

NEWS

Why Muriel is toasting our big cash giveaway



● MINI IDOL: (1) Alex Thomas and Kerry Anne Sharma; (2) Kelly Hardy; (3) Larnie Mallion; (4) Lee Tooze; (5) Gina Simpson and (6) (middle) event organiser Julie Jones with (from left) judges Kathryn Bowler, Alison Bloor, Dawn Mellows and Trisha Johnson.



MURIEL Salt remembers Christmas 2003 as a special one.

That was the year she and her elderly neighbours were invited to a three-course dinner and party by a group of youngsters.

The Christmas celebration was held by the 145th Broadbail Hilltop Scout group, at its headquarters in Stratford Road, after it received £200 from the Make It Happen awards to lay on the dinner.

Now the Evening Telegraph has teamed up with Kingston-upon-Thames-based Combined Insurance to launch the second round of the Make It Happen awards.

Under the initiative, a share of £10,000 will be given to people, groups and charities with the aim of helping communities in Derbyshire.

In the first round, which was launched in July 2003, more than 16 groups and individuals benefited, including the Scout group. Football legend Brian Clough presented the awards at a ceremony at Pride Park.

But for Mrs Salt (72), from Knutsford Green, in Broadbail Hilltop, it was the Christmas meal that made all the difference: "That day stands out in my memory. It was very special."

"Many of the people around here rarely get to go out for Christmas lunches. Some of them don't even have any relations."

"We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The food and the reception were very good and the Cubs and Beavers sang to us and gave us presents. The youngsters were very helpful and polite."

Margaret Wilson, Scout leader, said: "It's something we would like to do

every year but we just don't have the funds. It would give the residents something to look forward to and it's nice to get them to meet the youngsters."

"They all really enjoyed it and were quite upset when we didn't do it last year."

A much larger event that came to fruition because of the Make It Happen awards was Derby's own Pop Idol contest.

Mini Idol, held at The Spot, in Sacheverel Street, in August, was the bright idea of Julie Jones.

Ms Jones, who is project manager for Derby Parenting and Family Group, in Shakespeare Street, Sinfon, said the event attracted an audience of more than 100 people and was a great success.

About 50 young hopefuls aged 10 to 16 applied to take part in the competition and judges had the hard task of whittling down the entrants.

The seven finalists went on to prac-

tise and rehearse for six weeks during the summer holidays before taking to the stage to show their star quality.

Ms Jones (36), of Ballater Close, Sinfon, said: "They were all absolutely fantastic. We did it to raise the self-esteem and self-confidence of youngsters and also to keep them entertained during the holidays."

"We aimed it at children who wouldn't normally get the opportunity to perform and didn't have a chance to attend dancing or singing lessons."

Kerry Anne Sharma (11), of Alveston, went on to win thanks to an amazing performance of Falling by Alicia Keys.

Other winners of the Make It Happen awards used the money to buy equipment or to make renovations to their buildings.

Locko Amateur Dramatics Society was awarded £1,000 to go toward building a stage and putting up curtains in Spondon Village Hall in Sitwell Street.

Corinne Eyre, who is chairwoman of the society, said: "It's been wonderful. We've now been able to do productions at the village hall and so have the local dance group. So it's not just us who've benefited from the prize."

"It's a marvellous scheme as it can really make a difference to small groups that find it hard to raise these kind of sums of money."

Five hundred pounds of the award money was given to the 118th Scout Group at Withan Drive, Littleover, to help with an extension built at its base last year.

Liz Cheney, fund-raiser for the group, said the extension, which has two rooms and cost about £25,000 to build, had made a big difference to the Scouts.



● AWARDS HIGHLIGHT: Brian Clough and former Derby mayor Councillor Ruth Skelton with representatives of Derby City General's sensory garden project, at the 2003 awards.



● **BEST PRESENT:** Muriel Salt raises her cup to the Breadsall Hilltop Scouts who were able to lay on a Christmas meal for her and her elderly neighbours thanks to the Make It Happen awards.
Picture: Mike Inman M0407058-1

TELL US YOUR BEST IDEA

ANY idea, no matter how big or small, will be considered by the judges as long as the money will benefit the community. To enter, write in to tell us how much money you want and why you want it. Do not forget to include your name, address and a daytime telephone number.

The award scheme closes in early September. Nominations and suggestions for how the prize fund should be spent can be submitted either by e-mail to awards@derbytelegraph.co.uk or by post to Aly Walsh, Derby Evening Telegraph, Meadow Road, Derby, DE1 2DW.

She said: "The extension is very well used."
"We use it for meetings andumble sales and it has also served as a sorting room when we did all the scout post, involving the delivery of hundreds of cards at Christmas."
"We would like to apply for money gain. Our next projects are building a staircase up to our loft and replastering the ceiling of the main building. The jobs would probably cost about £800 each."
"Derby Kids' Camp, formerly Derby Children's Friendship Group, takes underprivileged children on camping holidays in the Peak District each summer and was given £1,000 to buy new tents through the wards."
Eddie Mitchell, chairman of the amp, said: "It was great to get the money, as it's not always easy for us to raise funds."
"We needed to increase the size of the tents that the children sleep in and we bought two 14ft ridge tents with the money."
"We're planning on entering this ext round of the awards."
"Our cooker has now reached the

end of its life and we need a replacement. We'll need about £1,000, as it's a fairly substantial piece of equipment."
Among those receiving the money was an historic centre which received £200 towards its idea that dressing up in Victorian and Edwardian costumes would be a fun way for children to learn about history.
The Little Chester Heritage Centre, which is based at St Paul's Church in Mansfield Road, Derby, used the money to make costumes so that children's groups and schools could visit the centre and see what it felt like to wear clothes from a bygone era.
Joan D'Arcy, chairwoman of the group that runs the centre, said: "The money was very helpful. We have about a dozen costumes now and the children absolutely love them."
Combined Insurance, which has a high concentration of policy holders in Derbyshire, decided to donate the money for the campaign because it was frequently getting requests for sponsorship from various community groups.
Make It Happen gives them a way

UNDERWRITING THE AWARDS

COMBINED Insurance, which is based at Kingstons-upon-Thames, offers accident and healthcare insurance to more than 600,000 policyholders in the UK and Ireland, with 16,500 of them based in Derby.
The global company, which has five UK offices and was set up in 1963, has been operating in Derbyshire for 40

years and currently has 64 sales agents working in the area. It chose to stage its awards programme in Derbyshire because of the success of the last community awards and its high concentration of customers in the county.
Clive Robinson, managing director, said: "We're delighted that the community awards have had such an immediate impact."



● **HAPPY TO HELP:** Clive Robinson.

of finding the most deserving groups.
It is looking forward to hearing the wide range of ideas submitted for the second round of awards.
Clive Robinson, managing director of Combined Insurance, said: "We're delighted that the community awards have had such an immediate impact on the local community in Derby."
"This campaign allows us to demonstrate our belief that if you

give people an opportunity, no matter how small, it can make a real difference."
"We're looking forward to seeing the dreams of more winners being realised in the coming months."
"Throughout this competition I believe that we will see examples of the fantastic work that people are doing and who, with a little help, can do a great deal more."
"This is a real opportunity to make it happen."



● **DRAMATIC BENEFIT:** Members of the Locks Amateur Dramatics Society rehearsing Play On!