

## **COMPANY OF EDUCATORS' CHARITABLE TRUST**

### **ANNUAL AWARDS 18 JUNE 2010**

#### **Introduction to Prizewinners by the Chairman of the Trust Fund, Mrs Susan Fey OBE.**

Master, Wardens, My Lord, Freeman, guests, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Trustees to welcome you to our second annual awards presentation.

The context is taken from the first of our Charitable Objects:

*'to reward excellence and innovation in their achievement and training in order to encourage both students and their mentors to undertake , and the public to appreciate, the work of educators.'*

Our interpretation of this Object is derived from the belief that there are so many deeply committed educators who work away every day doing really interesting and inspiring things for learners but who may not have many opportunities for recognition outside their immediate circle – and, possibly, not inside it either.

As last year, we asked our fellow Guild members to make nominations accompanied by a short citation describing the achievements of those nominated. The theme for 2010 is 'Inspirational Educators' in the belief that inspirational educators make for motivated learners. We asked for nominations from primary, secondary, further and higher education and in lifelong learning.

A panel of judges was drawn from the Freedom (with thanks to all those who volunteered), chaired by our then Upper Warden, Professor Ray Clark.

We will also be presenting the Annual Master's Award, chosen by Immediate Past Master Dr Yvonne Burne.

#### **PRIMARY EDUCATION**

##### **JANET MOFFAT**

Nominated by: Freeman Michael Pickersgill

Judges: Freeman Dr Ruth Eade and Dr Raphael Wilkins

Janet Moffat has been Headteacher of Melcombe Primary School in Hammersmith for 15 years, a large school with all the characteristics, complexities and problems of the inner city. When she arrived, it was

described as a school in decline. It had been badly led and managed, staff and pupil expectations were low, the quality of teaching and learning was variable, the behaviour of children was poor. Janet set out a whole school learning strategy. The essential factors are described through an acronym BASICS. Children have to have a sense of BELONGING; they need to know where they are going: ASPIRATION; they need to feel SAFE; and to feel proud of who they are so their INDIVIDUALITY is celebrated; CHALLENGE is crucial for the children to be SUCCESSFUL learners.

It has taken 10 years fully to embed the practices in the school, during the whole of which time Janet has continued to teach everyday.

Did it work? The 2008 OFSTED report records that the results are above average, pupils' personal development is outstanding; they have excellent attitudes towards learning; they feel respected and included.

And – I quote: 'The success is in large measure a result of the outstanding leadership of the Headteacher, whose vision, commitment and passion is an inspiration to staff and pupils alike.'

The judges concluded that Janet's role has clearly been that of an agent of change in turning a challenging school to 'face the sun'

Master – I present to you Janet Moffat.

## **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**JOHN AHERN**

**Nominated by: Freeman Professor Peter Briggs and Dame Mary Richardson**

**Judges: Freeman Caroline Haines and Susan Cousin**

John Ahern has been a teacher at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Reigate for all his professional life. This is a state boarding school combining boarding and day pupils. A significant number of the boarders have free places – for them it is an alternative to being taken into care.

In 2000 the school was placed in special measures. A number of the senior staff left and John was promoted from Head of PE to Deputy Head and Director of Studies, in which role he has played a major part in taking the school from special measures in 2000 to Outstanding in 2008 with a consistent record of being in the top 5% for Value Added. John has inspired and encouraged pupils to succeed by his management of their GCSE choices; he has inspired and motivated his team of Heads of Department; he has demonstrated creativity in

developing teaching and learning, particularly for the benefit of those who are not motivated by a traditional paper-based curriculum, including BTEC courses, for instance in Countryside and the Environment and in Horse Care.

The judges concluded that it is due to John's inspirational but unflashy leadership, rooted in genuine interest in pupils and colleagues, that a failing school has been turned into a high-performing Specialist School.

Master – I present to you John Ahern

## **FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION SECTORS**

### **GLYN POTTS**

**Nominated by: Freeman Edward Woods**

**Judges: Freeman Anthony Farnath and Amanda Taylor**

Glyn Potts is Head of Public Services at Our Lady's RC High School in Royton, a deprived area of Greater Manchester with a very high proportion of NEETs, in particular among white working class boys.

At this point you may be asking is this in the wrong category? This is a High School. It is not as simple as that and serves to demonstrate that we should beware of putting educators in neatly-labelled boxes

Listen on.

