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*All children's names in the magazine have been changed to protect their identities.

Toyhox

G4 Challenge House, Sherwood Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 6DP T: 01908 360 080 E: supporters@toybox.org www.toybox.org.uk

Registered charity number 1084243 Photography / Illustration: © Toybox / Nicest Jobs Design www.creatiscope.co.uk Printed by Snap



HELLO AND A WARM WELCOME TO THE LATEST STREET LIFE, YOUR SUPPORTER MAGAZINE.



Welcome to our latest Toybox magazine. Grab a cup of tea and a comfortable spot on the sofa and enjoy reading about the amazing children and young people you are supporting.

At Toybox we feel blessed to work for an organisation which changes the lives of the most vulnerable children in the world. In the office we constantly talk about how marvelous our supporters are, and we have a real sense of pride in what we achieve together with you.

I hope this magazine gives you an insight into how through our work we demonstrate love, hope and compassion in this complex world of ours. In particular I hope you enjoy the article on pages 16-18 about an exciting new education project we are helping to deliver in Delhi

as it highlights the incredible potential of the street children we work alongside, such as Raghu.

Thank you so much for your continued support of the street children we stand alongside. Please always feel free to pop into Toybox for a cup of tea and a piece of cake whenever you are near Milton Keynes – do give us some pre-notice so we can make the cake though! Yours,

Lynne

Lynne Morris CEO





WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD AND TOYBOX UPDATES

Join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter: www.facebook.com/toyboxcharity www.twitter.com/toyboxcharity

The Nicest Job in Britain



In the summer of 2016
Toybox was approached by
the team at Nicest Jobs and
asked to join with 39 other
charities to give someone
the chance to have 'The
Nicest Job in Britain'.

Their plan was to look for an enthusiastic philanthropist who would travel the length and breadth of the country, lending a hand to a different charity or third sector organisation each week for a year.

At the beginning of November, Alice was offered the job. Before joining Nicest Jobs, Alice worked as a corporate solicitor for a large PLC company but is now

ready to get involved with any of the tasks required of her by these charities saying: "I noticed people like me often do their proudest. scariest, most awesome things for charity. I applied for the Nicest Job in Britain to learn more about these marvellous causes and what it is about them that leads ordinary people to step outside their comfort zones, volunteer their time unpaid and donate their money rather than spend it on themselves. Behind each of the charities this year are people, each with their own unique story to tell. The Nicest Job in Britain

"I noticed people like me often do their proudest, scariest, most awesome things for charity."

is a platform which is all about celebrating ordinary people who are doing extraordinary things."

Team Toybox will be joined by Alice in October 2017 where she will be spending time in Delhi facilitating life-skills, creative and sporting workshops for street-connected children.



La Terminal fire

In September last year, Toybox received news from one of our partners in Guatemala that a fire had ransacked one of the main markets where some of their activities are held in Guatemala City.



Lots of the children who attend the activities have family homes and businesses in the area and many of these were destroyed which devastated livelihoods. Fortunately however, no one was hurt and although businesses and homes had to be rebuilt, the community all pulled together and within a few hours, wood, metal and other materials were being reconstructed into new buildings. Our partner continues to work in the area and support families and children as they try to rebuild their lives after the devastation of the fire.

Street Santa

Once again, Toybox's Street Santa Campaign ran over the weekend from Black Friday through to Giving Tuesday.

Between the 25th and 29th November 2016, Toybox followers on Facebook and other social media pages were encouraged to be a Secret Santa for a street child. Supporters were asked to text to give £3 to Toybox's vital outreach work over the Christmas period, which provided children spending the winter nights on the street with a hot drink, a delicious meal and a snuggly pair of socks. Thanks to the generosity of everyone who supported this campaign, street children living on some of the world's most dangerous streets were able to enjoy some extra care at Christmas. Thank you!





