



October 25 2007

Creating communities

West Midlands' employees who have dedicated their time to improving communities across the region have been recognised with a special awards ceremony.

Thanks to the Midlands Cohesion project, hate crime, domestic abuse and racial abuse, graffiti and the British way of doing things have been put under the spotlight for the fourth year.

The aim of the project, sponsored by Whitefriars Housing Group, Midland Heart Group and Orbit Housing Group, is to help integrate different communities with each other and crack down on problems, which lead to breakdown in neighbourhoods.

Delegates have attended in-depth sessions to increase their knowledge and understanding of our increasingly diverse community. From these sessions, they have worked together on a number of practical projects.

This year these projects have included an initiative to understand and tackle domestic abuse, a project to combat urban graffiti, a scheme to help non-English speakers understand tenancy agreements and one to tackle anti-social youth behaviour.

To recognise the work of delegates throughout 2007, an event was held this week to mark their achievements. The Lord Major of Coventry, Cllr Dave Batten, was joined by the Lord Major of Birmingham, Cllr Randal Brew, to present certificates to all those who took part.

Judith Ryder, director of organisational development at Whitefriars, said: "We are committed to creating communities people want to live in and this project is one way we can help to achieve that. The Midlands Cohesion project allows our employees to better understand the importance of social inclusion and some of the problems which can lead to residents in the city feeling unwelcome.

“It also allows us to share our equality and diversity expertise with others and to build links regionally.”

Professor Richard Tomlins of Cohesia Ltd, organiser of the project and Visiting Professor of Race and Diversity at Coventry University, said: “Harnessing the potential of Britain’s diverse communities is absolutely key to our future prosperity. This programme provides a space for local workers to make a difference by bringing different groups together through practical projects to work towards a common goal.”

Ends

**For further information please contact Michelle Hallmark at The Bridge Group
on 024 7656 0448 or m.hallmark@bridge-group.co.uk**