The Emergency Online Charity Auction Raises Over £50,000 – THANK YOU!

Our Emergency Online Auction ran live from the 7th - 16th June 2020, raising a total of £53,300. This means that, when added to our previous additional donation, with your help the Distillers’ Charity has donated over £100,000 to The Drinks Trust since March.

We thank everyone who contributed rare & unique bottles, as well as other items which generated so much interest. Worthy of particular mention are the barrel of Caroni 1998 Rum, donated by John Barrett of Bristol Spirits Limited, which raised £21,500, and a Bowmore 1963 30th anniversary bottle donated by Past Master Brian Morrison, which achieved a single bottle record of £6,000. A huge thanks is also owed to Isabel, Sukhinder and the team at Whisky.Auction. Without their professionalism and generosity, our charitable initiative would not have been possible.

We felt it important in this issue of Spirited to highlight the success of our Emergency Auction and what the Livery’s charitable goals can deliver. 100% of the proceeds were donated to support The Drinks Trust’s COVID 19 Emergency Appeal, helping those in our industry in need of support right now and in the coming weeks and months.

It has been so important at this time to actively support our key charity partners, including The Drinks Trust. Above all, we want to share with you the impact that your efforts have made towards those in our industry who are currently being supported by The Drinks Trust. This quote - from one of the many notes received from a beneficiary of The Drinks Trust - highlights the difference that a single grant can make:

“I would just like to say a massive thank you to everyone involved in this grant! It’s going to help me out massively with bills and being able to eat for the next few months. Relieves some anxiety for sure. I really do appreciate it!”

Thank you again for your support – what an effort of solidarity this was, on behalf of those colleagues in our wider team who are most in need at this time.

Chris Porter
Middle Warden and member of the Distillers’ Charity Committee

The Drinks Trust – Providing over 1750 beneficiaries with emergency grants

In March 2020, The Drinks Trust was unveiled as the new name for The Wine & Spirit Trades Benevolent Society (known as the Benevolent). Since 1886, the charity has provided care and support to the people from the drinks industry workforce, and this remains at the core of our charitable work. The Drinks Trust’s purpose is to assist people in building successful careers and to support a healthy and productive workforce.

Faced with the COVID-19 crisis, The Drinks Trust focused its support on individuals in the drinks industry, many of whom have been affected by the pandemic. Generous donations and fundraising initiatives, as well as support from its business partners, produced over $1.5m in income. Fundraising initiatives included the generous support from the Distillers’ Charity through their donation, supplemented by the very successful online auction which featured donated lots from members of the Worshipful Company; together, these initiatives have provided over $100,000 in financial support.

This has allowed the Trust to support over 350 regular beneficiaries, as well as providing 1750 beneficiaries who are facing a financial crisis as a result of COVID 19 with a one-off financial grant of $250 via the COVID-19 Emergency Fund. The Drinks Trust identified where the need was greatest, especially among younger members of the trade, and recorded some key statistics: 31% of grant recipients had already been made redundant due to COVID-19; 70% of successful grant applicants stated that they are sole household earners; and 19% of grant recipients had at least one dependent child.

CEO Ross Carter said: “The Drinks Trust is funded by industry donor businesses through events and the fundraising efforts of its community. None of this would have been possible without the generosity and support from all areas of the drinks industry. We are exceptionally grateful to everyone at the Worshipful Company of Distillers who has supported us at this difficult time and we look forward to working together in the future.”

Lucy Marcuson
Drinks Trust, Marketing Manager

The Distillers’ Charity Newsletter – 5th Edition 2020

In association with the WHISKY AUCTION

Chris Porter
Middle Warden and member of the Distillers’ Charity Committee

SPIRITED 2020
The Ben – Tailoring assistance to people’s specific needs

The Ben was formed in 1976 when the Scottish Wine and Spirit Merchants’ Benevolent Institution (founded in 1864) and East of Scotland Licensed Trade Benevolent Institution (founded in 1887) joined forces. Throughout its 156-year history, The Ben has assisted the needy in the licensed trade in Scotland and has recently added coverage of the hospitality industry.

Governed by a board of volunteer directors from throughout the trade, The Ben assists over 100 beneficiaries annually with a team of visitors who cover the whole of Scotland, lending social contact and friendship. The Ben’s team keep in regular contact with them, monitoring how isolation is affecting them, and the organisation’s mental health helpline is another means to assist those who feel overwhelmed.

With COVID-19 hitting many people hard, The Ben was – unsurprisingly - inundated with requests for help from industry employees in distress, and the charity reacted immediately making this a focus. Each case, including those of emergency hardship payments, is treated individually: assistance is tailored to the person’s specific needs and all the time continues to support the charity’s historic beneficiaries.

Having support through this period of national emergency has been vital, with funding coming from The Drinks Trust’s COVID-19 Emergency Appeal, which the Distillers’ Charity has supported. The organisation has also been able to rely on the industry to support their crucial work.

Chris Gardner
Chief Executive, The Ben

The Connection at St Martin’s – the Masters’ Charity for 2018/19

The Connection at St Martin’s helps thousands of people every year to move away from, and stay off, the streets of London. The Connection does this by tackling the underlying causes of rough sleeping, as well as offering practical help and providing tailored employment support and training, volunteering opportunities, and housing advice. The organisation also provides specialist services to help clients cope with the physical and psychological effects of being homeless.

