

Vital funding needed

UNDER THREAT: Support project is halfway to £60,000 target

By Holly Shackleton

A COMMUNITY project in Colchester supporting people with personality disorders needs to raise a further £30,000 to save an under-threat programme.

The Haven Project began as a pilot scheme in 2004 funded by the department of health to provide crisis and therapy services 24 hours a day for people with personality disorders (PD).

There are different types of personality disorders with sufferers having symptoms such as severe depression or an inability to form close relationships, and treatment can be lengthy.

Among The Haven Project's services is a social inclusion programme, which was launched in 2007 and includes parenting classes and teaching people how to get involved with voluntary work and education.

The Cabinet Office provided three years' start-up funding for the programme but now that is coming to an end and fundraising is the only option left as other official bodies cannot stump up the money at this time.

The Haven, one of a handful of national projects that teaches those with PD to cope with the outside world, set out to raise £60,000, which is needed to run the programme for one year, and thanks to generous donations, they have already reached £30,000.

Heather Castillo, chief executive of The Haven Project, said: "PD is a misunderstood condition that hasn't received support in the past. People need to be enlightened about PD and it needs specialist support.

"We cannot believe how wonderful people are being in terms of the fundraising. This service is absolutely crucial.

"They are a very fragile client group and this programme gives them opportunities that they would not have otherwise had."

One of the clients, Lesley from Colchester said: "The Haven is a lifeline for us. We have



APPEALING FOR SUPPORT: Staff and patients at The Haven Project in Colchester

Photograph: ANDREW PARTRIDGE

been cast on life's scrapheap, and are now given the opportunity to achieve our dreams."

Becky, from Highwoods, added: "The Haven is like a family. It is the one place that is proud of us, the one place that accepts us for who we are."

Money has been raised through the Friends of the Haven scheme or through individual events such as raffles.

For more information about Friends of the Haven and to make a donation, visit the Haven's website www.thehavenproject.org.uk.