

Press release 27-02-2014
For immediate release (photo attached):



An award winning south Belfast cafe is preparing to give away its profits to local charities who focus on helping the global poor. Five charities have been shortlisted, and now customers at Common Grounds café on University Avenue will decide which two should share next year's profits from the popular coffee shop.

Voting has been taking place all week at the fair trade café in the Holylands area, with customers invited to drop a token coffee bean into their chosen charity's cup every time they buy a food or drink. The final vote will take place on the Big Charity Give Away night next Wednesday, when the selected charities have five minutes to pitch for their cause in front of customers and supporters, who will then cast a vote.

The charities nominated are Barefeet Theatre, Concern Worldwide, Camara Education, Serve and Partners Relief.

In the past nine years since it has opened, Common Grounds has given away almost £56,000 to local charities, who work at helping vulnerable people in some of the world's poorest places. Last year, four charities were selected to share the café's profits. They will each receive over £1,000 at the event next week.

Phil King, one of the directors at Common Grounds said: "What we are attempting to do is engage with the local community - customers, residents, students and people who work in the area - to get them to think globally. And giving away all our annual profits to charity certainly makes people think.

"At Common Grounds, we do a lot within the community, hosting a friendship club for people who are new to Belfast, and organising a free slap-up dinner for people who are alone at Christmas. But we also focus on those who are vulnerable in other parts of the world. We hope that as we think globally and act locally that lives will be enriched and inspired by what we have created here."

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Phil King, one of the café directors, is available for interview: 07962266478
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Notes for Editors:

- The Big Charity Give Away event will take place on Wednesday 5th March at 7pm in Common Grounds café.
- Common Grounds is winner of Belfast's Best Fairtrade Café of the Year 2010 and 2011.
- Common Grounds began as a desire to reach out to the local and global community. Common Grounds is a not-for-profit business. We give away our profits to support humanitarian projects in the developing world and seek to raise awareness of issues that affect the global poor.
- Barefeet Theatre is a performance arts charity that works with children living on the streets in Zambia and those at risk of ending up on the streets.
- Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organisation tackling hunger with some of the most vulnerable people in 25 of the world's poorest places.
- Serve is a development and volunteering organisation committed to tackling poverty in the developing world. They work in partnership with marginalised communities, helping them to tackle poverty and injustice.
- Camara Education uses technology to improve education and livelihoods skills in disadvantaged communities around the world.
- Partners Relief and Development work to change the lives of thousands of children in Myanmar.

Photo caption: (L to R) Jim Thompson (Partners Relief), Frankie McClure (Concern Worldwide), Maeve Henry (Barefeet Theatre), Maria McCloskey (Serve)

