



Microsoft Research Limited Fund

A fund established by Microsoft Research Limited, managed by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, offering grants to local charities and community groups.

MRL supporting the Cambridgeshire community

Introduction

This newsletter outlines some recent grants made from the MRL fund to help charitable and community projects in Cambridgeshire.

This shows how a few hundred pounds can make a huge difference to a project. Money from the fund has supported many different groups. In this issue, we show projects that have benefited from grants ranging from £500 to £1,000.

Grant criteria

Offering grants to charitable projects that meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Enrich lives of disadvantaged local people through provision of cultural/educational events or experiences.
2. Improve the local green environment through small scale projects.
3. Provide support or training to improve the employability of those facing disadvantage.

Projects that are open to the public or that make use of computing in their delivery will be favourably considered

Converted double-decker buses to gardens —MRL has funded a variety of projects

£1,000 has been awarded from the MRL fund to **EARTH** in Ely, Cambridgeshire. Adults and teenagers experiencing a range of disadvantages — such as learning and physical difficulties, young offenders



and those at risk of offending — all have the chance to gain horticultural skills at the EARTH project through training and work experience. Results include increased self

esteem, improved social skills and participants learn to work with, and respect, other people and work equipment.

And the local community can buy plants, compost and vegetables at a good price.

Those that participate in the project also assist Ely Council with maintaining and planting community beds throughout the city centre.



EARTH is also one of the charities featured on the Localgiving.com web site — a new simple approach to small donations online that will help you to support Cambridgeshire causes like **EARTH**

So, rather than buying cups of coffee during the week, staff may consider donating the money saved to a charity or voluntary group on www.localgiving.com/Cambridgeshire.

Sport, eating and unusual meeting places



Two converted double-decker buses provide an unusual drop-in centre for young people. £900 from the MRL fund has been awarded to the **Connections Bus Project** in

Histon. The charity's vision is to enable young people to fulfil their potential by providing free recreational, educational and personal development opportunities in Cambridgeshire and its environs.

The buses are an informal meeting place where young people can go to relax and also experience a range of positive and challenging activities, such as using computers with internet access, games consoles, crafts and games. There are also themed evenings held on subjects such as sexual health, alcohol awareness and healthy eating. Information and advice is available through leaflets, board games and quizzes.

Experienced youth workers are on hand to listen to, and offer advice on, young people's problems.

Cambridge Sport Network has received £500 from the MRL fund to contribute towards the costs of holding the first disability sport and art festival for children and adults in Cambridge in May 2011. The group opens up access to sport and physical activity for all in Cambridge city, irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, race or colour.

It promotes, improves and develops sport through training and education. The group increases the number and quality of coaches, officials, volunteers and young players participating in sport, making sure that they fulfill their potential.

By being in touch with the needs of the sporting community, **Cambridge Sport Network** ensures that the community's voice is heard for any strategies developed for sport in the City.

Mums About Food, based in Littleport, has received £900 to assist it in its quest to educate people in the local community to lead a healthier lifestyle.



The group, with seven volunteers and two full-time staff, works with all ages and abilities teaching them how to cook from scratch using local produce wherever possible, and runs healthy eating workshops across Cambridgeshire.



Get Involved

You can get involved in a number of ways:

1. Are there local community groups you know that would benefit from an MRL fund grant or any of the other funds that CCF manages?
2. Fund raise for the MRL Fund.
3. Think about volunteering for MRL fund projects. Find out more from the MRL fund panel.

The Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, an independent charity (1103314), makes grants to local grass root community groups. Individuals, families, business, public sector organisations, and other charitable trusts make this possible by setting up Funds with us.

Our purpose is to provide a grant-making and fund-management service to our donors, while supporting projects that make a real difference to the quality of life for local people. Since set up in early 2004 the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, working in partnership with local and national businesses, charitable trusts, local government and individuals, has distributed over £4.5m to 1500 groups across Cambridgeshire.
