



CSR 2015 Review

As one of the largest and fastest growing providers of legal services Stephenson Solicitors LLP are fully aware of, and have a genuine commitment to, Corporate Social Responsibility

working
with you,
for you

Stephensons

Introduction

As one of the largest and fastest growing providers of legal services Stephenson Solicitors LLP are fully aware of, and have a genuine commitment to, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It provides Stephenson Solicitors LLP with the opportunity to give something back to the communities we serve, in more ways than one. We shortlist the charity of the year and arrange a number of fundraisers throughout the year to raise money for them and many other charities which mean so much to our staff and those in the local communities in which we are based.

Many of our fundraisers and initiatives are summarised here in our chronology of 2015, which shows how diverse and far-reaching these initiatives can be. People in the firm have the opportunity to donate money but they are also encouraged to donate time to help charities in ways which money cannot.

And it doesn't stop there. The CSR committee also discusses ways in which the firm can help itself and the environment

around it. Law firms aren't exactly known as being best friends of the environment but it's a friendship which could blossom with just a few simple actions. Stephenson Solicitors LLP are working on this and much of it stems from the CSR committee.

The CSR committee is important for the firm. Stephenson Solicitors LLP started as a small firm in Leigh and has gone from strength to strength. With a large presence throughout the North West and having expanded to London, our roots remain at the forefront of our minds and the most important function of the CSR committee is to ensure that we continue to help those communities which we have been a part of for so many years.

2015 was an active and productive year for the CSR committee as can be seen in this review.

Charity of the Year – Children’s Adventure Farm Trust

At the end of each year staff at Stephenson’s are given the opportunity to put forward their nominations for the charity of the year for the following 12 months. Due to the large number of nominations, it is then the responsibility of the CSR committee to turn this into a shortlist to be put to the vote. The winner is announced before the end of January and there begins an exciting relationship between Stephenson’s and the latest charity of the year.

Shortlisting and selection

The shortlisting process is a tough one. All of the charities which are put forward are worthy causes and it is never easy suggesting that one should not be on the shortlist. The fairest way to deal with this dilemma is to group the charities by type, i.e. animal charities, old age charities etc. In doing so, we selected one of each so that, despite some charities not making the final list, all areas were covered.

In 2015 the charity with the most votes was The Children’s Adventure Farm Trust. The Children’s Adventure Farm Trust provide a variety of programmes for terminally ill, disabled and disadvantaged children from all over the North West.

The needs of the children visiting The Adventure Farm range from complex and severe physical and learning disabilities, sensory impairments and terminal illnesses through to children who act as carers for a family member, those dealing with bereavement and children who have been victims of abuse.

Fundraising

One of the ways in which Stephenson’s helps to raise money for the charity of the year is to hold a firm-wide dress down day on the last working day of every month. All staff that choose to dress down are asked to contribute £1 which will be donated directly to our charity of the year. It is a simple concept but given the size of the firm, it is one which can generate some significant funds throughout the course of the year.

In addition to the monthly dress down day several requests were put in for extra dress down days to raise money for other charities such as Paws for Kids, The Bubble Foundation and several others. We have also held various raffles and cake sales throughout the year to help raise extra funds for the charity of the year.

We continued also continued to support the Atherton & Leigh Foodbank by offering fortnightly drop in clinics to give benefit and housing advice to those in need. We helped collect for the foodbank for three days at the beginning of December and collected an amazing five tonnes worth of food for the charity to distribute over the Christmas period.

Through the efforts of all the staff at Stephenson’s we managed to raise a fantastic £5075 for The Children’s Adventure Farm Trust. This will help the charity to continue the fantastic work they do with children across the North West.



February

On 4th February four brave ladies from the personal injury and clinical negligence teams cut at least seven inches off their hair for the Little Princess Trust. More than £620 was raised. The Little Princess Trust provides real hair wigs for children suffering hair loss through cancer treatment.



Also in February, clinical negligence and personal injury lead a fundraising day for the Rainbow Trust Children's Charity which the whole firm took part in. Lots of events took place including, raffles, cake sales and even a sponsored leg wax! All staff who 'dressed down' and wore red for the day donated £1 each to the charity. A total of £1032.48 was raised which will help support families who have a child with a terminal or life threatening illness.



2015 - February, March & April

Also in February the firm signed up to 'I'm a Green Warrior Energy Exchange Club', a group set up by Wigan Warriors Rugby Club to encourage local businesses to be part of a greener community and promote a sustainable future. Stephenson's were the first local business to join the scheme as we continue to be aware of our impact on the wider community and world's resources.



