

CHARITY FOUNDER ASSERTS UN'S ZERO HUNGER GOAL CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT GLOBAL, SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE TO HUNGER

International Charity Mary's Meals Leads The Way In Reducing Child Hunger Through Innovative School Feeding Model

Bloomfield, N.J. – October 12, 2021 – The international charity focused on ending child hunger, Mary's Meals asserts that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger cannot be achieved by 2030, unless the "all hands-on deck" global response to COVID-19 is replicated in the fight against hunger.

The crisis call comes in the approach to World Food Day on October 16 and the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 in November.

The global charitable organization, which has a U.S. office in Bloomfield, N.J., aims to break the cycle of hunger and poverty, creating a generation of educated young people, who are equipped to both meet the challenges that they face and create positive futures for their communities.

CEO and founder Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow states: "There is an urgent need for a global and systematic response to global hunger. If we are to reach the laudable yet currently out of reach Zero Hunger targets set forth by the U.N. in 2015, we should adopt a similar model to the global response to COVID-19. Being too hungry to learn is one of the main issues affecting tens of millions of children across the world each day. The U.N.'s Zero Hunger and No Poverty goals are depressingly behind schedule. Poverty and hunger are intrinsically linked and we must recognize the real issues at play in order to break the cycle that is impacting the lives of millions of children."

MacFarlane-Barrow continues, "Providing more than two million impoverished children a nutritious daily meal in an educational setting is an amazing moment in the Mary's Meals story and we are incredibly thankful to the people who have so generously supported us on this journey. Yet, there is much more to be achieved in our continued efforts to feed children in their places of education across the world's poorest communities."

Founded in 2002, Mary's Meals has developed an innovative and effective school feeding model which helps ensure more than two million chronically hungry children each day are receiving a nutritious meal in their place of education. Mary's Meals serves children in 19 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The organization has developed a sustainable and empowering charitable model by:

- Providing meals in school settings. This encourages children to gain a basic education that enables them to break free of the cycle of chronic poverty.
- Developing a sustainable program managed by local people. This contributes to the local economy through the purchase or growing of food, builds economic capacity, provides local farmers a market and develops skills of local volunteers.
- Creating a grassroots global movement that involves as many local people as possible, including volunteers in the individual countries, and recognizes that each person has a unique part to play in the mission.

MacFarlane-Barrow said, "We are focused upon making long term positive change. It's no coincidence that the poorest people in the world are the ones who receive no or very little education. Being too hungry to learn is one of the main issues millions of children across the world face every day – the stark choice between eating or learning. Providing a young person with a good meal in their place of education provides them with the nourishment, energy and will-power to learn; it gives them the basic tools to transform not just their own lives, but the lives of their communities. If we can raise awareness and action to support and replicate this simple idea across the global

community, we could have a shot at achieving those key aims of the U.N. for Zero Hunger and No Poverty.”

— END —

Notes to Editors

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Images

- Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow
- 11-year-old Gift who attends Kabila Primary School in Zambia and receives Mary's Meals.

About Mary's Meals

- When schools closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mary's Meals continued to reach almost every child enrolled in its school feeding programs through community distributions of food parcels and essential hygiene items. Ensuring their work didn't stop at this challenging time enabled parents or guardians to cook daily meals for the children at home - their temporary place of education - and reduced household hunger and fear.
- The average global cost to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year is just \$21 USD.
- Mary's Meals started in 2002 when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked her eldest son Edward what his dreams were in life, he replied simply: "I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."
- Mary's Meals is committed to spending at least 93% of donations directly on its charitable activities. This is only possible because most of the charity's work is done by an army of dedicated volunteers.
- Mary's Meals recently published a five-year study showing promising results in reducing child hunger, giving children energy, improving children's well-being and helping more children to access education. The charity believes that a steady stream of food in school is changing the story for young people who might otherwise be begging for their next meal or too worried about hunger to engage in lessons.
- Mary's meals also supports a home for young children with HIV who were abandoned as children in Romania.
- Mary's Meals America is supported by a team of ambassadors, volunteers, churches and fundraisers across the country working to raise awareness of Mary's Meals in their local communities and raise funds to feed more children across the globe. Global ambassadors include Gerard Butler and Emma Thompson.

Facts on poverty and child hunger

- More than 58 million primary school-age children are out of school around the world.
[Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019 – UIS Statistics – [unesco.org](https://uis.unesco.org)]
- An estimated 356 million children live in extreme poverty. Despite comprising one third of the global population, they represent half of those struggling to survive on less than \$1.90 USD a day.
[Source: UNICEF, 2021 – <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>]
- 73 million children living in extreme poverty are in need of school feeding.

[Source: WFP, 2020 – <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2020>]

- Nearly half of all deaths in children under five are attributable to undernutrition; undernutrition puts children at greater risk of dying from common infections, increases the frequency and severity of such infections, and delays recovery.

[Source: UNICEF, 2020 – <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>]