In addition, the charity provides a range of activity groups which reduce isolation and encourage people to explore or discover new interests. These activities include art, digital skills, gardening and mindfulness, as well as help with addressing problems such as anger or gambling. Offering hot meals and showers, access to medical appointments, and somewhere warm and safe to sleep in the Connection’s Emergency Accommodation are just a few other ways in which the charity helps its beneficiaries. In 2019, the Connection helped over 2,600 people on their journey away from homelessness.

Immediate Past Master Martin Riley said, “As our founder is buried in the crypt of St Martin in the Fields, I felt it appropriate to link with a charity based at this church. Homelessness is such an acute social problem and one we see all around us, so it seemed right for the Distillers’ Charity to support this organisation during my year as Master. We presented cheques to them at our Livery Founder’s Day celebration in October 2019 where the CEO of The Connection, Pam Orchard, expressed her thanks and appreciation to the Livery.”

Martin Riley
Immediate Past-Master
The roots of the Livery lie in vocational endeavour and reinforce our aim to be ‘at the hub of the industry’. In light of this, the Livery Working Group for Vocational Training (VT), under Past Master Richard Watling, was created in mid-2019 and undertook research among training partners, scholars, corporate associates and member SMEs. We now know the impact of our current activities and are much clearer on ways that the WCD can align its VT charitable mission with today’s needs.

One key takeaway is that there is a great desire for training and career support – especially among younger and aspiring members of the industry, and smaller companies – with opportunities for work experience and mentoring. Bursaries and scholarships are much appreciated, but their scale is modest, and their impact is limited.

The next steps include a full review of our awards, with a view to granting larger and better targeted bursaries and scholarships that will make a real difference. We will create much stronger partnerships with training providers that recognise needs in new subjects, particularly in more commercial areas. We have also developed a mentoring programme to launch in 2021, and at the same time, we are developing a wide range of other means to deliver vocational support that will include knowledge capture, signposting, work experience and networking. In the next 12-36 months, there will be plenty of opportunity for Liverymen to support these initiatives with their experience and industry knowledge.

Clive Bairsto  
WCD Development Director

Alcohol Education Trust (AET) – Making remote learning engaging and interactive

The week before lockdown happened, the AET held workshops and training for more than five thousand young people, teachers and parents. These included students at UCL, parents and students at Hammersmith Academy, school nurses in North Yorkshire, and youth workers at Onside Youth Zones. Suddenly, everything was postponed or cancelled, leaving the rug pulled from under us. No one could imagine how long lockdown would last, but we knew it would probably be a long time before we would be able to have any face-to-face engagement with our groups of young people and adults.

With the majority of schools only remaining open for the children of key workers and the most vulnerable, the AET has continued to ensure that young people have had access to our Talk About Alcohol programme; we have maintained our support throughout lockdown by engaging digitally through www.talkaboutalcohol.com. 1,000 visitors attended our virtual nightclub alone on one day in April, and all lesson plans, film clips and resources are freely available online for teachers and youth professionals via www.alcoholeducationtrust.org. This was particularly important with health education becoming mandatory from this September; it was crucial that we adapt our face-to-face training to an online platform.

Thank goodness for Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Jamboard, all of which have made remote learning engaging and interactive. We’ve had to learn fast and are still improving; remote learning will never replace our day-to-day work, but it has increased the number of ways that we can engage. We can’t wait to get back out into the field and away from our laptops to resume doing what AET does best, nudging young people into wiser decision-making, equipped with the knowledge, skills and resilience to keep themselves and their friends safe around alcohol.

Helena Conibear  
Founder & Director, Alcohol Education Trust
Future Youth Zone – Supporting young people and the community through COVID-19

When lockdown started, Future Youth Zone responded overnight, relaunching an alternative service to continue supporting their community. The Youth Zone focused on remotely supporting hundreds of young people a week through phone calls, Zoom sessions and online activities, and providing emergency community support, delivering medicine or food to anyone in need in their neighbouring wards. From June, Future started outreach youth work in parks and stations, establishing a presence in the community and having conversations with young people.

The Future Youth Zone team have developed their ‘Back to the Future’ strategy to transition the organisation into the expected post COVID-19 environment. Over the summer, the Zone will start supporting 180 young people through their holiday club. This will give small groups of the most vulnerable young people access to fun, safe and inspiring activities and educational sessions, all supported by youth workers who will help them reflect on their experiences.

Gavin Evans
Chief Executive, Future Youth Zone

Distillers’ Charity – Message of Appreciation

In this 5th annual edition of Spirited, we pay thanks to the outstanding response of our Livery, which has reached out to support industry colleagues who have suffered hardship as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Our features on The Drinks Trust & The Ben both tell this story, recording the generosity of members who responded to the Distillers’ Charity emergency appeal by collectively donating £34,000, and of those who helped make the Charity Auction a great success. Together these initiatives have enabled our charity to pledge over £100,000 to The Drinks Trust’s Emergency COVID-19 Appeal, while honouring our historical charitable pledges.

Our traditional beneficiaries have also been affected by the crisis and have had to work hard to adapt the delivery of their services to beneficiaries. Inside this edition we recorded how the Alcohol Education Trust and Future Zone in Barking & Dagenham have both responded in the face of very challenging circumstances. Throughout the crisis we have also continued to work with our vocational training partners WSET, Heriot-Watt and IBD, supporting our bursars and scholars. The Livery’s charitable activity has arguably never been busier, or its funds more needed, than at this time. In 2019, our collective efforts contributed to raising a record £65,000 for our annual fund, and we have already greatly surpassed that level in 2020. Thank you, on behalf of the Distillers’ Charity, for your commitment to the common good, and your generosity during these most extraordinary of times.

Grant Gordon
Distillers’ Charity Chairman