March

March was a busy month for fundraising in the Bolton family team.

In March, Ceri Thomas arranged for the collection and delivery of Easter eggs to a local domestic abuse support organisation, Paws For Kids. Paws For Kids support victims of domestic abuse and their families who seek to flee or have fled an abusive household. Over 30 Easter eggs were donated by the Bolton office for children who have been forced to flee their homes.

On International Women's Day, 6th March, family associate, Ceri Thomas, organised a cake sale with proceeds going to Paws for Kids who used the money towards their budget for purchasing Mother's Day gifts for women who are victims of domestic abuse and are supported by the charity.

On Friday 13th we held an additional dress down day to raise money for local organisation, Lagan's Foundation. Lagan's Foundation is a member of Victoria Melling's networking group and is an organisation situated in Bolton which provides support to parents, who have children under the age of five, with congenital or acquired heart defects (CHD) or feeding issues. This additional dress down day was held in March to tie in with National Heart Month, every February, and a total of £202.02 was raised for Lagan's Foundation.

April

In April the clinical negligence team raised some extra money for The Children's Adventure Trust by holding a St. George's Day fundraiser. They raised £60 by selling scones and 'afternoon tea'.



May

In May clinical negligence fundraised for brain injury charity, Headway, with the annual 'Hats for Headway'. Staff dressed down on the day, held a raffle, bake sale and best hat competition. We raised £224.

Tom Mooney is the treasurer for Headway Wigan & Leigh. He volunteers there for an average of four hours per month and has had this position for approximately one year.



Also in May, an application was submitted to the CSR committee for funding towards the purchase of tablet computers for Lagan's Foundation. Lagan's Foundation have confirmed that they wish to purchase three tablet computers for use during home placements, priced at between £189 - £199 per tablet. Lagan's Foundation confirmed that in exchange for any contribution made, the foundation would be willing to make Stephenson's a 'zebra patron' including earlybird invites to all events, VIP seating, publicity where appropriate, feature on the patrons page, regular updates and four free guest tickets to invite contacts to their information day. This request is being considered by the CSR committee.

June

In June the family team made an application to the CSR committee for contributions towards the purchase of 'cuddle bags' for children who have fled abusive homes with their parents. These bags contain an outfit, pyjamas, a teddy, toiletries, a blanket and a unique gift. A total sum of £300 was approved by the CSR committee, funding six bags for the charity 'Wipe Your Tears'.

Also in June, Stephenson's acted as a drop off point for donations from the public to victims of a fire at an apartment block near to our Wigan office.

July

Victoria Melling and Nicola Whittle organised a Ladies Networking Evening which took place on the 2nd July 2015 at the Middlebrook office. This event was organised in aid of Lagan's Foundation. The night included a guest speaker, stalls from local businesses and a raffle.

On Friday 3rd July we held an additional dress down day to raise money for the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

2015 - July & August

On Friday 10th July, the firm held a 'Wimbledon Day' selling strawberries, cream and lemonade. A total of £166.74 was raised on the day for our charity of the year.



On 11th July a group of Stephenson's ladies and friends did the Pretty Muddy 5K run in order to raise money for Cancer Research UK.



On Thursday the 16th July the clinical negligence and personal injury teams held a summer fundraiser for the charity of the year. There was a cake sale, summer quiz, guess the name of the teddy, guess the number of sweets in the jar, candy floss for sale, popcorn for sale and summer fruit punches. There was also a raffle and a tug of war contest. The day resulted in £316.40 being raised.

August

In August we held an additional dress down day to raise money for The Bubble Foundation UK. Staff wore yellow for the 'Wear Yellow for Seth' campaign. Proceeds from the day will help babies and children who are born with a gene deficiency which means that they cannot fight infections meaning many need bone marrow transplants.

September

On 6th September a group of staff took part in the Wigan 10K to raise extra money for the charity of the year

On the 25th September the clinical negligence and personal injury teams wore green and held a coffee morning / bake sale for Macmillan Cancer Nurses. They raised £160 on the day for Macmillan.



Also in September members of staff from clinical negligence and personal injury volunteered to help out at The Children's Adventure Farm Trust's summer fayre.

October

On 7th October we held a World Cerebral Palsy Day fundraiser with the funds going to a local family to help them with the cost of specialised wheelchairs for their two sons who suffer from the condition. Staff dressed down and took part in a raffle. The day raised £338.51 for the family.

