

PRESS RELEASE - 14 May 2010

Eddi Goes East - and Zigger the hypnotist dog, is going too.

Help for young survivors of the tsunami in Sri Lanka

A Brighton woman and her dog, Zigger, are moving to Sri Lanka for two years to help combat emotional distress among young survivors of the 2004 tsunami in a region of Sri Lanka.

The Boxing Day Tsunami killed four thousand people in the area of Hikkaduwa. A staggering 70% of them were women - the grandmothers and mothers, wives, sisters of the survivors. This has left a large number of devastated and traumatised young people. Some have chosen suicide as the solution to their despair.

Brighton resident Eddi Piper has spent the last 30 years addressing the problems of young people in the UK, including suicide, bullying and self-harm. "Without support, many young people find it difficult to deal with the problems life throws at them," says Eddi,

"Zigger is my Cavalier King Charles spaniel. He took me on 4 years ago and will be coming to keep me company. He is also wonderful with distressed children who respond to him in a way they sometimes find difficult with a human".

Following the tsunami, hundreds of young people in this region lost every member of their immediate family. They are traumatised, their futures look bleak and hopeless. With their parents and grandparents dead, they do not know where to turn. Recently one young man simply gave up, lay down by the side of the railway track, rested his head on a rail and waited for the train.

Says Eddi, "While the causes of British and Sri Lankan young people's problems may be different, many of the helping strategies are similar." While working from Brighton Eddi has counselled and run projects for hundreds of young people. She adds "I have spent over thirty years developing programmes to address these issues. The projects give young people a focus, reassurance, and opportunities to re-build their images of themselves, their self-esteem and develop the confidence to support their friends. I know they work, I have seen it again and again, both in the UK and sub-Saharan Africa."

"It is not quick or easy," says Eddi "it takes experience, patience, and of course money." Zigger is taking the lead in the fund raising effort. His hypnotic Dali-dog impression features on the project's logo, in the publicity material and on the web site."

Eddi is funding her own living expenses from her UK pension, and letting her house. The bulk of the funds will go into maintaining the Chandrasevana Community Centre, where she will be based, and to pay the teachers who train young people. They learn skills to improve their employment prospects,

including performance skills and traditional Kandy dancing, which is always a tourist attraction, English language and computer skills.

Eddi is a long-standing member of the Hullabaloo Community Quire. She says. “Zigger also comes rehearsals and performances, and despite his awful attempts to join in, the choir have adopted this project and will help raise funds at concerts and busking events over the next two years.”

You can read Eddi and Zigger’s blog on www.eddigoeseast.com. Though as Eddi points out “I have to write it as he has difficulty getting his paws around the keyboard, and is very busy working on a hypnotism routine to coax donations from Hullabaloo audiences and anyone else who is prepared to look deeply into his eyes – he seems to be doing a good job!

Editors Notes:

1. There is more information at www.eddigoeseast.com
2. Although the target is £22,000 to run the community centre and the project for two years, Eddi will still go to Sri Lanka regardless of how much is raised.
3. The project is being coordinated by the Hikkaduwa Area Relief Fund
4. Eddi Piper’s CV is on the ‘About Eddi’ page of the web site
5. Details on how to make donations are on the ‘Fund Raising’ page of the web site
6. Contact Eddi:
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7. There is a copy of this press release on the ‘Contact & Links’ page of the web site