

Ladies Lunch for Norwood raises £13,000 with the Professeur de Parfums

3 March 2009

100 ladies discovered the power of perfume through Roja Dove, the world's sole 'Professeur de Parfums' at a Ladies Lunch which raised £13,000 for Norwood on Wednesday 25 February. The event organised by the Food & Thought Committee, was held at the Haven Bistro & Bar in Whetstone who generously donated the lunch so that all the proceeds could go directly to Norwood to support children, families and adults with learning disabilities and social disadvantages in our community.



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Roja is the most celebrated "nose" in the world of perfumery and he shared his newly created scents with the guests. His passion for scent led him to Guerlain and he is now the in-house advisor on perfumes at Harrods where he opened the Roja Dove Haute Parfumerie. He has created his own bespoke fragrances and has set up his own PR company, RDPR, specialising in fragrances.

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Roja generously donated a semi-bespoke fragrance and a personal consultation as prizes for the raffle. Speaking at the Lunch he said, "Perfumerie was my "Bashert" (destiny). When I was young and smelt scent in the house, I always knew something lovely was about to happen, because perfume was a luxury and people didn't wear scent everyday. When I opened Haute Parfumerie, I wanted to create a place where the most beautiful perfume in the world can be found.

"It's a pleasure to help Norwood raise money. I was brought up by my mother, who always did everything for others and who taught me to do things for charity."

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Ingrid Segal, from the Food for Thought Committee, said, "Roja gave us an amazing insight into the world of perfume, and the fragrances that have been filling the room today have been truly wonderful!" We've had a sell-out event and we are so grateful to the Haven Bistro & Bar for generously donating the lunch today so that all the money raised will go directly to Norwood."

Erica Marks, whose moving appeal prompted guests to respond generously, has four children. Her oldest is Benjamin who is 16 and has severe disabilities. Erica told the story of how Benjamin, who was born with his umbilical cord around his neck, was traumatised from birth and was later diagnosed with cerebral palsy caused by lack of oxygen to the brain. Erica and her husband, David, did not know who to turn to until her GP referred her to Norwood's Rainbow support group for parents of children with disabilities. The Rainbow group allows parents to share their experiences whilst their children are looked after by Norwood support workers.

Erica said, "I would not be here today, the mother of four children and a participating member of our Community, had you not given to Norwood in the past. Norwood was there to support my family and other families like ours, to find our way through the most difficult times in our lives. If you have the power to give, you should know that your money will save many more families who need your support now and in the future. Thank you for your generosity."

For further information or photos, please contact the Norwood Press Office on 020 8420 6942 or email pressoffice@norwood.org.uk