

Fighting a global epidemic



Fun exercise: A child uses a dance mat

An epidemic that can reduce its victims' lifespans by ten years and cause cancer, kidney failure, heart disease and diabetes is spreading at an alarming rate.

Worldwide, 300 million adults are clinically obese and an estimated 22 million children under five are estimated to be overweight. The University of Birmingham's obesity research community is working to understand and tackle this deadly condition throughout people's lifetimes.

Dr Eliot Marston, Bupa Translational Research Manager, says: 'There's a definite and inexorable rise of obesity worldwide – this is the global epidemic of our time. It's already overtaking smoking and infectious diseases like TB as the biggest preventable cause of death worldwide.'

Obesity does not just affect the overweight and inactive but is about every factor of people's lives, from health and lifestyle to psychology, education and even economics. Research into obesity at Birmingham is moving towards a more holistic approach, with experts from different disciplines working together to find a 'whole body' solution.

Research is primarily focused on three areas in which Birmingham is world-leading: childhood obesity, body fat distribution and lifestyle factors.

Using sustainable approaches towards exercise uptake in children such as dance mats and developing new therapeutic solutions to counteract dangerous body fat distribution are two areas where Birmingham is already making a difference.

'Obesity is already the biggest preventable cause of death worldwide.'

Dr Marston's post, co-ordinating and supporting interdisciplinary research, is essential to the University's holistic approach and has been supported through a generous philanthropic gift by healthcare company Bupa.

Bupa medical director and Birmingham alumnus Dr Peter Mace (MBChB Medicine, 1976) says: 'We're aware that obesity is currently a major crisis in the UK and Bupa is very happy to support any way of reducing the impact of that crisis.'

More support is needed for the University's fight against obesity. For details of how you can help, visit www.alumni.bham.ac.uk

Donor support

The University would like to thank the following alumni who have supported obesity research:

Dr Charles Proctor (LLB Law, 1977; LLD Law, 2000) – Gift for small research projects carried out with the aim of attracting funding for major research and for workshops bringing academics together

Mark Glatman (LLB Law, 1977), Mike Welton (BSc Civil Engineering, 1968; DEng, 2008) and Neil Murphy (BSocSc Social Sciences, 1984) – Places for PhD students, who Dr Marston says will be embedded in the centre's integrated culture

Chris Banks (BA French and Latin, 1980) – Exercise bikes

Simon Dighton (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1985) – Dance mats



Researching obesity: Dr Eliot Marston

From the Vice-Chancellor:

Welcome to The Difference



As the University's new Vice-Chancellor, I am delighted to welcome you to this year's friends' and supporters' newsletter.

A powerful history of philanthropy exists at Birmingham and I am truly grateful that you are helping us to continue that tradition. Your support is playing a crucial role as we work to transform your University and pursue our goal to be among the world's top higher education institutions.

Between August 2001 and December 2008, your gifts contributed towards total philanthropic funding of more than £28.5 million received by the University, enabling research in areas as diverse as health, the environment and industry, and supporting us as we identify and develop the leaders of tomorrow.

From scholarships for students who could not otherwise attend university, to vital research into the world's obesity crisis and cutting-edge equipment to enable our scientists to probe life in its finest molecular detail, your gifts continue to transform our University.

The percentage of our alumni body who donate to the University is an important

contributing factor in gaining funding from external sources and we hope this will reach 5% by 2012. This is achievable if everyone continues to give as much as they can because all gifts, large and small, make a tremendous difference.

The value of your gifts is even greater until 2011 because of the government match funding scheme. Put simply, the government will give us £1 for every £3 we raise. With Gift Aid added, this makes an example gift of £100 worth £170.95 – a significant increase in value and a remarkable opportunity for you as donors.

Thank you again for giving so generously and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming months and years. I hope you will continue to support our University as we look to a prosperous future.

Professor David Eastwood
Vice-Chancellor



Imagine
if your gift
could go
33%
further than
ever before...

For every £3 donated to the University until August 2011, the government will give us an extra £1.

Learn more

www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund

Student prizes to honour professor of German

Two new student prizes have been established in honour of Professor Michael Butler, who taught at the University for more than 35 years.

