



22 March 2005

On the ball for charity

The battle of the sexes kicked off at the weekend as male and female staff from Whitefriars Housing Group got on the ball in the name of charity.

Employees from the not-for-profit housing group held a men v women football match on Sunday to raise funds for a poverty stricken area of Honduras.

The staff aim to raise around £300 to help give poverty the boot for one community and help renovate a primary school. Staff were moved by the plight of the youngsters in an area where illiteracy rates are as high as 40 per cent, 84 per cent of housing is deficient and dangerous to health, and 30 per cent of children under five are malnourished.

On the day the women proved to be top dog and claimed one giant footballing leap for womankind. The final score was 7-5 after the women claimed victory in a tense penalty shootout.

The money raised could mean the difference between a life of poverty and a chance of a future for 8,000 children.

Emma Woodgate from Plan UK, the charity leading the project, said the generosity of staff would make a real difference.

She said: "Every donation helps and we are grateful for all the help we receive. Plan's aim is to repair and rebuild over 70 schools and ensure children live in safe healthy homes. This donation is a step on the way to achieving this."

Staff spent weeks training for the big event but despite aching legs and bruised male egos, according to Sue Howarth, centre forward on the day, it was all worth it.

Sue, customer involvement officer at Whitefriars, said: "We were really touched by the story and wanted to do something to help. By sponsoring this school building project we can make a long-term difference in the area.

"What we hope to do is to support Plan in their bid to help Honduras and raise some of the money needed to renovate one school. If any local businesses or organisations wish to join us in this quest, we'd love to hear from them."

The footballing escapade is the latest in a long line of fundraising activities organised by Whitefriars' staff. Other charity challenges saw male team members don women's clothes for a fun run, employees donate unwanted clothes to children in Uganda and the Chair in a sticky situation wrapping presents for needy children across Coventry.

Any businesses or organisations wishing to help Whitefriars' mission to help Plan build a school, should contact Michelle Hallmark on 024 7621 7399.

Ends

**For further information please contact Michelle Hallmark at The Bridge Group on
02476 217 398 or m.hallmark@bridge-group.co.uk**