

Client: Hilton International
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Life IN CHARITIES BOOST

COMMUNITY CASH THE SIX WINNING APPLICANTS

£10,000 is gifted to worthy local causes

By Christopher Woodhouse

LOCAL charities are in the money after Hilton Hotels and Sunday Life teamed up once again for a £10,000 cash giveaway.

The six lucky charities gathered for the Hilton in the Community Foundation awards at the riverside Sonoma Restaurant in the Hilton Hotel Belfast on Tuesday.

This £10k giveaway is funded by the Hilton in the Community Foundation with the purpose of helping local charities, run mostly by volunteers, and who are working to provide children and young people with a brighter future.

Now in its third year in Northern Ireland, the £10k is raised by staff from Hilton Belfast and Hilton Templepatrick Hotel & Country Club and distributed between the winning applicants.

After judging in London and Northern Ireland this year's list of 86 applications was whittled down to just six.

Hilton Area General Manager for Northern Ireland, Mark Walker, was the man with the big chequebook on the day.

He explained: "The foundation as a charity within Hilton has been going now for 11 years in the UK and Ireland — in those eleven years the foundation has raised over £10 million.

"The whole amount has been raised within the hotels, we have a duty as part of our working for Hilton to raise money every year, in Northern Ireland last year we raised £18,000.

"Today we are giving away £10,000 in conjunction with Sunday Life, last year the foundation gave out 610 grants across the UK and Ireland and to acute disaster areas around the world.

DIFFERENCE

"We try to help smaller charities where the money can make a real difference, every pound we raise goes straight back into the communities in which we work."

Sunday Life Editor Martin Breen, said: "We've read all the entries and submissions and you're all very worthy recipients of these awards, you put us all to shame in terms of the work you do.

"A lot of the time you don't get the thanks that you

deserve and Hilton giving out this money is our way of saying thanks.

"Sunday Life likes to make a difference in communities across Northern Ireland, that's why we partner year after year on this event.

"This initiative enables charities like you, who maybe don't have the funding opportunities that the bigger charities do, to get the funding you deserve."

Pre-school co-ordinator Kathy Doherty, from St Colmcille's Pre-School Playgroup in east Belfast, was delighted at their award of £1,800, which she says will go towards renovating their outdoor space.

Kathy said: "We want to put in a sanctuary garden, walkways and a cycling area for the children.

BENEFIT

"We have 70 children this year, a fair percentage would have English as an additional language so being able to see lots of different things will help them settle."

Another group to benefit was Allergy NI and their Chief Executive Maureen Paul was glad to accept a cheque for £1,960, which will help them bridge the gap between patients and the NHS.

Maureen said that the money will help them put on workshops and activity days for children, teenagers and parents to allow them to take ownership of their allergy.

Dungannon based Speedwell Trust, a cross community children's charity, was richer to the tune of £750 which manager Eamon McClean will put to good use.

"In our secret garden, where we bring special needs and nursery



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children, there is a wooden walkway, built in 1996, that has fallen into to disrepair.

"It will be repaired so that wheelchairs and children with special needs can come along and enjoy the forest."

The Blue Houses Community Drop-In Centre in Ballysillan in north Belfast, was awarded £2,000 by Hilton, which will help them deal with issues affecting young people in the area.

Laura Farrell from Blue Houses, said: "There are a lot of issues affecting young people in the area, whether it's family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse, influence of paramilitaries or unemployment.

"We want to help young people grow, develop and reach their full potential through things like employment training and cross community work.

DELIGHTED

"Over the next year we would like to pilot new programmes for our juniors, like group work to help them learn and grow and develop into the people that they can be."

The Northern Ireland Kidney Patient Association (NIKPA) and their representative Hazel Gibson were delighted to receive £1,200 from Hilton.

The charity supports children who have to come to Belfast three times a week for dialysis as well as those waiting for transplants.

Hazel said: "Every year we take around 130 children and their

siblings to the Grand Opera House in Belfast for a fun day where they can get away from the hospital and meet other children who live day and daily with what they have.

"It's something the children really enjoy as they can forget about their problems for an afternoon and those of us who are younger at heart really enjoy it as well, mixing with families outside the clinical environment of the hospital."

The Hilton in the Community Foundation also funded Dundrum Cross Community Play Group which was the happy recipient of

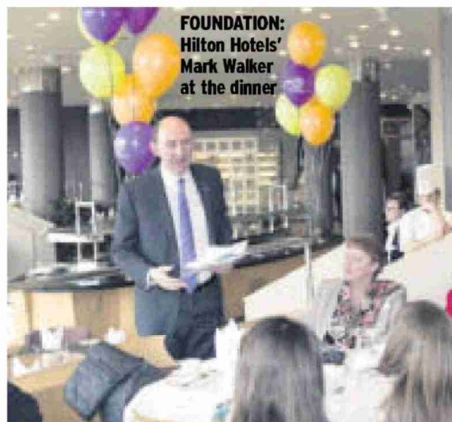
£1,200. Christine Cummins from the group said it will make possible much needed improvements.

"The playgroup started 15 years ago and the tables and chairs needed to be updated.

"Also over the last few years we have experience with children with special needs and learning

disabilities and we feel that some specialised furniture will enable them to take part in all the activities."

■ *If you want to be part of the fund raising for the Hilton in the Community Awards, the next annual charity golf day on September 11, at Hilton Templepatrick Hotel & Country Club. The day includes a team fourball, prizes, dinner and entertainment. Cost £400. For further details, email catherine.williamson@hilton.com*



VERY GRATEFUL: St Colmcille's Playgroup and NIKPA



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SUPPORT: Hilton Area Manager Mark Walker and Sunday Life's Martin Breen presenting cheques to Allergy NI and Blue Houses



WORTHY RECIPIENTS: Local charities Speedwell Trust and Dundrum Cross Community Playgroup are awarded cheques



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MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE: Hilton Area General Manager Mark Walker, Hilton Templepatrick manager Paula Collins and Sunday Life Editor Martin Breen with the lucky applicants