Professor Butler joined the University in 1970 as a lecturer in German, progressing to become the first Head of the School of Modern Languages in 1988 and later, the University's Public Orator. He taught his last class on German lyric poetry just ten days before his death.

'The prizes commemorate Michael's tremendous contribution to research and teaching in the Department of German Studies throughout his time at Birmingham,' says Professor Bill Dodd, Head of Department. 'We are very grateful to Michael's many friends, colleagues and former

students from around the UK and Europe, whose generosity has made these prizes possible.'

A total endowment of £5,000 will fund two Michael Butler Prizes of £100 each, one to be awarded to the best essay on a second year German Studies topic and one for the best essay or dissertation on a German Studies topic by a final year undergraduate or master's student.

Learn more

www.german.bham.ac.uk/about/michaelbutlerprize.shtml

Contact us

For more information about making a gift to the University, please contact Fiona Newell in the Development and Alumni Office on +44 (0)121 414 8136 or f.k.newell@bham.ac.uk

To find out more about our fundraising projects and what your gifts have achieved, visit www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund

Gift will help to inspire tomorrow's students

A major gift will support the future of an important programme to inspire children to attend university and ensure the very best students come to Birmingham.



Inspiring: A Summer School student

A gift of £150,000 will co-fund a programme to inspire schoolchildren to attend university.

The Summer Schools invite 100 pupils a year who have just completed their first year of A-levels to spend a week at the University to gain a taste of student life at Birmingham. The residential programme includes attending lectures, playing sports, socialising and attending a celebratory event with key donors at the week's close.

Comments from past attendees include: 'I was unsure about going to university and now I am sure that I will' and 'I met new friends and became more independent and confident.'

The programme is focused on schools whose students don't traditionally continue into higher education to inspire the idea of progression to university. It is hoped Summer School attendees will go on to apply to Birmingham through the Access to Birmingham (A2B) programme (see below for more information).

The gift, from the Derek C and Margaret I Hathaway Family Foundation, will help to support the Summer Schools for three years from 2010 until 2012. Derek says: 'We were born in Birmingham and lived close to the University for many years. Despite living in the USA for the past 25 years, we still have very strong friends and family connections in the area and believe the University is vitally important in nurturing the local community's young talent.'

'I was inspired by John Sheppard (BA General Studies English and History, 1950), my old schoolmaster at Moseley Grammar School for Boys (as it was then known), to work hard to achieve my goals and I hope these Summer Schools will have a similarly pivotal role in the futures of these young people.'

In recognition of his teacher's influence, Derek will return to the University each year to perform the John Sheppard Lecture as part of the Summer Schools programme. More details will be available via www.alumni.bham.ac.uk as they are confirmed.

The Summer Schools programme is funded until 2010 by charitable organisations the Goldman Sachs Foundation and the Sutton Trust.

Director of Development and Alumni Relations Nick Blinco says: 'This funding has been crucial in establishing the Summer Schools as a successful programme at Birmingham. We are tremendously grateful to the Goldman Sachs Foundation, the Sutton Trust and to the Derek C and Margaret I Hathaway Family Foundation for their generous support.'

To support Birmingham's academic enrichment programme or for more information, please contact Ceri Keeping on +44 (0)121 414 8895 or c.a.keeping@bham.ac.uk



Generous: Derek and Margaret Hathaway

Saying thanks from A2B



Thank you: Students supported by the A2B scheme

Students supported by the University's Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme said thank you to donors at a special drinks reception in March.

A2B recruits the most able pupils from schools and areas with low rates of progression to university, some of whom will have attended the Summer Schools programme, and helps them apply to Birmingham.

Sadie Taylor (First Year BSc Sport and Exercise) and Nervar Singh Sami (First Year BMedSc Medical Science), who both received A2B scholarships after achieving excellent A level grades, made speeches at the event.

'The experience and support that I have had with A2B has enabled me to achieve great things', Sadie says. 'Having achieved only BBC at AS level I never expected to get into Birmingham but hearing about this opportunity motivated me to go on to gain straight As. I thank everyone that is involved with and supports this scheme.'

