jacksonville.com The Florida Times-Union

Jacksonville Beach makeup artist uses skills to help orphanage

Source URL: http://jacksonville.com/community/shorelines/2010-09-06/story/makeup-artist-uses-skills-help-orphanage

By Christy Whitehead

Applying makeup is helping a Jacksonville Beach woman feed impoverished children in Africa.

Paulina Perez, a well-known makeup artist in the Jacksonville area, heard about mission trips through her church. She started researching volunteer opportunities, and when she found one that helped an orphanage in South Africa, she fell in love with the idea.

"Anyone who knows me knows how much I love children," Perez said. "I can't wait to have some of my own, so the thought of these kids being left there malnourished and uneducated in an 8-by-8-foot room turns my stomach."

So she put a plan into action, hoping to go for two weeks in November.

Perez knows lots of photographers and asked them if they would help her raise at least $4,000. She got an overwhelmingly positive response.

"It seems like a lot, but I am already halfway there," Perez said. "The money goes to many things, including a better shelter for the kids, education, nutrition, things of that nature. Their meals are pretty basic and nutritious already; it's the quantity that they get that is the problem."

For a minimum $125 donation, people can have their makeup done by Perez, then have a photo shoot with 15 images on CD by several photographers. She said the shoots would otherwise cost up to $600.

While not everyone needs makeup or a photo shoot, Perez is also reaching out for donations in other ways.

She is asking for donations of books and movies to sell, with the profits going toward her trip. She has teamed up with www.firstcoastfundraising.com and said she has received several boxes of books and DVDs.

A friend on Facebook also contacted Perez offering to donate a large bookshelf. Also, aspiring children's illustrator Amy Dwarika hand-painted flowers on a 5-foot bookshelf that her husband built and asked Perez if she wanted it.

"I would love to be able to volunteer like that, but since I can't at the moment, I wanted to help by doing what I could," said Dwarika, a Mandarin resident.

Perez has been to Africa, but not South Africa. She's excited to go, but the vaccinations she must get before she goes make her nervous.

"I have a tremendous fear of needles, and I have to go several times to get vaccinated," Perez said. "My fear of needles is the main thing my parents can thank for me not having any tattoos. I would rather go skydiving - which I have and vowed never to do again - than get a shot."

A photo shoot or donations can be arranged by calling Perez at her studio at 735-7499 or by visiting her website, www.paulinaperez.com.

Links:
[1] http://www.firstcoastfundraising.com
[2] http://www.paulinaperez.com
[3] http://jacksonville.com/sites/default/files/editorial/images/images/mdControlled/cms/2010/09/08/705190403.jpg