

# Getting Active on fun day in aid of Ocean charity

## Money to 'make a real difference' to children in Sri Lanka

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CHILDREN have been treated to a day of fun in aid of a local charity.

Everyone Active's Hart Leisure Centre, in Fleet, hosted a family fun day in aid of Ocean Stars Trust, a local charity which supports the educational needs of children in Sri Lanka.

More than 20 children took part in the fun day, playing on soft climbing equipment and bouncy castles.

Sandra Stokes, who worked as the crèche manager at Hart Leisure Centre for more than nine years, organised the day.

She said: "Having spent more than 30 years working with children under the age of five, I wanted to help young people in other countries benefit from better opportunities.

"Ocean Stars Trust makes a real difference to the lives



of people in Sri Lanka and ensures the welfare of children there.

"We had great fun and the children all really enjoyed it.

"Thanks to the generosity of families in Fleet, Ocean Stars Trust can continue its fantastic work."

The day raised more than £70 for the charity. This takes Sandra's fundraising total to almost £800 after

she recently completed a sponsored double triathlon at the Hitches Lane leisure centre.

Luke Charlton, general manager at Hart Leisure Centre, said: "We're delighted to support Sandra in her efforts to raise money for Ocean Stars Trust.

"The fun day was a fantastic event which gives people in Fleet the opportunity to

make a real difference to the lives of children elsewhere in the world."

Ocean Stars Trust was formed in response to the devastating Boxing Day 2004 tsunami that claimed more than 30,000 lives in Sri Lanka.

Founder Dilanee Bunter, who was born in Sri Lanka and now lives in Fleet, was determined to 'give something back' after the disaster, which killed around 35,000 people and displaced around 500,000.

She collected money, along with 50 pairs of children's shoes, from friends and family to take to her homeland in Easter 2005.

By the spring of that year, with the help of people in the Fleet area, the Ocean Stars Trust was born with a board of around seven trustees who had the continuing mandate to 'rebuild shattered lives'.

With a special focus on education and children in



(Above) Ocean Stars Trust founder Dilanee Bunter and Sandra Stokes at Hart Leisure Centre; (left) Sandra Stokes with two children during the fun day.

eastern Sri Lanka, the trust set up a child sponsorship scheme and a programme of supporting and building new pre-schools where previously none existed.

In 2013, the Trust also began a cultural exchange for pupils from Fleet's

Calthorpe Park School, while several links have also been formed between infant, junior and secondary schools. Last year it celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Mrs Bunter said: "From very small and innocent beginnings, Ocean Stars Trust

is now a leading Sri Lanka-based charity. This has only been achieved with the hard work of trustees and enormous goodwill of friends and supporters."

For more details about the trust, visit [www.oceanstars.org.uk](http://www.oceanstars.org.uk).