

Fundraising News

Thank you "Gracias" to all our supporters, whose generous donations are the life-blood of our work.

Churches

Reigate Park Church £1,500
Alexandra Presbyterian Church £200
St Peter's Church Third World Aid Committee £250

Star COTA Fundraisers



Wendy Sturgess

Wendy Sturgess is a long-standing supporter who for many years has been organising talks and workshops to raise funds for COTA. We would like to thank Wendy once again for her dedication and seemingly endless energy!

Birthdays

Thank you also to 6 year old Eleanor, who set an example for us all after asking friends at her birthday party to donate to COTA instead of giving her a present!

COTA team update

After over 3 years with COTA, Project Development Officer Eleni is moving on to pastures new. Through her dedicated work with trusts and foundations, Eleni has

Schools and Universities

Essex University £397
Rugby School £301

Rotary Clubs

Rotary Club of Derby £500
Rotary Club of Rhos-on-Sea £1,250

Luz Vallejo

Glass artist Luz Vallejo organised two craft fairs with fellow artists to raise awareness and money for COTA. As a Colombian who has spent many years living in London, this is a cause very close to her heart and we greatly appreciate all her hard work!

Other Stars

Special thanks also to Marta Hatfield, Ann McEntire, Nick Mann, Steve Henderson, Fred Pape and Rosemary Pasmore

Wedding Bells

We would like to thank fiancés Kate Foster & Ben Saunders and recently married Maria Ortega Santamaria & Chris Beasley for giving their friends the option of donating to COTA in lieu of wedding gifts.

helped raise hundreds of thousands of pounds in funding for our projects. She will be missed by all the team and many of our supporters, but we wish her lots of luck in her new life. We are happy to welcome Carolina Cordoba to the team!



Niños de la Calle

This poem was written by COTA supporter Amparo Restrepo following a visit to Colombia.

Caminando por las calles,
van los niños en silencio,
en el silencio amargo de la
incertidumbre,
sin paz, ni regocijo,
ni una luz que alumbre.

Un andar de laberintos,
entre lo escabroso y oscuro,
con un camino largo por recorrer,
entre el horizonte y futuro.

Con una realidad más amarga que
la hiel,
pero con deseos de vivir,
y la esperanza a flor de piel.

Children of the Street

Walking the streets,
they go in silence, the children,
in the bitter silence of uncertainty,
with no peace, no cause to rejoice,
no light to illuminate them.

Walking as if in a labyrinth,
between the darkness and the
rough,
and with a long road to travel,
between the horizon and future.

With a reality more bitter,
than bitterness itself,
but with the desire to live,
and with hope buried skin-deep.

The Year Ahead

Since our establishment in 1991, following Desmond Wilcox's shocking documentary on street children in Bogota, Children of the Andes (COTA) has invested almost £3.5 million in projects throughout Colombia, benefiting many thousands of children.

Despite this, the need for our support is greater than ever. With over 60% of the population living in poverty, 3 million people displaced and the internal conflict still rife, many children are missing out on a childhood and any hope for a better future.

During 2006 we will continue our work to support these children, through our partnership with over twenty protection, education, healthcare and peace-building programmes.

Some address immediate needs, providing vital food, clothing, medical support and shelter. However, increasingly our support is targeted at programmes that address the *root causes* of poverty and violence - working with families, communities, service providers and government, as well as the children themselves, to help bring about longer term change.

One of COTA's most recent projects of this kind is a pioneering education programme for working children, which has



just received a major five year Lottery grant and will formally start this spring. There are currently 3 million working children in Colombia representing one of the largest groups of children excluded from education - 75% have either never been to school or have dropped out.

This initiative will help working children develop the skills they need to learn and will help establish a more flexible primary education system that is adapted to their needs. Key stake-holders will play a vital role - families will be invited to take part in income-generation initiatives to help reduce pressure on children to work, and specialist training will be provided to ensure teachers are better prepared to meet the needs of child workers. The programme already has the support of the Ministry of Education and, once fully developed, will have the potential to be used widely in Colombia.

In line with our commitment to bring about longer-term change for children in Colombia, COTA is broadening its focus from providing funds to providing support with capacity building. In this way we hope to empower organisations to become more sustainable and provide better direct services through strengthened institutional

systems, training and improved awareness of child rights.

During 2006 we will be implementing a pilot 4-year capacity building programme with a grass-roots street children's NGO. Although the staff have a wealth of experience of working with street children, the organisation's infrastructure is poor and the finances weak - a problem typical of many grass roots NGOs in the field. Once the pilot is complete we plan to use the experience to help other grass roots children's initiatives in Colombia.

Since our focus on capacity building will require more intensive work with our project partners, we also plan to expand our Field Office (FO) team in 2006. Our FO was initially piloted in 2004 and has already brought enormous benefit to the charity and to our partners, by enabling us to monitor project work more effectively, take a more proactive approach to project development and gain a better understanding of project needs.

This is a snap-shot of just some of the work Children of the Andes will be doing in 2006. For more information on the projects we will be supporting please visit our updated web-site at www.childrenoftheandes.org.



Getting Active IN 2006

Take action by getting active to raise funds for children in Colombia. To inspire you, we thought we would tell what some of our supporters got up to last year, what others have planned for this year, and what you can do starting today!

Here are just some of the ways to make 2006 your year for getting fit and putting the 'fun' into fundraising.

