

RCVS news: RCVS President makes Christmas donation to local cat re-homing and national educational charity

A cat re-homing charity based in Stoke-on-Trent and a national charity that helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds connect with the countryside have been chosen as the recipients of this year's Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Christmas donation.

Iris's Cats in Need and The Country Trust were chosen by Dr Mandisa Greene, RCVS President for 2020-21, to each receive a £2,000 donation. Every year the RCVS makes a donation to a charity of the President's choice and this year, in light of savings in postal and meetings costs, the College has increased the total amount that can be donated to £4,000.

Commenting on the choices Dr Mandisa Greene said: "This year has been a very tough one for charities big and small as they have had to contend not only with the coronavirus but decreases in fundraising income and opportunities to raise funds as a result. So I am very glad that, this year, we have been able to increase the amount that can be donated to these good causes.

"For those who, like me, live in the Stoke area, Iris's Cats in Need is something of a local institution, not only in re-homing stray cats with loving new families, but also in re-uniting lost cats with their owners. This year many of our most vulnerable have had to contend with increased isolation and loneliness and I know that cats and other companion animals can act as a lifeline and a source of solace and comfort, so I am very glad to be able to help Iris's continue its wonderful work.

As a national charity The Country Trust does excellent work in helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds access the countryside to learn more about food, farming and animals. As President I have commented on the need to widen access to the veterinary professions as a career choice to children from broader socio-economic, racial/ ethnic and other backgrounds and the Country Trust, by exposing working in agriculture, animal welfare and veterinary medicine to a broader range of children, is certainly helping in this respect. I would also like to thank Navaratnam Partheeban, a member of the RCVS Diversity & Inclusion Group who is a Trustee of the charity, for telling me about its work."

Commenting on the donation, Jill Attenborough, CEO of the Country Trust, said: "I am thrilled that the RCVS has chosen our charity to be one of the recipients and the donation comes at a really important time for the charity as we gear up to meet the demand for our new programme, Farm in a Box, which is proving really successful with schools who can't

come out on visits at the moment, and also support those schools who can, to access the wonder of real working farms.

“We are also in the process of organising school visits to Royal Veterinary College’s Hatfield site, which is very exciting and we are really keen to inspire children from all backgrounds to consider that this might be something that they could go on to do. Food and farming offer so many possibilities and the amazing children we work with have so much potential.”

Jean Clegg, the Treasurer for Iris’s Cats in Need, commented: ““We are very grateful for this donation from the RCVS and to Dr Mandisa Greene for nominating us. As is the case with many small charities, it has been a challenging year and this has provided a real boost to us.

“The money will be used mainly towards paying for veterinary care. Only this week, we rescued a kitten whose paw was caught in a rat trap - sadly, he has had to have his leg amputated.

“The charity's priority has always been stray and abandoned cats. We try to treat every animal as if it were our own; this means providing the best care we can give them, re-homing 500 to 600 cats a year.

“We became a Registered Charity in 1994 although Iris herself was rescuing cats in Stoke-on-Trent long before that. We work with a network of foster homes but one day we hope to have our own cats’ home in the area.”

The charity donation is made by the RCVS to a charity (or charities) chosen by the President every Christmas in lieu of posting cards. Previous recipients in recent years have included the Links Group, The Horse Trust, Medical Detection Dogs, Worldwide Veterinary Service, Mind, Riding for the Disabled Association, Canine Partners, Hounds for Heroes, Vetlife, the American Fondouk and StreetVet.

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1. The RCVS is the regulatory body for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in the UK and sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards, so as to enhance society through improved animal health and welfare.

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