

GET INVOLVED IN YOUNG ENTERPRISE!

Philip Woodman, President of Sidcup Rotary Club gave a Best Practice Presentation at the 2009 District Conference on the value of Young Enterprise and how he felt it really 'made a difference'. This article complements this and illustrates the club's ongoing commitment to the project.

Young Enterprise is a national initiative supported by both the government and the private sector. It was set up as a charity nearly 50 years ago and its aim is to teach business skills to youth in our schools. Last year 380,000 young people took part in various UK Young Enterprise programmes. 40,000 students for more than 3000 companies, under both the Company and the Team programme. They were assisted by 5000 business people from 2000 different organisations.

Sidcup Rotary Club is involved in the Company programme. A group of pupils in a school get together and form a proper company. The school and the company sign up to the Young Enterprise Programme which means they must then follow a formal process. The pupil group sells shares in the company, appoints a Board of Directors, brainstorms to identify a suitable product or service and carries out market research to identify the viability. The product or service is then produced, marketed and sold to the public. There is a Link Teacher from their school and an External Business Advisor to oversee and assist with the process.



Explaining the product

At the end of the year there is a finals evening at which all the companies display their products, present their Annual Report and make a Presentation to the mayor, business sponsors, their local authority, schools, family and friends, the local press and also to a panel of independent judges.



A winning team

Sidcup Rotary Club has enjoyed a long association with Young Enterprise. In the very early days the club had the foresight, time and energy to set up its own programme which was very successful until changes in the academic structure within schools made it impractical to continue. Then, in the mid-nineties Bexley Education Business Partnership, a department of our local authority, was given a mandate to restart the initiative locally. Sidcup Rotary was invited to sponsor

the event. Since then the club has been very closely involved with Bexley Young Enterprise. Philip Woodman, the current President of the club, has been a judge for the Bexley Finals for the past sixteen years and for fifteen of these has chaired the

judging panel. Several club members have given up considerable amounts of their time to be advisors. The club also sponsors the Best Report and the winning team receives a shield.

Recently Philip Woodman accepted an Award on behalf of The Rotary Club of Sidcup from The London Borough of Bexley in recognition of the club's long term support of youth development in the Borough and also for its involvement with Young Enterprise.



Sidcup President Philip Woodman receiving the Civic Award from the Mayor of Bexley & Will Tuckley CEO London Borough of Bexley

In this year's final a team from Bexley Grammar School, took the Best Company Award. This team, under the name "Flying Colours", concentrated on a social enterprise project raising awareness of our carbon footprint and devised simple ways to show how people can save energy.

There were several other prizes awarded in the categories:- Best Display Stand, Best Business Report, Best use of IT, Best Presentation, Best Product and The Environmental Award. Sidcup Rotary Club again sponsored the Best Report Award, which was presented by Philip Woodman, as President, of the club to another team from Bexley Grammar School, "Easy Peasy". The teams this year were particularly innovative and gave assured presentations. This was a tribute to their hard work and commitment to Young Enterprise despite the conflicting pressures of their curriculum.

The members of Sidcup Rotary Club feel that Young Enterprise is one of their most worthwhile projects and really does make a difference. One of the key Rotary Service Committee Objectives is to assist with the development of our youth and Young Enterprise falls squarely within that remit. We are committed to Young Enterprise because:

- It is good for the club and for Rotary in general as it enhances the profile of Rotary.

- It is good for young people because it teaches skills that will be needed in the workplace and these are not necessarily skills that one develops in the traditional curriculum. It also adds a most effective dimension to their University personal statements and to their CVs.
- It is good for the community as those that benefit from the scheme feel incorporated into the community resulting in less of a "them and us" mentality. It also provides an arena for Education and Business to come together and it is highly regarded by industry and commerce employers.
- It is good for society in general as it focuses solely on people age 15/19 perhaps those most susceptible to less meritable pastimes. It assists with the development of a mentality whereby if someone gains from society they feel indebted and are more likely to behave or comply with the standards that society expects or desires. Someone who has developed well through a scheme such as this is much more likely to put back into society in later life.

These are our leaders of tomorrow -- we need to be involved!

Sidcup Rotary Club
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