Once again the brilliant team at Wychwood Festival have asked Toybox to join them this summer as their partner of conscience, and we are delighted and proud to be invited again!

ychwood is the UK's Premier Family Music Festival and returns to Cheltenham Racecourse for its' 13th Year. from 2nd – 4th June (within the Spring Half Term Holiday). Over the weekend, you can expect to be entertained with more than 100 acts across indie, world and folk genres, and across numerous stages including the Main Stage Arena and the Big Top. Add to that there will be comedy, workshops and activities for all ages, a Children's Literature Festival, great food and Wychwood Ales, an Artists and Sculpturer's Quarter and for those that want a late night there will be the Headphone Disco until the early hours. To finish this all off you will be camping beneath the idyllic Prestbury hills - your perfect summer-opening festival! Early Confirmations include: OMD, Levellers, Electric Swing Circus, Kanda Bongo Man and CBeebies Katy Ashworth.

Toybox have teamed up with Wychwood with various activities running on site

to share with the festival goers our work with street children and in particular the importance of Birth Registration. Please do come and join us at the festival where you'll be able to rest your weary feet at our chill out area. Recharge your batteries and see a glimpse of life on Guatemala's unforgiving streets with our 360° photos.

We have negotiated a special discount price for our supporters, giving a saving of 25% on your Wychwood Tickets. This offer will end on 7th March, so snap your tickets up now! To book, visiting the Wychwood ticket page, and enter "Toybox" in the promotional code box.

For more information on the festival, please visit www.wychwoodfestival.com and make sure you do come and say hello to the team on site – our candy striped marquee means we will be easy to spot!

GHRISTWAS APPEAL 2016.

Our 2016 Christmas appeal has raised over £140,000. We have been overwhelmed by your generosity. Thank you.







ike last Christmas. on providing the vital piece of paper that can transform a child's life their birth certificate. Since our birth registration work began, more than 2900 children have been registered and this has only been possible thanks to your kind gifts.

Our expansion into the impoverished Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala has shown why we need to ask for your continuing support. Our new project aims to help children before they reach the streets. Many of the street children in Guatemala City come from the Alta Verapaz area. It is one of the most populated and deprived regions of Guatemala and as a result few children are registered

at birth. This limits their we focused this appeal opportunities for schooling and leads to low literacy and income levels. Many are trapped in a hopeless cycle of poverty. Those who try to escape find that without their birth certificate there are no opportunities, and when they come to the city they are forced to survive on the streets. Toybox are working to change this.

Making a child visible in a world that doesn't see them.

Thanks to the kindness of our supporters, this birth registration work is going from strength to strength. With a birth certificate. a street child can access healthcare, education and protection from abuse and exploitation. Stuart Keane, a global leading expert

in child registration recently told us "A birth certificate can make invisible children. such as street children. visible. It gives them a legal identity, without which they are powerless and often unable to access basic services such as schooling. healthcare and welfare. A birth certificate is also a key document which, as part of a package of child rights measures, can help to protect street children from appalling abuse, violence and trafficking. For International Non-Governmental Organisations supporting street children to access their rights and achieve their dreams, enabling them to acquire a birth certificate is an essential first step." Stuart Kean independent consultant, Policy and

Advocacy Strategist.







Here are some of our favourite snaps taken at the registration events that were made possible with your generous support





With your support through our Christmas appeal, four siblings were able to get their birth certificates and start school!

Fernanda and her partner had eight children. However, only one of their children had been registered. When the couple broke-up and separated, the children's father moved out and decided that he didn't want any record of his name linked with his children. He burnt the one and only birth certificate the children had between them.

Fernanda was very worried because she didn't know how to register her other children. She was scared

to investigate for fear that the authorities would take her children away from her. Her three eldest children soon reached school age but were unable to attend because they didn't have their birth certificates. The family's case was made more complicated as Fernanda had also misplaced the children's original birth reports and without them it was impossible to register them.

Fernanda's children got really angry with their mother because they didn't have their birth certificates so much so that some of them went to see their father for help.

