

PRESS RELEASE! PRESS RELEASE! PRESS RELEASE!

College employee makes a difference for disadvantaged children in Ecuador

Monday 17th November 2008

Sarah Clarke, Curriculum Quality Leader for Personal Tuition at Cambridge Regional College, is raising funds for disadvantaged and disengaged children in the South American republic of Ecuador. She is holding a fundraising event at Club Salsa in Cambridge on 20th December and is selling personally made Christmas cards in the run up to Christmas.

As a social worker in the UK with many years experience of working with children and young people, Sarah ventured to South America to undertake voluntary work with street children. She volunteered in a street children centre, supporting young people to develop life skills, literacy and numeracy and worked independently with the children's hospital, a day centre and orphanages. She was able to make an impact by using some funds that she had raised before leaving the UK, but decided on her return to the UK, to set up a dedicated charity. The "Mashi Foundation" - a Quechua word that means "friendship" - supports projects in Ecuador which are involved with the care of disadvantaged and disaffected children and young people.



“The time I spent in Ecuador with children who were in incredibly difficult situations changed my perspective on life. . Working closely with the organisations when I was out there, I was able to buy necessities and resources that were so desperately needed, but a lot more needs to be done. I was driven to try to make a difference and that is why I have set up the Foundation,” explains Sarah. “These children are living in extreme poverty, often independently of any adult and so have to find ways to survive. They are often not able to access basic health care and education, but with some financial support, providing these services is more achievable. I have been able to buy parasitic medication for over 150 children and to support 47 children in attending school, by providing them with equipment such as school shoes“.

Sarah is working towards gaining registered charity status, but needs to raise £5000 to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission and is arranging various events to help with the fundraising. The next fundraising event is a salsa class at Club Salsa on Station Road in Cambridge on Saturday 20th of December. The class will be run by Moe Flex, one of the most creative and inspiring teachers and choreographers in International Latin dance, who himself has a charity called Dance for Children and raises money through dance events for charities who support children. Tickets are £5 (includes class and fiesta) and are available in advance by emailing info@mashifoundation.com or from Club Salsa. All proceeds will go to the Mashi Foundation.

“My ultimate goal would be to have a children’s home which could accommodate those children and young people who can no longer live at home. Often street children have left their families as they have suffered severe abuse. To get out of a life on the streets, they need help to access education and all other services that will enable them to leave such a life and look forward to a better future”, Sarah adds.

For more information about the Foundation and for donations, please visit the Foundation’s website www.mashifoundation.com or email info@mashifoundation.com There are also Christmas Cards and gift cards available to buy in support of the Foundation.

ENDS

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Lara Jodin, Marketing Manager, on 01223 418772 or Lesley Devaney, PR & Events Co-ordinator, on 01223 418773.