

£1 million in pledges for award winning homeless charity

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More than £1 million in pledges were offered in support of homeless charity Anchor House last night at an event attended by more than 200 people at the Inner Temple in London.

Lead by patrons ITV's Julie Etchingham and former world boxing champion Barry McGuigan MBE, the charity launched a £9.3 million Home and Hope Appeal to help bring regeneration to East London and its homeless residents.

Keith Fernett, Anchor House director, said the event was a tremendous success with Barclays Bank pledging a substantial amount of support towards redeveloping its 50 year old centre.

"Last night was a historical moment for Anchor House. In a matter of one night, we now have enough funds to build five out of 25 new studio move-on apartments for our residents," Mr Fernett said.

"We still have a long way to go, but we are confident that this is the start of big things to come."

At the event, a passionate John Bird, founder of the Big Issue and former homeless person, paid tribute to the work of Anchor House.

He said it was important that people supported charities like Anchor House who provide the homeless with a hand up, not a hand out.

"When you meet an organisation like Anchor House, it makes you feel really good because it shows what can be done when homeless people take control of their lives with the assistance of professionals and volunteers," Mr Bird said.

The £9.3m development includes new education, training and rehabilitation facilities. As well as 25 new transitional "move-on" studio flats to help residents achieve a sustainable transition back into independent living, and a new training kitchen for people to gain catering qualifications.

The charity has enlisted the help of an 18 member Appeal Board recruited from the business sector, including chair Michael Dawson (Chaucer plc) and vice chair, Simon Hall (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP).

It has also attracted a high calibre of support from its patrons, including Lord Patten, Lord Glasman, Rt. Hon Ann Widdecombe, Jeremy Paxman, Julie Etchingham, Barbara Windsor MBE, Barry McGuigan MBE, John Bird MBE, the Archbishops of Westminster and Southwark, Sir Gus O'Donnell KBC, the Bishop of Brentwood, Sir George Bull, Sir Christopher Benson and Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank.

Recently Oxford Economics found that Anchor House saves society and tax payers more than £5 million a year by helping to turn around the lives of its homeless residents. Including saving society up to £3.2 million from lower crime.

To watch a film on the appeal visit <http://youtu.be/NkuEKFrMhU>.

For more information or to donate to the appeal please visit www.anchorhouseuk.org or call 0207 476 6062.



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