

14 December 2007

## **IT'S IN THE BAG FOR ISOLATED AND ELDERLY**

The festive season has been made that extra bit special for housebound and elderly people in the Isle of Dogs area after local charity, IDCF and Canary Wharf firms got together to help them.

Throughout the year, IDCF has received an excellent response from companies it contacted to donate baby goods to its Island Exchange Project, so it decided to use the same approach to see if firms would be willing to collect non-perishable food items that could be distributed to older residents.

As a pilot, four companies were contacted and the results more than pleasing. Credit Suisse, State Street, Standard & Poor's and ConocoPhillips all responded to the appeal with more than 180 bags full of biscuits, tea, sugar, coffee and other treats already collected.

Around 140 bags will be given out by Neighbours in Poplar as part of its annual Christmas and New Year hot meals' service. A further 30 bags are scheduled for residents at John Tucker House sheltered housing scheme on the Isle of Dogs. Additional bags collected will be distributed to other elders' groups.

Willing volunteer students from George Green's School are also helping the operation by labelling the re-useable shopping bags before they are sent out.

IDCF director Tracey Betts said: "From our experience with the Island Exchange Project, companies find collections like this a good way to involve their employees without putting too much pressure on them. We approached just four firms for the Christmas food initiative as we weren't sure what sort of response we would get or whether it would be manageable but it has turned out to be ideal and I am sure we will be looking to expand the scheme next year. Credit Suisse, Standard & Poor's, State Street and ConocoPhillips have done us proud and I'm sure their contributions will be much appreciated by some of our older residents this Christmas."

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