The reception was hosted by lead donor Martin Devenish (BCom Industrial Economic and Business Studies, 1986). Donor Sarah Lee (LLB Law, 1987) says: 'I've been very lucky to have the opportunities I've had and to be able to help other people is really important. It's wonderful to feel I've individually touched somebody's life and made a significant difference.'

Million dollar gift to support future talent

A \$1 million donation from global energy giant BP is helping to bring the very best students to Birmingham.

BP, one of the world's largest energy companies, is supporting academic excellence at Birmingham with a \$1 million gift for undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships.

The gifts will provide a range of scholarships over four years to 2012, each targeted differently, but all with the same aim of bringing the highest calibre students to Birmingham and ensuring the best possible pool of prospective candidates for BP.

Scholarships funded include those given through the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme, for children with no family history of higher education who have the ability and commitment to attend university, but who might struggle to achieve the necessary grades due to personal and social factors.

BP is also funding Excellence Scholarships in subjects relevant to their key recruitment needs

such as engineering and the sciences and BP Internship Scholarships offering a ten-week training programme during the penultimate year of undergraduate study.

For postgraduates, BP is funding both MSc Scholarships to enable talented undergraduates to continue their studies, and Fourth Year Masters Scholarships to encourage high-achieving students to extend their period of study and obtain an enhanced qualification.

'We are committed to attracting the very best candidates, and removing any financial impediments is a key part of this strategy,' says Vice-Chancellor David Eastwood. 'This extremely generous gift will help us greatly towards achieving that goal in the coming years.'

BP's Andy Holmes, Head of Refining and Marketing, Rhine, Germany, adds: 'We focus on recruiting high-calibre graduates like those from



Talent: Geology and Geography student James Inman received an A2B scholarship funded by BP

Birmingham and this partnership will enable us to raise awareness of BP as an employer of choice and identify and recruit talented students ahead of the competition.

'We are committed to supporting our industry's future talent throughout their education, and these scholarships will help to bring the highest calibre of students to Birmingham and in turn, increase the number of those students later recruited by BP.'

To support academic excellence at Birmingham or for more information, please contact Ceri Keeping on +44 (0)121 414 8895 or c.a.keeping@bham.ac.uk

Learn more

For more information about corporate giving to the University, contact Andrew Harris on +44 (0)121 414 2708 or a.j.harris@bham.ac.uk

Maths is the solution



Number crunching: 2008 festival in the Great Hall

Encouraging young people to study mathematics is an essential part of the University's work.

The importance of maths was highlighted when Birmingham was chosen to host the STEM programme, a national scheme promoting the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics at British universities.

Gifts from alumni such as Nancy Blachman and Andrew Fisher have helped promote maths as a valuable and relevant subject to study at university.

Young people from 34 local schools had fun solving problems at the University's first maths festival in 2008, which was attended by 200 14- and 15-year-old pupils.

The event was made possible by a donation from Nancy Blachman (BSc Applied Mathematics, 1978), creator of MathsDelights.org, a maths website for primary school children, and *Google Guide*, an online tutorial on searching with Google.

Nancy had fond memories of taking part in maths contests at secondary school in the San Francisco Bay area. She found the problems much more engrossing than what teachers presented in her maths classes.

Because her school maths contest no longer existed, she co-founded the Julia Robinson Mathematics Festivals in the USA and then encouraged the Birmingham Maths Department to create its own festival.

The next maths festival will be on 17 September 2009. Nancy has also funded a series of masterclasses for gifted high school students.

'I'm delighted that Tony Gardiner, of the maths department, designed a festival and masterclasses that foster a positive feeling about doing mathematics,' she says.

Andrew Fisher (BsocSc Economics, 1982), CEO of financial services firm Towry Law, made a gift to support five scholarships in MSc Mathematical Finance, a programme that sits uniquely between the departments of Mathematics and Economics.

'Now, more than ever, we need graduates in the City with the right technical skills to succeed. I'm delighted that my scholarships will help Birmingham to attract excellent graduates with quantitative skills to the MSc in Mathematical Finance programme,' he says.

The gift of a lifetime

Friends and supporters of the University have pledged around £13.5 million in legacies to support student bursaries and all kinds of projects.

The donors below all decided to give because of their strong connections with Birmingham. To find out more about leaving a legacy, call Martha Cass on +44 (0)121 414 6679.

