

NEW AFFILIATION FOR WCHCD

City Livery Companies have for years had affiliations with schools around London. In a new project, the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers Company is forming an affiliation with a school in Newham. Located at Custom House, by the Excel Centre, The Royal Docks Community School is a mixed, community comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 16. Purpose-built in 1999 to serve the local population in Newham, Royal Docks is a fully inclusive school of around 1,200 students. In addition the school has 30 special needs places, located in a separate unit. Master of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers, Andrew Overton, went along to visit the school. He said: "This school has a good feel about it. Our aim through this affiliation is to assist both mainstream and special needs in ways the Head Teacher and teaching staff see best."

To begin with, the support from the WCHCD will see books being given as prizes to the 10 pupils who have made the most progress academically during the year. The pupil will receive a book of their choice and this will include an inscription of congratulations from the Company. Andrew continued: "We also hope to promote knowledge of London's world renowned taxi trade to the senior pupils through the vocational studies teacher." In the next few months, it is intended that the WCHCD will be able to assist the Special Needs group of students. They are studying horticulture and it is hoped the Company will be able to assist by providing transport for a visit to Kew Gardens. Andrew said: "This would not only give the pupils the benefit of a taxi ride but also will take in some of the sites of London along the way. We plan giving each pupil a certificate stating what they have achieved during the days outing."

Livery Companies have formed part of The City of London life for hundreds of years. In the early years, the early guilds cared for their members in sickness and old age, with some City livery companies still supporting or maintaining almshouses for elderly people throughout the country. During the Middle Ages, rich liverymen left specific sums for the provision of shelter and food for their own members who were in need. This led the way for the formation of some of the charitable trusts still in existence today.

Today's Companies have extended their charitable works into a wide variety of giving. For The Worshipful Company of Hackney Drivers, their annual Magical Taxi Tour taking sick children to Disneyland Paris is now legendary in the City, with some of the other City Livery Companies supporting the trip through sponsorship. Even the most hard hearted business person cannot fail to be moved as the convoy of over 100 taxis and other support vehicles, headed by a police escort, leaves Canary Wharf each year. So far more than 3000 children have had the trip of a lifetime, bringing joy to both each individual child, their parents and carers.



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