

## Norwood's 10th anniversary Property Lunch raises over £355,000

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Over 500 guests from the property industry enjoyed Norwood's 10th Property Lunch at the Intercontinental Hyde Park on Friday 12 June. The Lunch, sponsored by Derwent London, AXA and Earlcrown raised over £355,000 to help Norwood to support children, adults and families with learning disabilities and social difficulties. The Property Lunch has raised an impressive total of nearly £2.5m over the past 10 years. Giles Barrie, Editor of Property Week lead a lively panel discussion with industry leaders Susan Geddes, Head of Real Estate Finance at Abbey UK Corporate Banking, John Burns, Chief Executive of Derwent London, and Mark Dixon, Chief Executive at Regus.

The guests saw a film which showed the progress made by Lauren (aged 19) and Michael Lang (aged 9), who have learning disabilities and are part of Norwood's Young People's Focus Group (YPFG). The Group is a groundbreaking initiative which enables young people with disabilities to become more confident and independent and gives them the opportunity to learn important skills needed to enjoy a more fulfilling life, now and in the future. For the last three years the Group has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund, who fund projects for a limited time frame, but now that funding will come to an end.

Lauren joined Fundraising Chairman, Gary Sacks to appeal for the continuation of the project. Gary said, "Our industry has been well known to have a strong social conscience and it is times like this, which distinguish the charitable from the non-charitable. Unfortunately learning disabilities do not cease because there is a recession and Norwood still needs your help."

Cherie Blair, Norwood's Patron of Children's Services, who narrated the film, said, "The Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, talks about the dignity of difference. We all take choice for granted and Norwood's amazing group gives these young people the dignity which any young person would expect. As they get older, they are developing the ability to make decisions and express their views within a context that's suitable for them."

For the second year, The Norwood Property Awards recognised the achievements of those in the industry. Last year's winners presented the prizes, though Nick Leslau retained the title of Personality of the Year sharing the accolade with Mike Brown. 2008 winner, Leo Noé passed his award for Philanthropist of the Year on to Sir Harry Solomon, who is a member of the Norwood Council and was knighted in 1991 for services to the food industry. John Burns presented the Deal of the Year award to Graham Edwards, CEO of Telereal for the Trillium deal. Gerald Ronson, who received last year's award for Lifetime Achievement, presented the award to Sir Stuart Lipton, who was knighted in 2000 for his contribution to London's landscape.

Giles Barrie, Editor of Property Week probed the guest speakers on their views as to how best to deal with the current climate. Susan Geddes of Abbey Real Estate advised that lending with caution is the current policy and it is more of a 'dripping tap', especially difficult is development finance. She hoped that capital would become more 'free-flowing' in the next few years. Her fellow panellists were looking for the 'green shoots' of opportunity that could now be emerging for the industry.

Sara Parish, Events Fundraising Manager, said, "We'd like to thank our speakers and our Committee for working so hard to make the 10th Norwood Property Lunch such a great success. We also thank our generous sponsors, Derwent London, AXA and Abbey and the guests from the property industry for showing their support for Norwood by raising over £355,000, which will help us to make a real difference to the lives of children, adults and families with learning disabilities and social difficulties."

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