In his spare time he is a volunteer officer in the Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force (ACF). The ACF rented the school premises in the evenings for a detachment of teenage cadets – an activity unconnected with the school. However, being an ACF volunteer as well as a teacher, Glyn had a foot in both camps and became well aware of the synergy between these post-school activities and behavioural improvement.

He approached his Headteacher and the Cadet Vocational Qualifications Organisation (CVQO) to use his experience that despite underachieving academically, many cadets were successful vocational learners in a post school environment. To cut a long story short, Glyn persuaded the school to refocus in order to build on these strengths through a Public Services Course, using CVQO.

Did it work? For the past 3 years the school has been judged as one of the top 10 of Most Improved Schools with Specialist Status. From what had been a small evening detachment of 20 cadets, Our Lady's is now the BTEC Public Services hub for Oldham Borough with some 200 cadets and 4 full-time staff. The school is seen as a national model. Ofsted has acknowledged a novel solution to the problem of breaking the cycle of

failure in young people's lives. As if this were not enough, Glyn has motivated Adult Volunteers to gain vocational qualifications up to Master's Degree equivalent. Better training of adult staff has improved the drop-out rate of senior cadets on out-of school vocational qualifications from 68% to 5% over 2 years.

An example of innovation, resourcefulness, inspirational leadership.

Master – I present to you Glyn Potts.

## **LIFELONG LEARNING**

### **PETER POWELL**

**Nominated by Freeman Barbara Stitt**

**Judges: Freeman Professor Anthony McClaran and Eric Watts**

ESPA (Education and Services for People with Autism) is a charity that provides services for people with autism and related conditions.

Peter Powell is the manager of one of ESPA's residential homes – Orchard House, in Seaham, County Durham. Peter has been with ESPA for 15 years; he was a miner until the demise of the mining industry in the North-East.

Peter leads a team of 20. There are 6 residents of Orchard House, all adults, each of whom lies at the extreme end of the autism spectrum. They cannot speak, often have behavioural difficulties; they require constant help to deal with the simplest tasks in everyday life. Education is a key focus for the residents. Every six months, learning objectives are set and re-set for each resident: to use cutlery; personal hygiene; to sit quietly, not to disrupt others, to be able to go for a drink in a pub. This can be a daunting task when the individual is 60 years old, hyperactive, unable to communicate even when distressed. It often takes months, even years, to see progress, learning has to be a constant and is truly lifelong. Peter leads a team including specialists like psychiatrists, behaviour specialists, occupational therapists; together they develop a unique and specific programme for each resident, designed to enhance their quality of life and extend their range of learning opportunities and experiences. Peter's leadership has to ensure that staff remain motivated and inspired in the face of what to most of us would seem such impossibly slow progress; he also has to ensure that new team members are trained and motivated.

I have nothing to do with the judging but I have to confess that I was willing the judges to choose Peter Powell, an inspiring educator truly deserving of recognition and appreciation.

Master – I present to you Peter Powell

## **MASTER'S AWARD**

### **SEAN CANTY**

Choice of Immediate Past Master, Dr Yvonne Burns who will herself present the award

Sean is a Ph.D student at the City University. He left school early to take an apprenticeship and made the decision to enter university later in his life, going on to take a degree in Mechanical Engineering and now a Ph.D.

The City University has run a City Karting Project (GO-Karts) for 6 years as part of its Widening Participation and Community Engagement work. Sean has worked with it since its inception, first as a student volunteer. He now has responsibility for the whole programme. The project runs annually over 3 months. It involves working with some 20 young people from neighbourhood schools who would not normally consider continuing to Further or Higher Education. They learn about Engineering and Applied Mathematics through a mixture of lectures, workshops and track days, culminating in building Karts which they then race.

All those involved give feedback on a weekly basis through which Sean has developed more interactive lectures, added an element of competition through the Headstart scheme and developed weekly mathematics tasks and quizzes to check the young people's understanding. This has led to the highest ever participation and attendance rates.

Sean's infectious enthusiasm, ability to explain technical information in easily understandable chunks, his gift of engaging and educating young people from across Islington demonstrates how inspirational leadership can unlock the potential of young people and enable them to do things they never thought possible.

The young people the Master spoke to were enthusiastic and described without realising it textbook cases of learning and understanding through doing; their achievements were impressive. Everyone spoke of how Sean had transformed the project.

The Widening Participation and Community Engagement Coordinator at the City University says 'Sean is able to help unleash this potential in the young people by the innovative approach he takes to teaching them both through theory and practice and also because he is an inspiring role model.'

Immediate Past Master – I present to you Sean Canty