

The property sector has much to give to help rebuild lives

By Keith Breslauer, Managing Director, Patron Capital

The festive season is always a good opportunity to think about life from a broader perspective. This might mean analysing what went well over the previous year and where there is room for improvement; or thinking about business strategy; or considering society as a whole and how we can do more to help those in need.

I was struck by the generosity shown by attendees at The Royal Marines Charity's annual London Dinner last month. Sponsored by Patron Capital and heavily supported by the property sector, **the dinner raised a record £1 million to support the invaluable work The Royal Marines Charity does to help injured veterans rebuild their lives.** The sponsorship of the dinner forms part of an ongoing partnership that has been in place since 2010.

We are not alone within the industry in taking an active role supporting charities. From LandAid to Shelter to the Prince's Regeneration Trust and many others, the sector has a range of very relevant charities that it supports.

However, the best types of relationships with charities are about more than just raising funds. And the property industry is well placed to provide other forms of support.

Offering somebody a work placement in your organisation could change their life. We have set up placements for disabled war veterans within Patron and with our contacts in the property and financial services sectors. These have not only injected new talent into the industry, but also assisted with the rehabilitation of disabled war veterans

Property is a valuable commodity for charities. At Patron, through our involvement in hotels we provide free breaks to veterans and their families. We regularly provide free meeting room space to the charities we work with at our central London offices. We have also given free use of our Powerleague five-a-side football pitches for hosting tournaments to raise funds for disabled Royal Marine veterans.

Perhaps the most widely available and valuable resource the property sector can give, however, is time. Providing mentoring to people who are trying to rebuild their lives or create a new business can be completely transformative. Administrative expertise, such as information technology and accountancy or access to our book of contacts can also be exceptionally useful for a charity.

It is also important to remember the positive effect of giving. The Patron team has been directly involved in raising funds through tough physical feats. This has ranged from me personally kayaking across the English Channel, joining a team of Royal Marines to recreate the Cockleshell Endeavour – one of World War II's most daring raids – and climbing the vertical 'nose' route of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, to Patron's employees taking part in the Royal Parks half marathon each year. Such challenges help staff to bond together in common cause in the spirit of helping others, which greatly boosts well-being and workplace satisfaction.

The festive season is a time of giving and goodwill. So, as the year draws to a close, take the time to think about how you might do more to support charitable causes next year. Getting involved in charitable work benefits all involved, and the property sector is perfectly placed to do this