On 30th October we held a Halloween fundraiser for our charity of the year. Across the firm we held a dress down / fancy dress day, a best dressed competition and cake sales. The Wigan Investment Centre also had broomstick races and a best pumpkin competition. The day raised £557.48 for The Children's Adventure Farm Trust.



November

November was another busy month for CSR activities.

On November 10th three members of staff attended our charity of the year to give a helping hand in wrapping some of the presents which were to be handed out during the christmas parties which are arranged for the children who attend the farm. The CAFT started their christmas parties in the middle of November and they are run seven days a week until the week leading up to Christmas, therefore, a lot of presents are required in order to put smiles on the faces of the partygoers. Our staff spent more than five hours at the farm, wrapping hundreds of presents for the children.



On 17th November we held our annual quiz. The quiz raised £159.27 in aid of the charity of the year. Below are pictures of the top three teams.



Also in November, the firm donated £3,000 to a children's diabetes charity as part of the firm's commitment to working with communities across the UK.

Head of litigation, Louise Griffiths met with Carolyn Goldhill and Colleen Tandy from Supporting Children with Diabetes (SCD), to learn more about the charity's work and present the donation.



Staff across the firm took part in Operation Christmas Child by putting together shoeboxes filled with treats, gifts and essentials for children around the world who would not otherwise have had anything at Christmas.

We also held two additional dress down days in November to raise money for Paws for Kids and Prostate Cancer UK.

December

On December 2nd several members of staff gave a helping hand to the CAFT in the smooth running of one of their many Christmas parties. The day involved several costume changes which included every volunteer either being dressed up as a penguin, a polar bear, Rudolph the reindeer or a Christmas tree. The fun activities started when the children entered into the courtyard of the farm which was covered in Christmas decorations and snow and they were met by four snugly dressed characters. The children who attended on that specific day were aged between ten and 16 and were all pupils in a special needs school in Manchester.

Many of the children wanted big hugs and high fives from the characters which resulted in big smiles and joyful faces. The children were then led into the grotto by the workers at CAFT where they enjoyed their presents and a Christmas meal. The farm had been decorated to the theme of Happy Feet. When the children had eaten as many sweets as their hearts desired, they were then led back to the courtyard to see their four cuddly friends once again. The volunteers waved the children off on their journey and everybody had a thoroughly enjoyable and humbling day.



A request was made and approved for an additional dress down day in December 2015 for the donation of either the usual £1 or the donation of a Christmas gift. In total four gift bags of presents along with £147.15 was raised and handed over to Paws for Kids.

Also in December we donated £2,000 to a city centre organisation, 'street angels'. Head of Regulatory and Criminal Justice, Sean Joyce met with group chairperson, Rachel Goddard and volunteers from Manchester Street Angels, to learn more about the charity's work and present the donation.

Manchester Street Angels provides teams of volunteers to help patrol the streets of Manchester, during busy periods, provide support for vulnerable people, those who have over-indulged on alcohol and relieve pressure on the emergency services.



Stephenson's have a very good relationship with the Atherton and Leigh Foodbank, which includes drop in clinics on a fortnightly basis in which we provide advice on both benefits and housing issues to those in need. We have done several past collections for the foodbank and we were again approached in November by A & L Foodbank to see whether we could offer some assistance in this years Christmas collection.

The Christmas collection is a nationwide project and is endorsed by Tesco Stores across the nation. As it approached the time of the year in which people were most at need due to the cold weather and other factors. The firm were able to offer eight volunteers over a three day period at the Tesco Store in Leigh. There were many stations which needed manning, including handing out the leaflets, (which explained the reason for the collection and the need which is most in demand), rattling the collection buckets at the entrance and inside the store and finally collecting the food itself and separating it into the relevant food groups and dates.



The Foodbank collected in excess of five tonnes of food over the three days, this is enough food to help those in need over Christmas and well into the New Year. The event was also attended by Andy Burnham MP on the Saturday, during the collection, Kate Sweeney and Jamie Gordon had the opportunity to explain to Andy how we offer assistance to the Foodbank in any way we can and he was very impressed. Overall, it was a very successful collection and it was great to see the local people supporting a great cause.

On 11th December staff came to work in nightwear and raised £200 for MedEquip4Kids, a charity providing paediatric medical equipment and facilities for hospitals and community health teams.



In addition to the monthly dress down day staff raised money by paying a pound to wear christmas jumpers to work on 18th December and also had the opportunity to dress down all week in the run up to Christmas, donating £2 to do so, in order to raise money for the charity of the year.

