

Press Release

17 May 2010

XC2010/012 (SH)

VOLUNTEER OPENS DHAKA ‘SOUP KITCHEN’ FOR SLUM ORPHANS

A caring charity volunteer from Derby who last year spent a two-week trip in the slums of Bangladeshi capital Dhaka, has gone one step further than most and opened up a ‘soup kitchen’ for orphans in city’s densely populated Mirpor district.

In April 2009, the 26-year-old from Derby was part of a small group of six volunteers who travelled to Asia after hearing about the heart-wrenching child poverty and horrific slum conditions in Mirpor.

The trip touched Serina more than most so with the help of a £200 donation from her employers CrossCountry trains, and monthly contributions from Serina herself, a soup kitchen which now feeds around 120 homeless children per week was officially opened late last year.

Serina, a customer relations consultant for the Birmingham-based train operator said; “When I came back from Bangladesh last year I was taken aback by the amount of poverty and homelessness I saw. It was then I knew that I wanted to help out in some way. I contacted a local school teacher that I’d got to know and put forward my soup kitchen idea for the poor Mirpor district. They loved my idea and now manage the soup kitchen for me whilst I directly fund it every month.

“So far the project is going great and the children are getting a better, healthier diet of rice and lentils in a much nicer environment. It was a massive help when CrossCountry agreed to help fund the project and they’ve shown great faith in me. Their funding has helped provide essentials such as cups, plates and cutlery.”

Serina added; "I hope to visit Dhaka again soon and would love to do more to help the people there or in other poor regions."

ENDS

**Please find notes to Editors, CrossCountry facts and figures below.
For more information feel free to contact us on 0121 2006115 or by email to communications@crosscountrytrains.co.uk**

Notes to editors

CrossCountry started operating on 11 November 2007. The franchise, which is the most extensive in the UK, will run until 31 March 2016. For further information on CrossCountry services and future franchise plans log on to www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk

CrossCountry is now live on Facebook www.facebook/crosscountrytrains

Arriva is one of the largest private sector providers of passenger transport in Europe, employing more than 42,000 people (including share of associate companies) and providing more than one billion passenger journeys every year.

Arriva provides transport services including buses, trains, commuter coaches and water buses, and operates in 12 European countries: Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

CrossCountry facts and figures:

STATIONS SERVED: 118

ROUTE MILES: 1,478

WEEKDAY SERVICES: 295

PASSENGERS CARRIED: Over 30 million passenger journeys a year anticipated

ANNUAL TRAIN MILEAGE: Approximately 16 million

EMPLOYEES: Approximately 1,600

LONGEST TRAIN SERVICE: 08.20 Aberdeen to Penzance (773 miles)