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Press release:

COVID CHANGES EVERYTHING – AND BRINGS US TOGETHER IN STRANGE WAYS!

**STARS UNITE TO BRING INTERNATIONAL HELP TO THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN OF DARFUR,
DESPITE COVID KEEPING US APART – AND A SURPRISE ROTARY AWARD!**

Joanna Lumley OBE FRGS, Miriam Margolyes OBE, Julie Etchingham, Timothy West CBE and Lord Cope of Berkeley PC got together online this week to bring international supporters together to help children living in remote villages in Darfur, Sudan – where there is no internet, not even electricity! “Children are starving and need us now more than ever” said Joanna Lumley who, together with the other celebrities at the KIDS FOR KIDS Candlelit Christmas Concert this year, is a Patron of the charity.

The Kids for Kids’ annual Candlelit Christmas Concert sponsored by Delamere Dairy has been held in London for the past 20 years, but not this year! Covid-19 has changed all that. “Although lockdown was lifted I felt I could not risk the health of any one of our wonderful supporters, and of course not our much loved celebrity Patrons” said Patricia Parker MBE, Founder of the charity “so we had to go online. To make it even harder, I wanted it to be live”. The small team who work for Kids for Kids quickly gained technical skills in order to take the magic online. Working with Queen’s Gate school, whose children sing their hearts out each year, the concert went ahead without a glitch! Celebrities recorded themselves reading their favourite Christmas stories from their own homes. “Miriam Margolyes is in Italy but that worked too” said Patricia.

“I never thought I would say this” said Patricia “But Covid may have its benefits! Because we took our concert online, over 300 families from all over the world, including France, Denmark, Norway, Malta, Mexico, North America and even Sudan, joined us and I was able to speak to so many friends many of whom had never been able to join us in London.”

The online concert raised over £10,000 which will enable Kids for Kids to provide soap to individual families in remote villages, as well as mosquito nets and goats for their milk for children facing starvation right now. “We have had to cancel every event this year and hardly dared hope to raise even enough to cover our costs. It is under half of what a live concert would raise but it will help us to fight malnutrition in children, mosquito nets to protect against malaria, which is sweeping across the region, and, especially soap to combat Covid-19 in Darfur” said Patricia.

“The concert raised everyone’s spirits and brought us together in ways we couldn’t have imagined! As every year, we asked people to wear something red, and they all lit candles. It was wonderful to be able to raise a glass with so many friends.”

Patricia Parker was surprised with a prestigious **Paul Harris Fellowship Rotary Award**. The Award was presented to her by Jon Martin, Immediate Past President of South Holland Rotary Club, for her devotion to the ideal of good will, peace and understanding. The last individual to publicly receive the Paul Harris Award was Captain Sir Tom Moore in July 2020. Previous recipients include Mother Theresa and President Clinton.

Please get in touch with any questions: charlotte@kidsforkids.org.uk / www.kidsforkids.org.uk

NOTES FOR THE EDITOR:

Kids for Kids was founded in 2001 by Patricia Parker MBE after her first-hand experience of the inexcusable conditions children were living in in Darfur, Sudan. The poorest families survive on less than £25 a year. With inflation soaring, up to 100% in May this year, and shortages of even the most basic of essentials, starvation is a real threat. Sudan is currently facing its worst food crisis in recent years and dealing with COVID-19 on top of this. Mothers cannot afford to feed their children protein in any form. Prolonged malnutrition damages growth, weakens bones and teeth, and destroys brain cells. The future is a bleak prospect for a mother who worries every day about how she can feed her little ones. There is no money to purchase soap, the only way that people can protect themselves from the virus. Kids for Kids is working hard to provide goats for milk to strengthen people's immune systems and soap to every family in all our villages. Please read about our Urgent Appeal for Soap here: www.kidsforkids.org.uk/SoapAppeal.

Kids for Kids adopts a village, introducing an integrated package of grass roots projects identified by the villagers themselves as things they are in need of most – and which will help them out of poverty long term. All our projects are sustainable. From our 'lend a goat' scheme through to training midwives and first aid workers, planting sustainable forests and fruit trees, to installing water pumps in villages so they have clean, fresh water, to building kindergartens, Kids for Kids has adopted 105 villages so far.

Kids for Kids has received support from many well-known personalities including HRH The Prince of Wales, Joanna Lumley OBE, Eamonn Holmes OBE, Julie Etchingam, His Holiness Pope Francis, Lord Carrington PC, Timothy West OBE, Miriam Margolyes OBE, and many others.

For details of Kids for Kids' extraordinary support which has helped over 550,000 people to date, please do get in touch or visit our website: www.kidsforkids.org.uk

Images:



Joanna Lumley OBE FRGS, Patron of Kids for Kids



Julie Etchingam, Patron Kids for Kids



Miriam Margolyes OBE, Patron Kids for Kids



Timothy West CBE, Patron Kids for Kids



Patricia Parker MBE, Founder of Kids for Kids, being presented with the Paul Harris Fellowship award



International supporters on Zoom

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