However, he refused and turned them away. Fernanda became depressed by her family situation and she felt alone and that she had no support.

Fortunately, the midwife who had been present at all of Fernanda's childrens births told her of a local organisation funded by Toybox who could help her. The four youngest siblings were recently registered at a mass registration event and the eldest three will be registered soon. Javier, Rosa, Jorge and Domingue started school in January and have said they all want to catch up with their studies as quickly as possible.

Registering a child is a one-off event but the impact is life-long. If you would like to make a donation to give a street child a birth certificate, please call 01908 360080 or give online at www.toybox.org.uk

Emilie Hunter worksin the Marketing Team at Toybox. Here she shares her personal reflections on what motivates her to work for a charity.



"It broke my heart to hear Celia's story. The obstacles she has had to overcome and continues to be faced with seem endless."

orking for a charity is both a challenging and an unbelievably rewarding experience.
On one hand, it can be difficult and emotionally demanding.
On the other, the people I have met during my time in this sector are incredibly inspiring and their compassion and hard work motivates me every day.

A whole new experience

My inspiration to work for a charity began when I travelled to Kenya in 2007 as part of a school fundraising project. I was fourteen, and my knowledge of International Development was limited to geography lessons and the charity adverts I had seen on TV. Actually being in a developing country was a whole new experience and unlike anything I had expected.

During the trip, we visited a newly built community healthcare centre caring for families and orphaned children. There I met Karina. Karina lived in a nearby village in a small shelter that she shared with her six younger

siblings. Her mother and father had both died the year before from AIDs related illnesses. She was just fifteen and now the sole carer for her siblings.

She had not given up

Karina told us that she would do whatever it took to look after her brothers and sisters and ensure that they would not miss out on the opportunities that she had. She had lost so much already in her short life, yet it was clear that she had not given up. Karina's story is one that has stayed close to my heart in the decade since I first met her and one I don't think I will ever forget.

Forced to find a life for herself on the streets

During one of my first weeks at Toybox, news came from our partner in El Salvador about another young woman, Celia. Celia was 10 years old when she ran away from home because of the abuse and neglect she was suffering at the hands of her mother. With no one to turn to and nowhere to go, she was forced to find a life for herself on the streets. Here, like many of the street

children Toybox works with, Celia became addicted to glue and her life began spiralling downwards. She formed a relationship with an older man and soon fell pregnant. In 2014, she became a mother to twin boys. With the father in prison and Celia struggling to take care of them alone on the streets, local authorities intervened and placed the

children into care. Celia wasn't able to visit them.

Our partner's outreach workers met Celia in 2014 and began working with her to help overcome her addictions and find her a safe place to live. With support, she enrolled into a local college and began training as a beauty therapist. However after a few weeks, whilst on her way to class,

she was threatened by gang members who told her she was not welcome in the area. San Salvador is a city overwhelmed by violent gangs who rule certain neighbourhoods. Celia's home is in a rival gang territory to the one her college was in and it was therefore too dangerous for her to continue studying there.

Inspired by her strength of character

It broke my heart to hear Celia's story. The obstacles she has had to overcome and continues to be faced with seem endless. However, it is impossible not to be inspired by her strength of character. Earlier this year, I was so happy to hear an update from Celia to say that she has been able to enrol into a new college in a different area and is continuing to work towards building a better life for herself and her two sons.

Never lose hope

Incredibly courageous individuals like Karina and Celia and the team here at Toybox are the reasons that I am so passionate about working in this sector. Their compassion, determination and the fact that they never lose hope inspires me to be the same. Whether you work for a charity, spend time volunteering or are simply kind enough to donate, support or pray, we are all helping to make a difference and change the world for people who need it most. And that is an incredible thing to be a part of.





Magdalene is a trained social worker and has worked in the slums of Nairobi for over 20 years. She has worked with Toybox's local partner, PKL for over 13 years and became their Head of Programmes in 2015.

to counsel both the children and their parents. I also attend some of the Child Rights club sessions in my project area to facilitate the sessions.

