FUNDOWN CARIBE: ONE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

One of the biggest problems faced when a child has Down syndrome is finding acceptance in wider society. In two GlobalGiving-sponsored initiatives Fundown Caribe is working to fulfil its ultimate mission of creating inclusive environments for people with the condition, as well as other cognitive disabilities, across the Colombian Caribbean coast.

**DOWN SYNDROME** is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement that has always been a part of the human condition. It is universally present across racial, gender and socioeconomic lines – although there is considerable variation worldwide – and occurs in approximately one in 800 live births. Despite this prevalence, the reality is that individuals with Down syndrome, like those with many disabilities, are often faced with ignorance and lack of opportunities.

The Caribbean Down Syndrome Foundation (Fundown Caribe) is a non-profit organisation set up by parents of children with Down syndrome in an effort to promote the development and inclusion of people with the condition. With the slogan ‘One makes a difference’ underpinning their activities, the Foundation establishes small-scale projects to enact change within communities and permanently shape attitudes to people with disabilities. In support of these activities, the fundraising platform GlobalGiving is connecting two Fundown Caribe projects with potential donors so that the organisation’s dreams can become a reality.

**INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: BUSTING MYTHS IN COLOMBIA**

One of the biggest challenges faced by people with Down syndrome is overcoming the stereotypes that pervade many societies around the world. In an effort to confront these myths head on, Fundown Caribe is launching an awareness campaign in Colombia in order to promote the idea of people with Down syndrome as equals. In an expansive plan that includes educational workshops in schools, seminars for teachers and workshops for families, the Foundation hopes to produce long-term change in attitudes and ensure that individuals with Down syndrome are included ‘naturally’ in their communities. An important aspect of this is getting rid of the preconception that people with cognitive disabilities should always be placed in ‘special’ institutions.

With a funding goal of US $23,000, this far-reaching project is relying on public donors to ensure a better environment for people with Down syndrome. To find out more, go to:

www.globalgiving.org/projects/bustingmyths-in-colombia

**DISABILITY AND INCLUSION: TRAINING COLOMBIAN TEACHERS**

Students with disabilities have the potential to gain a lot from a positive school experience. Unfortunately, largely due to a lack of understanding on the part of teachers, the needs of these children are often not catered for, meaning that many end up dropping out before they have reached their full potential. These children miss out not only on a formal education, but also on the interactions with other people that are so important both for them as individuals and also for their classmates, who will learn to be more inclusive. By establishing training workshops and lectures for teachers so that they can gain the necessary skills to work with children who have Down syndrome and other cognitive disabilities, Fundown Caribe is hoping to reduce dropout rate for this population and further contribute to its goals of inclusion and equality.

This project is looking to raise US $20,000, and if enacted successfully it should play a major role in breaking the exclusion cycle faced by many children. To find out more, go to:

www.globalgiving.org/projects/inclusion-teaching-teachers-in-colombia

ABOUT GLOBALGIVING

GlobalGiving connects people with over 1,000 pre-screened grassroots charity projects around the world. It is an efficient, transparent way to make an impact with donated funds. Its mission is to catalyse a global market for ideas, information and money that democratises aid and philanthropy. Since 2002, 421,533 donors have given US $163,867,032 to 11,657 projects. The organisation offers donors the opportunity to turn their donation into a gift, or give money in memory or honour of someone important to them. GlobalGiving gift cards are also available, and donors in the US can use the text-to-give option, which allows them to make $10 donations from their mobile phones. More information about GlobalGiving and its featured projects can be found on the website: http://www.globalgiving.org/