P R E S S R E L E A S E

FROM: Room to Reward

DATE: 12/03/18

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

Room to Reward Presents A Week’s Holiday to Inspiring Volunteer

Room to Reward, the hospitality charity, have presented an inspirational volunteer with a week’s holiday in Mudeford, Dorset, in recognition of her contribution and dedication to raising awareness and improving the lives of autistic people.

Mandy Garford of the National Autistic Society was presented with the prize at the Autism Professional Awards after being named the Most Inspirational Volunteer. Adam Terpening – Charity Director of Room to Reward – attended the celebration and revealed the special surprise to Mandy on stage.

The holiday home was donated to Room to Reward by a supporter, who wishes to rename anonymous.

“*We were delighted to attend the awards as sponsors of the Most Inspirational Volunteer category and the wonderful donation from our supporter meant we could make it extra-special,”* said Mr. Terpening.

*“Mandy is a truly inspirational lady. Her passion, dedication and commitment to improving the lives for autistic people was humbling to hear about.”*

A mother of three children on the autistic spectrum, Mandy is a qualified teacher who specialises in challenging behaviour. She is the Chairperson of the Dartford and Gravesham Branch, supporting children and adults on the spectrum and their families and also speaks on Autism at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Furthermore, Mandy runs an Autism Café every week and is locally considered a one stop shop for Autism, supporting shops during Autism Hour, supporting Early Help, local businesses and schools, speaking to members of the community, and responding to countless emails from people living anywhere in the South East.

Mandy also set up and runs three Autism pages and a group on Facebook, sits on the committee for the Multi Agency Autism Group, is a local councillor and attends the All Party Parliamentary Group for Autism; ensuring that the Autistic Voice is represented.

Presenting the award, Jane Asher – who hosted the evening along with Kate Fox – said:

*”The winner of this award had a strong focus on parliamentary initiatives which have the potential to reach a large number of people. She is a strong influencer of those with most influence and an excellent advocate who really is making a difference in the lives of autistic people.”*

Room to Reward is a unique hospitality charity that uses donated unsold hotel rooms as a means for registered charities to give something back to their staff and volunteers in the form of a two-night break in a partner hotel.

As well as a holiday for Mandy and family, Mr. Terpening confirmed that Room to Reward will also arrange a short break for the runner-up in the Most Inspirational Volunteer category – Dawn O’Neill from True Colours Inclusive CIC.

*“It was a wonderful evening to be a part of and inspiring to be surrounded by so many people doing such wonderful things and making real positive differences to the lives of autistic people,”* he said.

For more information about the Autism Professional Awards, visit: <http://www.autismprofessionalsawards.org.uk>

For more information about Room to Reward, visit: [www.roomtoreward.org](http://www.roomtoreward.org)

**Notes for Editors**

‘Room to Reward’ is an exciting new registered charity that was launched in July 2015. Since its launch, over 135 hotels are now supporting the scheme. Over 190 hidden heroes have been nominated from various charities. ‘Room to Reward’ is the first of its kind in the hospitality industry. Hotel partners donate their anticipated unsold rooms to reward deserving charity workers with complimentary hotel breaks across the UK.

<http://www.roomtoreward.org/>

Registered Charity 1160675

Photo Captions: Jane Asher, Adam Terpening (Charity Director of Room to Reward) Mandy Garford (Winner of Most Inspirational Volunteer) and Kate Fox

Room to Reward Logo

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