Through my work I have learnt so much about the plight of children. I'm greatly inspired by their innocence.

children belonging to a family, living a dignified life.

What are the biggest challenges you face in your work?

Most of the slum areas I work in are very insecure even to staff of Development agencies like PKL. I have

What are the best and worst things about your job?

When you see that there has been a rise in cases of children reporting abuse towards themselves or their friends. It shows that children are slowly becoming empowered.

with many communities to teach them about the importance of child protection. This in turn helps to create a safe environment for children living in those communities.

Magdalene addresses the community during a Child Protection campaign.

REMEMBERING ASTREETGHILD

Lynne Morris CEO of Toybox



Some of my friends thought I was a little mad, leaving a large organisation with an abundance of resources to

work for a little organisation with few staff and even fewer resources. But when I saw that Toybox was advertising for a new CEO, I knew I had to grab this opportunity with both hands. It really was my dream job. >>>



During my time working for international development charities, I had seen first-hand the plight of street children in India, and the desperation of young people surviving in post-genocide Rwanda. I knew that working with Toybox would help me create a safer world for frightened and vulnerable children. So I took the leap. Within months of joining I had travelled to Latin America, meeting the partners we work with and the children we support. As I got to know the children who had moved from the violent streets into school and work, I knew I had made the right decision.

That was four years ago. Today I'm even more determined that together with supporters like you, we do everything we can to reach out to some of the world's most vulnerable children. That's why I've chosen to include a gift to Toybox in my Will.

I have always been in awe of the selflessness and generosity of those people who put their faith in us and choose to remember street children in their Will. It's a great feeling to know I can join them in making this very special gift.

After all, a gift left in your Will is different to an ordinary donation. It's an act of trust in Toybox. When someone remembers us in their Will, they are putting their faith in us to use that generous gift to support the lives of children who may not have even been born yet. I think that's really special – a beautiful demonstration of the faith our supporters have in the hope for the future of vulnerable children.



As CEO, I take a special interest in these kinds of gifts to Toybox. These very precious donations are absolutely vital if we are to continue our work. They help us to explore new opportunities and invest in long-term projects that will protect young children from exploitation and violence, and help them move towards a better, safer future.

The children we support often don't have families of their own. They certainly won't be remembered in anyone else's Will. But they can be remembered in mine.

Including a gift in my Will means I can be family to a child like Sofia, whom I met on one of my early trips to Guatemala. Sofia was a beautiful little girl – really strikingly pretty. But for Sofia, her beauty was a curse, not a blessing. Her unusual looks made her more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The traffickers didn't see her as a pretty little girl. They saw her as a valuable commodity who would fetch a high price.

When I met Sofia, I did what anyone would do. I told her how clever and brave she was and that her eyes were very pretty. For most girls, this would be a happily-received compliment. But to my horror, Sofia recoiled. She didn't want to be noticed. She knew all too well that standing out can lead to a life of exploitation, violence and fear.

In her frightened face I saw how, to their traffickers, children like Sofia are seen as nothing more than commodities. They're not valued as special children, as unique little people. They're treated as objects to be bought and sold on the street. Sofia's pretty eyes made her more 'valuable' to the adults determined to exploit her. No wonder my compliment filled her with fear.

With a gift in our Wills, we can be the families that children like Sofia never had. We can remember them, when everyone else in their lives has forgotten their special and precious existence.

To me, including Toybox in my Will was a no-brainer. I want my own children to be provided for. And I want to help other children – children like Sofia – to have a chance in life.

Working for Toybox is more than just a job. I give my heart and soul to this organisation every day. And so I see including street children in my Will as an extension to that dedication I feel to the work we do. Through my Will, I can remember my own children and protect their future. But I can also remember children like Sofia. I can make sure that street children will be cared for.

