

'Fundraising ball could help save a life' claims charity leader

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A grand fundraising ball thrown by a leading Cumbrian homebuilder could potentially prevent somebody from taking their own life.

Chris Green, the lead facilitator at the Carlisle branch of male suicide prevention charity #ANDYSMANCLUB, claimed that the awareness of male mental health issues raised by Genesis Homes may save at least one life.

The Penrith-based homebuilder selected #ANDYSMANCLUB as its chosen charity of the year and has held various fundraising events throughout 2024, culminating in a spectacular charity ball at the Halston in Carlisle.

A national charity with clubs across Cumbria including Carlisle, Cockermouth, Workington and Maryport, #ANDYSMANCLUB offers adult men a place each Monday evening to get together and talk about their mental health without fear of prejudice.

Chris shared with guests of the fundraising ball the emotional story of how his 20-year-old son Nicky, affectionately known as 'Nicky the Bricky' as he worked in construction, died of suicide.

He said: "We have been so humbled by the amazing generosity of Genesis Homes and its supporters to raise so much money for #ANDYSMANCLUB which means we can open more clubs and reach more men who are struggling with their mental health.

"But what's more important to our charity is the amazing awareness Genesis Homes has spread about #ANDYSMANCLUB, and the message about how important it is that men feel they can share their feelings

with others without fear of prejudice.

“Our charity’s motto is ‘it’s okay to talk’ and the more people we can reach with that message, the better. We are so grateful for Genesis Homes for choosing us as its chosen charity of the year, and for going above and beyond to spread awareness of who we are and what we do.

“If raising our profile can save just one man from taking their own life then that is a huge success.”

Tens of thousands of pounds have been raised through the activities hosted by Genesis Homes in 2024, with Christmas-related fundraisers still to take place.

Nicky Gordon, the company’s founder and Managing Director, selected #ANDYSMANCLUB as he is passionate about encouraging men to open up about their feelings.

Not only is the rate of suicide in men higher than the national average across Cumbria, the number of suicides within construction is three times higher than the national industry average.

Nicky said: “The statistics about male suicides across Cumbria and within construction are really worrying.

“This is our world. A great number of our colleagues are in what might be classed as ‘vulnerable trades’ so I see it as my and our duty to do what we can to promote initiatives that seek to improve mental health and tackle the devastating impact of suicide.

“I’m pleased to have got to know some of the wonderful people at #ANDYSMANCLUB who do a fantastic job in bringing men together in a safe place where they can share their experiences and open up about their struggles. It is truly lifesaving work they carry out across our county and throughout the entire country.

“As a company, we are extremely grateful for all those who have dug deep to help raise a fantastic amount of money to improve the support available locally, but being able to spread the word about this fantastic charity has been the most rewarding part.”

There was a James Bond 007 theme to this year’s Genesis Homes Charity Ball and guests were treated to excellent performances from Explosive Productions which included singers, stilt walkers, fire eaters and acrobatics.

Throughout the year, staff at Genesis Homes took part in charity walks, golf days and bake offs, among other activities.