

Press Release

06/12/2006

Secret Millionaire continues the good work in County Durham.

Last night television viewers may have seen local entrepreneur John Elliott MBE become Channel 4's latest 'Secret Millionaire'. This is however just the tip of the charitable iceberg where John is concerned, as he has secretly been supporting worthy causes in County Durham for many years through his charitable fund with County Durham Foundation.

The second instalment of Channel 4's new reality TV show, 'The Secret Millionaire' saw John, a well-respected businessman from Crook, living off just £11 a day state benefit for a week in inner city Liverpool to find somebody whose life he could change for the better with a cheque for £50,000.

John, 62 made his fortune producing domestic dehumidifiers and water coolers in his Bishop Auckland-based company Ebac. In 1999 he set up his charitable endowment fund with County Durham Foundation to give something back to the community that he has worked and lived in. His fund supports local people who are achieving against the odds with the potential to excel in a particular field - but need a little help to make the most of their opportunities.

John said: 'Everything I have today I have worked incredibly hard for. I know what it's like to come from humble beginnings and I wanted to help others who are in a similar situation. Sometimes life isn't easy and if I can make a real and lasting difference for just a few people I'll be a happy man.'

Since setting up this fund John has helped a number of people move one step closer to achieving their dreams. In the past he has given grants to support: a talented 11-year-old swimmer from Darlington who suffers from severe food allergies; a young girl from Stanley with cerebral palsy who wanted to compete in national athletics championships; a 14 year old trampolinist with

severe asthma and most recently a 16-year-old ballet dancer from Newton Aycliffe who needed a helping hand to attend the prestigious Hammond School of Dance in Chester.

One of the first grants John ever made was to a mother in Consett, whose 16-year-old daughter has cerebral palsy, whose son has grand mal epilepsy, and whose husband was, at the time, suffering from a fractured lower spine. She explained:

'John is a wonderful man, who helped my family when we needed it most. The money he gave us paid for vital safety equipment and improvements to our family bathroom, which made the world of difference to us, especially to my daughter. I'm not sure I would have been able to cope without the help John gave us.'

In Liverpool, John had to immerse himself in the homeless community for a week to find someone that he thought really needed his help. Back at home however John has found an easier way to reach these people.

"I set up my fund through County Durham Foundation because they find me the people who are most in need of my help. They really know the area and they know the people, well that's what they do best. With them I can also keep control of my money – which I like! - so nothing will be spent without my say so.'

County Durham Foundation is a registered charity working with individuals, companies and trusts, to help them set up charitable funds which will have a positive impact for the lives of people living in County Durham and Darlington.

For more information about applying to the Ebac fund or about setting up a fund of your own please call County Durham Foundation on 0191 3830055.

ENDS