I hope you will consider remembering a child like Sofia in your Will.

Including Toybox in your Will is a big decision and I am here to help you as best I can with any questions or thoughts you may have. If you would like to discuss what these gifts mean to Toybox, then please give me a call on 01908 360080 or email me at legacy@toybox.org

ANNUAL REVIEW ROUND UP

Toybox's CEO Lynne Morris shares her highlights from the last financial year, made possible with your incredible support. As we draw close to the end of another financial year, I am amazed when I look back and see what we have achieved, Team Toybox – a team that's made up of you our supporters, the amazing people who work in our office in Milton Keynes, our inspiring partners and the children we work with – we have made a real difference.

In the last financial year we managed to support over 18,000 children – that's 18,000 lives made better because they came into contact with Toybox – that is something to feel good about!

As you might expect income proved to be challenging, but we continue to look for innovative ways to our programmes and we keep our overheads as low as possible. Despite a dip in our income, neither the quality or quantity of work we did with children living in the most dangerous cities in the world was affected in any way. We also implemented new systems to ensure we maintain our excellent standards.

For the full and detailed picture about what we achieved – and what we didn't, please read our Annual Report and Accounts here: www.toybox.org.uk/about

The story from the last year which significantly inspired me is that of a girl called Linda who lives on the streets of Guatemala City. She had been living on the streets for over 10 vears after she left her home because of domestic abuse. During those 10 long years, she became fully involved in everything that living on the streets brings. However, in early 2016, with the support from one of our partners, she finally received her birth certificate. This simple piece of paper which all of us take for granted has changed Linda and given her a new confidence that her life can be different.

Let's pray that this year will be beyond our expectations. Despite the challenges we may face here in the UK, we know they are nothing compared to what children living or working on the streets face every day just to survive.

She now has dreams to counsel other children living on the streets to help them realise that they can turn their lives around too. What an incredible aspiration!



Linda with her birth certificate

I am really proud of what this dynamic, little organisation achieved in the last financial year. I hope you are too.
You are part of an amazing community of warriors determined to create a world where no child is forced to live on the streets. Without you we cannot act – with you we can achieve the impossible!

Education is the single most effective way of breaking the cycle of poverty that street children in India experience. In this article Gerry Walker, editor of Street Life, explores the challenges faced by Indian street children in accessing schooling. Toybox is helping to make advances for these children by supporting an education project in West Delhi.

FOUNDATIONS FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE: TO SCIOL STORE STORE TO SCIOL STORE TO S



oday, one in five of the world's children are born in India. In Delhi alone, it is estimated that there are over 50,000 children living and working on the city's streets. (Save the Children, 2011.) Many have never been able to go to school because they have to work to support their families.

"I remained hungry so that people would give money to me"

Seven year old Raghu was one of those children. When his mother was taken seriously ill and unable to work for a year, Raghu was left with no choice but

to work as a rag picker to support his family financially. To earn some additional money, he would also beg at the traffic lights. "Someone had to support the family. I travelled 20km every day and remained hungry so that people would give money to me." As a result, Raghu was unable to go to school.

"We didn't understand the importance of education"

In June 2015, Toybox began working in Delhi, supporting a local partner, CHETNA, with an education project. The project is focused on helping street and working children in Delhi to access and stay in education.

Enrolling a child in school is a crucial way to keep them off the streets and give them the foundations for a brighter future. Raghu was one of the children who was identified by CHETNA as a prospective candidate for the school programme, so the local project workers initially met with his parents. His mother recalls: "We didn't understand the importance of education. Raghu used to earn 200 rupees (around £2.30) every day- we thought it was good enough. They explained to us how education could change Raghu's life."

In its first year, the project has supported the enrolment of 250 children, including

Raghu, at schools in West Delhi. This is no mean feat - street children are often discouraged from going to school by their parents and told to stick to domestic work to help support their families. To give the project the greatest chance of success, it was crucial for the project workers to talk to the local community and the families of working children to help them understand why it is so important to send their children to school.

