



Press release

24th July 2014

A star-studded evening hosted by the Lord Mayor of the City of London at her official home, the iconic venue the Mansion House, helped to raise valuable funds to help TRACKS autism, a charity for vulnerable children, move even closer to achieving an ambitious fundraising target.

Actress Jane Asher, Baroness Howarth, Lady Hobson and BBC broadcaster and raconteur Reverend Cannon Roger Royle were among the guests attending the event as patrons to help TRACKS autism, a charity dedicated to supporting children with autism and their families, purchase a new building. So far the charity has raised £367,000 but requires an additional £33,000 to complete the purchase.

"We were overwhelmed by the passion and support for TRACKS at the reception," said Mike Shaw, executive trustee of the charity. "Roger Royle, Jane Asher and Baroness Howarth all spoke in praise of TRACKS and the incredible valuable work we do and conveyed our desperate need to raise the final £33,000 to purchase our new building. As a result some guests were moved to take out their cheque books there and then to offer financial support, it was truly amazing!"

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people and the world around them. It is often described as an 'invisible disability' because people with the condition do not 'look' disabled.

TRACKS autism provides a calm environment for children with a typical staff ratio of 1:1. With their support over half of the children that have attended have progressed into mainstream schooling. The difference the

charity makes, according to parents, is invaluable: "What happened at TRACKS was nothing less than a miracle. In the one-year that my son went there, things started to make sense to him," said one parent.

The highly specialised service the charity provides is very costly to deliver and TRACKS is dependent upon charitable contributions to continue its valuable work. The Government's Green Paper: *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* identified the huge value of early intervention for children with autism. The charity raises two thirds of its operating costs through charitable contributions from the community.

Notes:

1. Please visit www.tracks-autism.org.uk for more information or call Vicki Whent, TRACKS autism trustee on 07952121071