

Local daughter sets bar with charitable efforts

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By Stanley Giguere



She has been an ambassador and contributing member of several different charities and singlehandedly started two non profit campaigns.

She has been presented with the keys to two cities and one province.

She has traveled the world, visiting 13 countries on four continents.

It is also worth mentioning that she just celebrated her 9th birthday in June.

In February of this year Ally became involved with Shoes of Hope through her third grade class at Butler Elementary School. Shoes of Hope is part of the Art Miles Mural Project, it is a program which provides children in third world areas with shoes.

“One day I went into the art room and saw a bunch of shoes on the table and wondered what they were for. Our teacher told us ‘Today we’re going to paint shoes for children who don’t have any shoes.’ And I was just stunned,” said Ally.

Touched by the movement, Ally prepared and delivered a speech. The director of Shoes of Hope heard the speech and asked Ally to be an ambassador for the organization. Ally also produced a short movie for the cause, “Shoes of Hope – Hope for Peace.”

Bitten by the charity bug she learned about more organizations trying to make the world a better place.

After seeing the film “Invisible Children” she was moved by the plight of children in Uganda who are being kidnapped and made into soldiers. She learned that by buying a \$20 bracelet, the money would be spent on schools and medicine in Uganda.

It was not long before she convinced everyone she knew into buying a bracelet to support the cause.

Afterwards Ally started her own fundraiser, Change for Change, in an effort to buy more shoes and supplement the Shoes of Hope program.

With its success she started Money for Milk to provide milk for orphaned children in Mexico. Through donations and garage sales she managed to raise \$260, more than one month’s worth of milk for the entire orphanage.

As ambassador for Shoes of Hope, Ally recently travelled to the Philippines, China and Hong Kong.

While in the Philippines, Ally hosted events in Luzon at Bethany Orphanage and LaTrinidad Rehabilitation Center for Special Children. She was honored July 30 by the Governor of Benguet Province, Nestor Fongwan, who presented her with a key to the Province.

The following day she gave a speech promoting peace at a Philippine Mayor's Conference at City Hall in Baguio City. She was then presented a key to the City of Baguio by Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr.

Ally also took part in a coffee tree planting ceremony that day at Rizal Elementary School in Baguio City. While at the school she learned about the Eco-Walk for Indigenous People and looks forward to future collaboration on good will and environmental projects in the Philippines.

On Aug. 7 in Beijing, Ally met John Spooner, ambassador for Raffles Hotel and learned about the Sunrise Children's Village Orphanage in Cambodia. Following the meeting she toured the Great Wall of China and met local Chinese tourist residents.

Although she spends her time helping others in extraordinary ways, Ally has all the same passions and interests of other girls her age.

Ally has a love for the theatre and particularly enjoys Broadway musicals. She takes voice, dance and guitar lessons and likes to play tennis. She likes to swim in pools, but not at the beach after a painful incident with a jellyfish.

Her favorite restaurant is P.F. Chang's, but she will try almost anything. "I think I'm the only kid in my school who will eat smoked salmon, snails and frog legs," said Ally. She does, however, draw the line at grilled, skewered scorpions.

Ally's parents, Alan and Diane Woodard, stress that Ally's education is the most important thing but say she is "at home on the road."

Currently Ally has another short film in the works and is selling wristbands for the Esperanza Learning Foundation to raise money to send a Mexican boy named Leo to college to become a teacher.

The wristbands are \$3.50 a piece and can be ordered by contacting Ally at (850) 650-4452 or by email at dwdestin@aol.com.
