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FACTS ABOUT MARY'S MEALS

1. The story started in 1992 during the Bosnian conflict. Magnus McFarlane-Barrow and his brother Fergus, two fish farmers in Argyll, took a jeep load of aid from their home to Medjugorje in Bosnia. Magnus, who was 24 at the time, gave up his job for a year to keep delivering the flow of aid but hasn't stopped since. (Magnus was just 14 when he first visited Medjugorje as a backpacker!)
2. Scottish International Relief became a registered charity in 1993.
3. SIR's work then extended into building homes for abandoned children in Romania and setting up mobile clinics for returning refugees in Liberia.
4. The Mary's Meals campaign was born in 2002 after a trip Magnus made to Malawi during a famine. The mother he met who was dying of Aids was called Emma. It was her eldest child Edward, who was about 14, told Magnus that his ambition was "to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."
5. Mary's Meals feeding programme began with 200 children in Malawi in 2002. It now feeds over 450,000 children every school day in Malawi.
6. Feeding in Malawi was followed by feeding in India in 2004, then Albania, Kenya, Liberia, Uganda, the Philippines, Romania and Ukraine all in 2005. Feeding in Haiti began in 2006. We then went to Bosnia, Sudan and Zambia in 2007. Burma and Thailand followed in 2008, and Ecuador in 2010.
7. It was named Mary's Meals after Mary, the mother of Jesus, who brought up her child in poverty.
8. We work in 16 countries across the world (we're now counting Burma and Thailand as two separate countries.)
9. As of May 2011, we are feeding over 500,000 children.
10. Mary's Meals is a non-denominational charity supported by people of all faiths and none and feeding children of all faiths and none.
11. Our mission is to ensure that every child in the world gets at least one meal a day in a place of education.
12. We believe that food gives the chance of life. Education gives the child a chance to escape the spiral of poverty.
13. Mary's Meals relies on the involvement of volunteers to fundraise and to deliver the food in our project countries. Thousands fundraise on our behalf here AND more than 60,000 volunteers deliver the daily meals to the children in our project countries.
14. We are committed to spending 93p in every pound given on our charitable objectives. (We say "charitable objectives rather than "on our projects" because some money goes on raising awareness of the issues of hunger and poverty in schools etc in this country)
15. In 2011, it will cost us £6.15 to feed a child for a whole school year in Malawi. The global average is £9.40 to feed a child for a whole school year. The reason for the increase is rising food prices and the lower value of the pound.

16. We now have supporter bases around the world, including Abu Dhabi, Australia, Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, and the USA.

17. The sponsor a school campaign and the Backpack Project are two of our most successful campaigns.

18. The sponsor a school campaign involves an individual or group meeting the costs of feeding children at any given school or providing the money to build a kitchen onto the side of a school, or both. The campaign runs in Malawi and Liberia although there is no need for kitchens in Liberia so there it is just a case of meeting feeding costs. All those who sponsor a school in any form get a school allocated to them, their name on the wall of the school and a document giving the school's profile.

19. The Backpack Project supports the education element of our feeding programme. It is just one of a number of things schools can do to help us feed and educate children in our projects. A new Schools Resources page can be found on our website which has all the information, lesson plans etc, most of which fit into the curriculum and which have been devised with the help of professionals.

20. Our website address is www.marysmealsusa.org