Marathons & Runs

With a large number of marathons, half-marathons and shorter runs (5-10k) in the UK and overseas on offer, there is no excuse not to take part. And remember that it's the taking part that counts and the experience will be one you'll never forget!

Once you decide on an event, just contact us and we'll arrange to send you sponsorship forms, fundraising advice and COTA t-shirts!

David Wetton London Marathon

David ran his first London Marathon in 2005. Having secured a place for the Great North Run in October 2006, David has pledged to raise funds for Children of the Andes (COTA).



"I previously raised funds for COTA's Street Children project through a midnight sponsored hike with my local youth group. I love the fact that COTA works with grass roots projects, supporting children in Colombia who have struggled in the face of poverty, ill health, war and neglect. I hope that my fundraising will help to make a real difference to the lives of these children."

Carlos Blanco Great South Run

"I decided to support COTA because I saw with my own eyes the plight of street children in Colombia, my home country. It makes me very sad to see that there are still thousands of children in Colombia who live on the streets; children who do not have a family, a home or anything to live for. I look at my two little boys and my eyes fill with tears to see how lucky they are. It is essential that we all make our own little contribution to help improve the lives of street children."

Nubia Crollick Paris Marathon

"As a Colombian it is an honour for me to run the Paris Marathon for COTA."

Over the past four years, my husband and I have run various half marathons for charities such as Cancer Research and Sense, and last year we ran the London Marathon in 4 hours and 37 minutes!



We have been raising funds and training hard for 4 months to prepare for the Paris Marathon on 9 April. We would like to complete the marathon in under 4 hours to improve on our London Marathon result."

You can sponsor Nubia and David online at www.justgiving.com/nubia1. What's more, if you are in Paris on 9 April, you can watch the marathon start from the Champs d'Elysées at 8:30am!

Dates of other UK runs in 2006

Great Manchester 10K 21/05/06
Edinburgh Marathon 11/06/06
British 10K London 02/07/06
Loch Ness Marathon 01/10/06
Great North Run 01/10/06
Great South Run 22/10/06



Sky diving

If you would like to jump out of a plane at 10,000ft for COTA, let us know! With options to suit all levels of experience and a choice of over 20 BPA registered centres all over the UK, take advantage of the summer and book yourself in for an unforgettable parachute adventure!



White Water Rafting

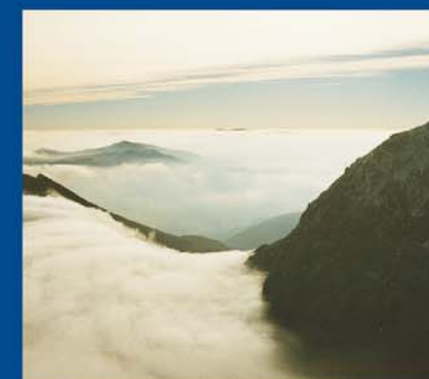
If water sports are more your thing, why not get a group of friends or colleagues together and race the rapids for COTA? This is an ideal summer activity that requires no previous experience. Just let us know you're interested and we'll help you plan from there!

Treks

Whether overseas or in the UK, treks are a great way to get fit, explore new places and meet interesting people whilst making a real difference to our work. So instead of dreaming of going on that adventure, why not contact us to find out how you can make those dreams a reality or log on to www.charitychallenge.co.uk

Upcoming treks include:

Kilimanjaro Summit Climb 05/07/06
Inca Trail 08/09/06
Everest Basecamp 9/09/06
Great Wall of China 07/10/06
Brazilian Waterfalls 19/10/06
Cuban Revolution Cycle 03/11/06
Mexican Jungle Challenge 03/11/06



The Three Peaks Challenge

The challenge is to climb the three highest peaks in Britain (Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafell Pike in Cumbria and Mount Snowdon in Wales) in 24 hours, including travel time! Embarking on this challenge requires commitment, planning and above all stamina but it is quite an achievement when completed!

Pedalling Against Child Poverty: Cali to La Paz on two wheels

This September, photojournalist Colin Brooks and English teacher Steve Clarke will embark on a 4000km cycling expedition from Cali, Colombia to La Paz, Bolivia, with the aim of raising over £5000 for charity.

Steve, a resident of Cali since 2003, says, "I've felt welcome in Colombia since I arrived here three years ago. By raising money for Children of the Andes to continue their work, I hope I can give something back to a country whose people have shown me so much warmth and kindness over the years."

Colin, who cycled 800km across the Bolivian and Peruvian Andes in 2004, adds, "The physical

challenge of riding through some of the continent's most spectacular environments is a big attraction, but I also hope that our reports from the saddle can provide an alternative to media coverage which too often focuses on the violent and sensational in South America."

Before they get on their bikes, Colin and Steve will spend several weeks in Cali getting to know the reality of life for children, young people and families who are participating in COTA's projects, in order to produce a photo-documentary. As they progress on their four-month journey through the Andes, the cyclists will upload regular photo-stories from their documentary project, along with updates of their two-wheeled adventures, onto the Pedalling Against Child Poverty expedition website; <http://pacp.moonfruit.com>. Colin and Steve also plan to publish images from the Cali leg of their expedition in the autumn issue of the COTA newsletter.

Colin and Steve's Cycle Route



Other dates for cycle rides

London-Brighton Bike Ride: 06/06
London-Paris Cycle: 21-25/06/06
Vietnam Cycle: 29/10-10/11/06