

## Norwood's Annual Dinner announces Royal Patron visit by the Queen

18 November 2008



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At the Annual Dinner at The Grosvenor House, Norwood's President, Richard Desmond, made a surprise announcement of the forthcoming visit by the organisation's Royal Patron, Her Majesty The Queen. She will visit Ravenswood in Berkshire, Norwood's residential community for adults with learning disabilities on 11 December.

Richard Desmond told guests, "Something that sets Norwood apart is that we have the Queen as our Royal Patron. I am delighted that she has requested to meet children and adults who use our services, together with staff who support them.

"We are all looking forward to showing her our fantastic services. Whilst she is at Ravenswood she will be opening the new Pamela Barnett Centre for adults with profound and multiple disabilities. It's a great honour to have Her Majesty's support."

Norwood raised around £3 million at its Annual Dinner on Monday 17 November. 1200 guests demonstrated their support for the charity, at their largest ever dinner. The money will go towards the £9 million that the Charity needs this year in donations to maintain its services supporting children, families and adults, coping with disabilities and social disadvantage within the Jewish community and beyond.

Carol Sopher, the Dinner Chair, thanked Alan Howard for his generous sponsorship of the dinner and the guests for their support and commitment. The next generation of philanthropists, YN guests, were present in numbers greater than ever before.



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Bringing The X Factor magic to the evening, Richard Desmond introduced Simon Cowell, the guest speaker as "the man who has changed the face of Saturday night". Along with celebrity judge, Piers Morgan, he entertained a captivated audience with a candid, informal chat.

Simon Cowell introduced Norwood's fundraising film, expressing his admiration for the UK charity's work. He said, "Charities carry out extraordinary work and I like to support them as much as possible. To see so many people out tonight to support Norwood is staggering."

"Through my friend, Richard Desmond, I have learnt a lot about Norwood and I understand why you're all here. I'm a great believer that we have to support British charities and I'm very happy to support this cause."

He demonstrated his commitment to the Charity by making a very generous donation to become a Norwood Patron, which should be an inspiration to others.

David Kaye, a resident of one of Norwood's homes, spoke emotionally after the film and Chief Executive Norma Brier made a heartfelt appeal for donors to give generously in these difficult times, so that the charity is not forced to turn anyone away.

Richard Desmond was delighted with the evening's success. He said, "This year, more than ever before, we appreciate the generosity of Norwood's donors who have demonstrated that even in this tough financial climate, they are there for the children, families and adults who rely on Norwood's support.

"It's been fantastic. I'm so pleased people enjoyed the evening and we thank Simon Cowell and Piers Morgan for being our guest speakers tonight."



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In an evening which celebrated Norwood's success, Bernie Myers, Chairman Designate, also announced the Charity's plans to open a new Employment Opportunities Centre, which will provide support and training for adults with learning disabilities to prepare them for the world of work.

Gill Fenner, the Chair of the Helping Hand Awards, introduced Kate Garraway, GMTV presenter and journalist to present the Awards which recognise inspiring individuals in the Community who have made a huge difference to the lives of others. The three recipients were Michelle Barnett, Rachely Plancey and Eliana Ostro, who is just 12 years old.

Members of The Dinner Committee, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the event of such great magnitude was an overwhelming success included Carol Sopher, Michelle Goldberg, Adele Goldstein, David Ereira, Gill Fenner, Ronnie Harris, Steven Howard, Sian Levy, Gary Sacks, Michael Teacher and Alex Tucker.

Guests included influential figures and well-known personalities: Sir Philip Green, Sir Trevor Chinn, Lord Levy, Lord Kalms, Jonathan Shalit, Kate Garraway, Tania Bryer and Vanessa Feltz.

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