

Charity's appeal gets off to winning start

By Rob Virtue on October 18, 2011 5:46 PM | **Tagged with:** Anchor House, Barry McGuigan, Canning Town, homeless

A homeless charity in Canning Town got the ball rolling on a fundraising appeal by making £1 million on the first night – with a former resident among those chipping in.

Anchor House is looking to raise £9.3 million to building apartments for those looking to take their big step towards independent living.

The appeal was launched at the Inner Temple in the City on Monday night at an event hosted by newsreader Julie Etchingham and attended by the likes of boxer Barry McGuigan and Big Issue founder John Bird.



On the night of the event alone, over £1 million was pledged from the 200 attendees to Anchor House, which gives shelter to those on the street and helps train them for work.

Part of that was a gift from former homeless man Danny Reisinger, who is now a sewing machine engineer. He donated £5,000.

As well as the cash, he also said he would donate sewing machines for residents of Anchor House to help them launch careers in fashion.

"This is just my way of giving back to Anchor House," said Danny. "The help and training they give to those who need it is truly amazing."

Danny arrived at the centre after falling on hard times when his employer at a pub did not pay him his wages.

He said a big part of the good work Anchor House does is down to its chief executive Keith Fernett.

"Things really started to improve around the time Keith arrived," he said. "There was much more communication and from that people got into training."



Monsignor John Armitage is chairman of the charity and said he had been involved with it from the beginning when as a youngster in the East End – as well as the son of a merchant seaman – he raised money to buy bricks to help fund the building.

Originally it was to help out of work dockers, before it became dedicated to supporting homeless people.

"What we're looking to do here is come up with some form of life plan to help them address what their particular issues are and help them," he said.

"It's not bed and breakfast – it's aspiration."

The charity has a strong track record in getting its residents, which are mostly referred by housing groups and prisons, back into work and independent living.

Barry McGuigan, who is one of the patron's of the charity, said he was won over by Anchor House after visiting the east London facility and talking to the residents.

He said: "Someone told me about Anchor House and I thought it was amazing. They really make people feel so much better about themselves.

"I know times are difficult at the moment but if you spend half an hour there you want to give all your money to the charity. It's good for your humanity."

Go to anchorhouseuk.org

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