

SUSTAIN DOING BUSINESS



Support for the Third Sector from Solihull's business community

Could you use a little help refurbishing a room? Or specialist skills and training? Maybe even some equipment or a venue for a meeting or event?

Increasing numbers of companies are getting involved in **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**. CSR is where a company gives something back to the local community. This could be providing a team of volunteers to complete a neighbourhood project, or free advice and expertise to help a charity operate more effectively.

For Third Sector organisations, CSR is an invaluable resource of time and skills that can help them to develop and achieve.

For companies, it is an opportunity to be innovative and lead, to enhance their integrity and develop employees.

“CSR is not simply about investing in communities to help resolve social problems... it is about the integrity with which a company governs itself, fulfils its mission, lives by its values, engages with its stakeholders, measures its impacts and reports on its activities” (DTI Corporate Responsibility Group, 2003)

How can CSR help your organisation?

TEAM CHALLENGE	This is where a team of people support an organisation with a one-session activity such as refurbishing a room or making-over a garden.
PRO HELP	One-off professional help in areas such as accounting, law, planning, quality, IT, HR or marketing. In some cases, a pro bono meeting can lead to paid professional work.
MENTOR	Typically a once a month session offering professional expertise to oversee an organisation through a period of change.
PRO EVENT	A basic training or instruction session in a specialist skill, set-up for several organisations sharing the same need.
VENUE	Some companies offer free or reduced cost room hire for voluntary and community organisations. The SUSTAIN website provides a search facility of venues, including those available through CSR.
EQUIPMENT	Often companies replace equipment while it is still in good condition. SUSTAIN regularly receives offers of donated office furniture and equipment.
VOLUNTEER	As relationships grow individuals may want to assist an organisation with skilled help by becoming a Trustee or volunteer, applying skills into new areas and developing personal talent. Prospective employers also look for community involvement on CVs or as an added bonus for career development.
PARTNER	Some companies will develop an on-going relationship with a community based organisation. Such a partnership may provide many opportunities as the relationship between the organisations grows.

CSR in action

National Grid make-over Smiths Wood Children's Centre

Staff from the accounts department at National Grid Metering Services swapped calculators for cutters as they transformed the grounds of Smiths Wood Children's Centre.

The outdoor play area had become overgrown and hazardous, meaning the children were unable to explore their surroundings.

But after a day of hard graft, the centre was given a new lease of life, and has gone on to attract new customers to enjoy its woodland backdrop.

Susan Harper, manager at the centre's Wood 'n' Tots nursery, said: "the difference the National Grid team has made is just amazing. The grounds are now much safer and cleaner, and it feels so much more relaxed. It's like walking into a completely different place."



Smith's Wood Children's Centre and National Grid enjoy the new garden

Members sit in comfort at Castle Bromwich Cricket Club thanks to NEC group



Castle Bromwich Cricket Club test out the new chairs as Martin Clarke looks on

When the International Convention Centre refitted its conference facilities, almost 300 chairs were ready to hit the skip.

But word of SUSTAIN's CSR work had spread, and instead, the unwanted furniture found a new home at Castle Bromwich Cricket Club.

The donation speeded along the club's refurbishment, which had relied entirely on the hard work of volunteers.

Club Secretary, Paul Messenger, was delighted with the donation: "the chairs have been a huge benefit to us. Our old furniture was over 20 years old – now we have more comfortable facilities, and hopefully a place where local people and families will want to keep coming back to."

Interested?

SUSTAIN is continually securing new support for Third Sector organisations from local businesses, with a dedicated Business Advisor who can match your needs to the help that is available. Let us know what it is you need, or if you are unsure, give us a call to see how we might be able to help you.

Contact Martin Clarke, Business Advisor on **0121 711 3148** or csr@solihull-sustain.org.uk.