Dr Stephen and Elizabeth Wright

Dr Stephen Wright (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1959; PhD Chemical Engineering, 1962) left a legacy to support a Chemical Engineering bursary. After he died, his wife Elizabeth was so impressed with the feedback she got on the student's progress, she decided to leave her own bequest to Birmingham.

'Steve was devoted to his work. He used to travel all over the world working on an international project. It was a very interesting life for him and if that could be given to somebody else, it would be fantastic,' she says.



Legacy donor: Elizabeth Wright

John Hurman

John Hurman decided to leave a legacy to ensure the annual prize he gives in memory of his wife Elaine continues to be awarded after his death.

Mrs Hurman studied for her Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at Birmingham and taught modern foreign languages before she died of a brain tumour aged 51.

The £200 prize rewards modern foreign language students' performance in the classroom and goes to the trainee who can elicit the most foreign language from his or her class in any one lesson. Mr Hurman, who trained modern foreign languages teachers at the University for 30 years, assesses contestants himself after schools make recommendations.

'An awful lot of the assessment for the PGCE is written,' he says. 'This prize reflects a teacher's ability in the classroom.'

Karen Lynch

Karen Lynch (MSocSc Social Work, 1995) is a social worker who was employed by a local authority for eight years before moving to work as a Family Court Advisor for Cafcass. She decided to leave a bequest to give something back to Birmingham.

'I was really privileged to go to Birmingham and obviously got good qualifications there,' she says. 'I want to let somebody else benefit from being able to attend the University.'

Paul Steptoe

Paul Steptoe (BSc Mathematics, 1994) is one of the youngest people to have pledged a legacy to the University. The 36-year-old is a father of two and works as a manager in the automotive industry.

'Writing a will is something I hadn't thought much about but I realised when you're married and have children and a house, it's really important to make sure your family are looked after should anything happen to you,' he says. 'When I was asked if I wanted to leave a legacy, I realised I had a good time at Birmingham and I wanted to give something back.'

* The University would also like to thank the late Dr Peter Dearden (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1963; PhD Chemical Engineering, 1967) who kindly left £200,000 to the Department of Chemical Engineering in his will for the refurbishment of an undergraduate laboratory.



Putting Birmingham at the forefront of research

Grants from two organisations have funded a state-of-the-art instrument for biomedical research at Birmingham.

The 600 MHz NMR spectrometer should be installed in the Henry Wellcome Building for Biomolecular NMR Spectroscopy by the end of the summer.

The Wolfson Foundation gave a grant of £500,000 towards the spectrometer, which was match-funded by regional development agency Advantage West Midlands.

Spectrometers can examine life in its finest detail and the new instrument will be used for researching the molecular basis of human health, cancer progression and infectious diseases. It will also allow the University to develop its work in cancer diagnostics.

Professor Michael Overduin, Executive Director of the Biomolecular NMR Facility, says: 'The spectrometer will place Birmingham's NMR facility at the forefront of research, providing scientists with the means to try and unravel disease mechanisms, identify better diagnostic indicators and accelerate drug discovery.'

Reception marks Special Collections reopening

A donor reception will be held in the autumn to mark the reopening of the University's Special Collections.

Including more than 80,000 books and three million manuscripts, the historically important collections have been rehoused in purpose-built, state-of-the-art facilities in the redeveloped Muirhead Tower following a successful fundraising project. The improved facilities include exhibition and learning spaces and increased storage to allow for growth.

The reception will offer donors the opportunity to explore the collections' new home, including the donor wall and plaques, while allowing the University to thank donors for their invaluable support.

Making an impact – the University of Birmingham Fund

Alumni generosity means the University of Birmingham Fund (UBF) has been able to support a range of projects across the University again this year that would not otherwise have been possible.

This year more than any other has been difficult for all charities and we are extremely grateful to every person who has made a gift to the UBF, which funds five key areas of University life: Teaching, Research and IT; Campus, Environment and Facilities; University Sport Birmingham; the Guild of Students and Student Support.

Here are just a few examples of the projects funded by you through UBF in 2009. Visit www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/annual/fundareas.shtml for a full list. Thank you.



