

Giving young people a sporting chance

The Lord's Taverners donate over £2million a year to a variety of projects which are designed to give disadvantaged and disabled children a sporting chance. The charity, which was founded in 1950, has been a supporter of the Villa Real School in County Durham since 2001, helping to change the lives of hundreds of children.

THE VILLA REAL SCHOOL

The Villa Real School is a mixed day school for pupils who have severe, profound or complex and multiple learning difficulties.

The school actively encourages the pupils with learning difficulties to work alongside their peers in inclusive class groups. Pupils with autism, who usually find mixing in groups difficult, have a separate provision with scope for integration into the mainstream of the school when appropriate.

LENDING A HELPING HAND

The Lord's Taverners has supported The Villa Real School since 2001 when the charity provided the school with funding for an interactive multisensory hydrotherapy pool which transmits light and sound. These are important elements for the mental stimuli for children with severe learning difficulties.

The Lord's Taverners has continued to support The Villa Real School and in both 2006 and 2007 gave donations of £5,000 for outdoor activities equipment, including canoes and kayaks.

HEARING ABOUT THE LORD'S TAVERNERS

Andy Jack, Head of Outdoor Activities at Villa Real School:

"I was hired to teach at the Villa Real School three years ago as the Head of Outdoor Activities. I always wanted to get the children involved in kayaking and canoeing, as getting the children out on the water was never previously an option. Having researched some possible fundraising routes, I came across The Lord's Taverners. They sounded like the perfect charity to help as I found out they are dedicated to giving young people a sporting chance no matter what their ability or background."

Fiona Wood OBE, Headteacher at Villa Real School:

"We find it very difficult to get funding and grants. It is a very time consuming and laborious process and we just don't have the time to spare as all our hours are dedicated to the children. We would never be able to employ a fundraiser, as this would be the equivalent to a teacher's wages and having sufficient teaching staff is paramount to the school and the excellent reputation we've gained. So when we found out about The Lord's Taverners and their dedication to helping young people of all abilities and backgrounds we went straight to them."

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Leading edge

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The grants that The Lord's Taverners gave the school have enabled us to provide the children with sports that they wouldn't have the chance to participate in elsewhere. This has made a huge difference to these children's lives and their enthusiasm for these sports is beyond belief.

Fiona Wood OBE,
Headteacher at Villa Real School

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The sense of achievement that the children have after making a success of challenges before them and coming out with a huge smile on their faces, is so rewarding to me.

Andy Jack, Head of Outdoor Activities at Villa Real School

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PUTTING THE MONEY TO GOOD USE

Andy Jack, Head of Outdoor Activities
at Villa Real School:

“Since obtaining the grant from The Lord's Taverners, the children have gained so much. They have become hugely confident and have learned independence and water awareness. If we wanted to take the children out to do water-based activities prior to the grant, it would have been such a huge expense to the school to hire out equipment and trained supervisors; it simply wouldn't have been feasible. Now we can take the kids out on the water whenever we want.

The kayaks and canoes have expanded the opportunities that the children can participate in, as many of the children didn't know that the sports existed before. The children now have a desire to get involved in the sport and have become more physically active and are excited by taking part.

If it wasn't for the grant The Lord's Taverners has given to the school, the children would have to pay a lot of money to do these kinds of activities since many outdoor pursuits or sports centres don't have the facilities or trained professionals necessary to support children with special needs.

I didn't know much about children with special educational needs before I started at Villa Real School, but to be honest this is the best job I've ever had. The sense of achievement that the children have after making a success of challenges before them and coming out with a huge smile on their faces, is so rewarding.

The children have come along in leaps and

bounds in the sports and we even have one youngster who learned kayaking and canoeing at the Villa Real School going to the Special Olympics in Leicester next summer. This has all been made possible thanks to The Lord's Taverners funding.”

Fiona Wood OBE, Headteacher at Villa Real School:

“The grant that we received from The Lord's Taverners has been an amazing help to us. The Lord's Taverners saw that we are unique in that we provide all sorts of outdoor activities and sports to the children, some of whom have severe physical and learning difficulties. The grants that The Lord's Taverners gave the school have enabled



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Since Nathan was introduced to the canoes which were funded by The Lord's Taverners he has grown immensely. The activities have given him the tools he needs to get on with life. Nathan is no longer stuck in a world of his own, which autism brings, he is now able to interact with us, as well as others around him.

Andy Jack, Head of Outdoor Activities at Villa Real School

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us to provide the children with sports that they wouldn't have the chance to participate in elsewhere. This has made a huge difference to these children's lives and their enthusiasm for these sports is beyond belief.

“The Lord's Taverners also provided us with the lights and sound system for our interactive, multi-sensory hydrotherapy pool. This too has made a huge difference to the children, as sensory stimulation is incredibly important, especially to the children who have little or no verbal communication. Without The Lord's Taverners the children wouldn't have access to any of these facilities and we are truly grateful.”

THE REAL BENEFICIARIES

David Harrop, parent of Villa Real pupil, Nathan:

“Nathan has autistic and epileptic tendencies, so he was very wary of going out on the water. Nathan would watch the other children out in the canoes and then when he saw how much fun the other children were having, he jumped at the chance to get in the canoe and get out on the water and has since fallen in love with canoeing.

“The great thing about the Villa Real School is that the children get to decide what activity they want to participate in and the excellent instructors and teachers give the children the confidence they need to take part.

“Taking part in these sports also increases social interaction between the children, their peers and mates. This is a chance that they wouldn't necessarily have had elsewhere. If Nathan had joined a conventional out-of-school club he would have needed an adult with him at all times, so wouldn't have experienced the benefit of peer interaction. At the Villa Real School my wife and I have no worries about Nathan when he takes part in canoeing. We know that he is under fully qualified instruction, using incredibly safe equipment.

“Since Nathan was introduced to the canoes which were funded by The Lord's Taverners he has started to grow. The activities have given him the tools he needs to get on with real life. Nathan is no longer stuck in a world of his own, which autism brings, he is now able to interact with us, as well as others around him.

“Every child whether they have a disability or not should get the opportunity to live life to the full and be able to interact. Villa Real School gives them just that. The children are no longer segregated. They may have special needs, but they are special and they get to do special things.”

Leading edge

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The Lord's Taverners is one of the UK's leading youth sports and disability charities and cricket's official recreational charity.

The Lord's Taverners believes that sport and recreation are essential for children and young people to help them build their self-esteem, health, well-being and future social, personal and educational potential.

Our mission is to give a 'sporting chance' to young people in need; those who through physical, mental, social, environmental or economic disadvantage, not of their own making, would otherwise miss out.

We achieve this by encouraging participation in youth cricket, particularly in disadvantaged areas – providing grants towards non-turf pitches, funding for youth cricket competitions and donating hundreds of cricket bags to clubs and school teams across the UK.

Also, supporting recreational and sporting activities for youngsters with special needs – donating specially adapted minibuses and sports wheelchairs giving young people vital transportation and access to sport, and providing grants for play and sports equipment.

This year The Lord's Taverners will help tens of thousands of young people of all abilities and backgrounds participate in cricket and other sporting and recreational activities.

Our strongest sporting relationships are with the cricketing family, but we also work with other sports including tennis, basketball and rugby.

The Lord's Taverners benefits hugely from the support of The Lady Taverners, Young Lord's Taverners, our regions and 5,000 members, many of them drawn from the world of sport and entertainment.

For more information
please call: 020 7821 2828
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