getting to know Skillway better, we joined forces and asked them to build our 'Little Free Library', a free book exchange which is located outside our office at One London Square in Guildford. Opened in July by international best-selling author Adele Parks, it is a community asset where everyone is encouraged to 'take a book, return a book'. Reading has been proven to help mental health issues and we hope that the library is enjoyed by people of all ages within the local community. Please do pay us a visit if you are passing by!

To top it off, we have invited all of our local charity clients and contacts along with all of our previous grant recipients to our Charity party in October, where we will be joined by guest speaker Ruth Sutherland, CEO of Samaritans. Too often we can focus on the negative around us, and so we hope to raise a toast to celebrate the successes of our local community, showing how we can achieve great things by working together.

“Celebrating the third year of our own Charles Russell Speechlys Community Fund”

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If you are a charity and you are interested in funding opportunities from the Charles Russell Speechlys Community Fund, or if you are a business who is also looking to establish a corporate fund to engage staff and 'give something back', please contact Kate Peters at the Community Foundation for Surrey on info@CFSurrey.org.uk or on 01483 478092. ♦



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