Completing the semi-circle: An architect's impression of the music building

Campus Environment and Facilities

Alumni gifts will play a key part in supporting the University's new Music Building. Completing the iconic redbrick Aston Webb semi-circle, the auditorium will contain a 450-seat performance space for music and drama alongside state-of-the-art rehearsal and teaching facilities for the Music department.

The new facility will build on a fantastic heritage of music at Birmingham, and properly reflect our international reputation for research and teaching excellence.

We are seeking further funding to assist in the completion of this important project, and will soon be launching an exciting seat-naming campaign as one of our final steps. For more details on this project, please contact our Deputy Head of Development Matt Mangan on +44 (0)121 414 8640. Thank you.

Professor John Whenham,
Head of Music



Teaching, Research and IT

The School of Psychology, which was rated second in the UK in this year's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), has benefited from UBF support this year thanks to alumni generosity, with funding for its new multimedia 'Babylab'.

The laboratory will allow direct research with infants for the first time at the University with multimedia techniques for stimulus presentation and data analysis.

This is a highly popular field among psychology students and the lab will enhance their skills and experience significantly. A student volunteer scheme will also run alongside the Babylab to train students in running a laboratory. This will provide a real enhancement of students' abilities and transferable qualities for their future careers. Thank you.

Professor Glyn Humphreys,
Head of the School of Psychology



University Sport Birmingham

This year, the UBF has funded three projects for USB, all of which provide exciting new opportunities for students.

One of the successful projects is a training programme for students to become qualified referees and officials across a range of six sports. Upon qualification, these students will support the University as volunteer officials in the British Universities and Colleges Sports (BUCS) matches, intra-league matches and local club fixtures.

The project will also link with other educational institutions to create a pool of volunteers across the city. Students taking part will develop invaluable, skills including leadership and management. Thank you.

Rachael Shepherd,
Active Lifestyle Development Manager

The Guild of Students

The Guild's Dive Boat Club has enjoyed many years of success since its foundation in the 1960s, but has been suffering since the loss of its boat last year.

A gift this year from the UBF will help it buy a new boat to maintain this historic club. The club plans to extend to more diving sites and to train additional students.

The boat will also have improved equipment to help navigate back to port in bad weather. In 2008, the club received a certificate of congratulations from the British Sub-Aqua Club congratulating it on 15 years of membership. Thank you.

Jen Larbie,
Guild President

Student Support

Alumni have once again provided support to a range of bursaries for current students. This year the UBF's student support fund has also been able to support two special projects providing internships to current students in an area related to their studies.

One is the Birmingham Symphony Hall placement which allows one student to undertake a year-long placement with the Symphony and Town Hall as part of their Business degree.

The placement is highly sought after and provides invaluable experience for future career prospects.

The second special project is a year-long internship in museums and art galleries with the Barber Institute. Thank you.

Andrew Miles,
External Relations Manager, Birmingham Business School

Andrew Davies,
Press and Marketing Officer, Barber Institute

Corporate Benefactors

Every year, local businesses donate vouchers, tickets or merchandise as prizes to thank our student callers for their hard work throughout the UBF telephone campaign. This year we would like to say a big thank you to Cadbury World, The Black Country Living Museum, The Glee Club and Domino's Pizza for their support.

Student callers making a difference

Many of our alumni have been called by student fundraisers and Fatima Kanji is one of the voices on the end of the phone.

She plays an integral part in explaining how the University of Birmingham Fund benefits students, while also maintaining and building relationships with alumni.

Money raised by the annual campaign is used to finance a variety of projects around the University that directly benefit students.

Fatima, a first year student studying European Politics, Society and Economics, says: 'By adding to the Alumni Fund with even the smallest of gifts, you are doing something worthwhile and generous. There are a lot of facilities we wouldn't have without the support of alumni.'

'When I leave University, I know that I'm going to donate because it's benefiting the lives of future students.'

Fatima has been working as a student caller since October 2008 when she started her studies at Birmingham and hopes to continue the job alongside her degree into the second and third year.

She says she enjoys hearing all the wonderful memories that alumni have of their time at Birmingham.

'When they speak to callers like me, alumni still feel connected to the University and know they haven't been forgotten.'



