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The milk of human kindness

By Diana Cormack



Sara and a throng of volunteers are joined by Rudi Vis on Saturday 22 January. Photo by Erini Rodis

Local mother of two Sara Sibley was so moved by a TV programme about the plight of babies involved in the tsunami disaster that she determined to do something to help. Sara, who works as a nanny and has lived in East Finchley all her life, set about organising a collection of baby formula milk powder, new baby bottles and beakers by contacting her friends and anyone else she felt could help.

Word spread rapidly, helped by sticking up posters and leafletting schools and businesses. Sara was also interviewed on the nationwide commercial Radio Aid campaign and London Greek Radio, as well as featuring in newspaper articles. Barnet Council assisted by putting up directions to the Green Man Community Centre at Strawberry Vale for the collection on Saturday 22 January, attended by MP Rudi Vis.

The response was terrific. "It was way over what I expected," Sara told *THE ARCHER*. "It's been amazing!" So much was donated that the van sent to transport it to Chiswick Temple had to be changed for a much bigger one. Because their original donation of

boxes to pack the goods in proved to be too few, The Big Yellow Box Company pledged to provide as many as were needed. Similar stories of generosity surfaced throughout the day, such as the family who gave seventy seven tins of milk and seventy seven baby bottles in memory of their father who had just passed away at the age of seventy seven. Or the lady who bought £1000 worth of powdered milk with money she had collected from family and friends. Tesco exchanged any boxed liquid milk that was given for tins of the powdered variety and manufacturers Avent donated four hundred of their baby bottles. Shan, of Budgen's in the High Road, wrote labels for the tins in Singhalese.

Sara, a committed Christian, was delighted with the multi-faith involvement in the event. "It further illustrates the power of the human spirit," said Tarun Patel of Neasden Temple. "The local community can be justly proud."

And the local community can be justly proud of Sara.



Sara helps the children pack the milk. Photo by Erini Rodis

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