Student caller: Fatima Kanji



Success story: Richard Pleeth in New York

Sweet success for Honey Pot alumni

Recipients of Honey Pot awards for student work placements have achieved great things after leaving Birmingham.

Since it started in 2006, the Honey Pot scheme has provided financial support for about 40 undergraduates to do low paid or unpaid work experience over the summer vacation.

Nanjala Nyabola and Richard Pleeth are just two of its success stories.

Nanjala Nyabola (BA African Studies and Political Science, 2008), aged 24
In summer 2006, Nanjala worked in the Czech Republic for six weeks in a project management role with AIESIC, the world's largest student-run organisation.

Her Honey Pot experience was the starting point in a journey that eventually led to her working for the United Nations Development Council and an internship at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

She won the University's Vice-Chancellor's award for her international volunteering and starts a Master's degree in first migration at Oxford University this summer after being awarded the Rhodes scholarship.

'I am so grateful for the Honey Pot award because it was an excellent opportunity that I wouldn't have been able to fund. Without that experience I wouldn't have been prepared for everything that came afterwards,' she says.

Richard Pleeth (BA International Relations, 2007), aged 24

The Big Apple was the venue for Richard's Honey Pot placement in 2006. He spent four months in New York working for international advertising agency McCann Erickson on one of the world's biggest advertising accounts.

Richard is now a Product Manager for cosmetics and beauty company L'Oreal, where he just launched a new skincare brand called La-Roche-Posay.

He said his Honey Pot experience helped him win an unconditional place on L'Oreal's graduate scheme last year, one of the most oversubscribed in the country.

Honey Pot is funded by your donations. To find out how you can help students get a head start in their careers, visit www.alumni.bham.ac.uk

Group giving means more

'Challenge funds' from two of the University's key supporters will maximise the value of gifts made by two groups of alumni this year.

Michael Rawlinson and Chris Outram will match gifts made by the Class of 1991 and those alumni who took the double degree of BSc and BComm.

Both donors also give their time to the University as members of the Development Advisory Council (DAC), reflecting their strong belief in giving something back to the University.

There is also an opportunity for all alumni celebrating an anniversary reunion year in 2009 (Classes of 1958 and earlier, 1959,

1969, 1974, 1984 and 1999) to contribute to a Class Gift. Last year's Class Gifts totalled more than £32,000, proving that collective giving can have a huge impact.

All gifts given to UBF this year will also attract a further 33% value through the new government matched funding scheme. To find out more, visit www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/index.shtml



Collective giving: The 2008 reunion classes, including the Class of 1958 pictured here, came together to make their Class Gifts

Support from around the globe

From the United States to Canada, Cyprus and Greece, alumni and friends all over the world have generously supported the University this year.

With all donations from US-based alumni being matched by Paul and Yuanbi Ramsay through the Ramsay Challenge, almost \$260,000 has been raised.

Nick Blinco, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, says: 'The match gift from the Ramsays enabled us to really maximise donations from our US alumni, many of whom retain strong ties to Birmingham. We would like to thank Paul and Yuanbi for their extremely generous ongoing support.'

One of the many areas where your donations have made a difference is the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme, which helps students from less conventional backgrounds. US alumnus Dr Tim Harris (BSc Biochemistry, 1971; PhD Medical Microbiology, 1974) made a donation to fund A2B science students.

'I wanted to support A2B because it inspires young people to apply to the University and

supports them with a range of activities designed to make the most of their skills,' he says. 'I'm a scientist myself and knowing I've helped students into the Birmingham labs who might not otherwise have made it to university is really satisfying.'

Canadian alumni have also generously supported a range of projects this year, including the Medical School prosectorium, by donating almost Canadian \$13,000.

Alumni worldwide have not only donated funds but also offers of work placements. Nick says: 'These are highly sought after by students, particularly in professional and vocational areas, and we are grateful to all those who offer this type of invaluable experience.'

To find out more about the University of Birmingham Foundation, visit www.bhamf.org or email annualfund@contacts.bham.ac.uk



Matching gifts: Yuanbi and Paul Ramsay

Your gifts now worth even more

Until August 2011, the government match funding scheme will provide an additional 33% of the value of every gift to the University, including those from overseas.

Learn more

www.alumni.bham.ac.uk/fund/index.shtml