Training teachers

Of the 250 children who were enrolled at school as part of the project, only 31 did not complete the entire year. We know that street and

working children often find it very hard to adjust to the school environment and struggle with low selfesteem, so this is a fantastic result and one that truly exceeded expectation. Once enrolled street children continue to face many challenges and are still at risk of isolation and exclusion and they can feel stigmatised by their life on the street. To combat this, the project trained teachers to help them understand the issues and find ways to approach the children with understanding and sensitivity. Encouragingly, after just one year, only 10% of the children said that they still felt

stigmatised at school.
This is a huge difference –
before the project began,
many of the children told
us that older children
at school would often beat
the younger street children
and would refer to them
as 'slum child'.

Determination and commitment

The project's low drop-out rate is in part due to the sheer determination and commitment of the project workers, or 'street educators' who supported children with their enrolment at school. They often found that schools would look to make excuses as to why they did not want to admit a street child.

"Raghu shares everything with me, including things about his family. I think all children need a confidant and I am happy to be one for him."





The street educators also worked closely alongside children throughout the year, running after-school clubs offering informal learning and homework support, helping to build self-esteem and communication skills.

"All children need a confidant"

In some cases, the street educators will act as a mentor to the child. They will regularly drop into the child's home to encourage them to go to school. This was certainly the case for Raghu. His street educator said; "Raghu shares everything with me, including things about his family. I think all children need

a confidant and I am happy to be one for him. Children need to share their feelings with others in order to perform better. We can see very good improvements in Raghu."

Top of their class

In just a year this project has already achieved great things – six of the original street children involved in the project came top of their class and another five got either second or third place. This is an incredible result, given that most of them had only been attending school for a year.

This targeted approach to working with street children in West Delhi has

proved successful. Toybox's Programme Officer, Emily Malcolm commented; "It's fantastic to see that so many of the children we've helped through the project have exceeded all expectations. The last year has shown us that these children all have so much potential. They just need to be given the opportunity to go to school and extra support to help them catch up."

The project is now in its second year and is building on its successful start. It has expanded into three new communities with double the number of street educators, enabling more children to benefit from this exciting programme.

REFLECTION

Our reflection piece in this issue comes from Paul Oxley, Vicar of St Marks Church in Milton Keynes. Paul also presents Pause for Thought on BBC Radio 2's Early Breakfast show.

Given the recent 'seismic global events', I guess it is fair to assume that you may not have heard about a particular disaster which happened to me a few weeks ago – it certainly didn't attract the national press attention I thought it merited.

A cruel and bitter blow

I'm not often trusted with the 'big shop' (I usually get suckered in by special offers on Lemon Tarts and Sausage Rolls) so on this occasion I was feeling fairly smug that I'd remembered *everything* I had been sent out to buy. Everything including eight pints of milk.

Buoyed by my success, I stopped off at my mum's on the way home to check she was ok and have a cup of tea. It was while doing this good deed that fate struck me a cruel and bitter blow. The milk started to leak. Opening the boot to unpack the bags, I discovered the leaking carton and mopped it up quickly before leaving the rear window open slightly overnight to allow any lingering smell to evaporate.

Well – some of you have already adopted the brace position in fear of the imminent disaster -the next morning as I left the house for the school run I could smell the car long before I was even close enough to open the door. IT STANK! Having finished dropping the kids off with windows open, pegs on noses and a sound of retching from the back, I spent the next few hours scrubbing, washing, spraying, sweeping and soaking the car boot. None of it made the slightest difference.

Stemming the tide

I totally love the guys and gals at Toybox. I love the work they do and I love the way they do it. But if I'm really honest I sometimes struggle to believe that they (or anyone

else doing similar work) ever has a chance of stemming the tide and changing the world for the outrageous number of kids on the streets around the globe. The job just seems too big. The numbers are just too great. The complexities are just too... well. Complex.

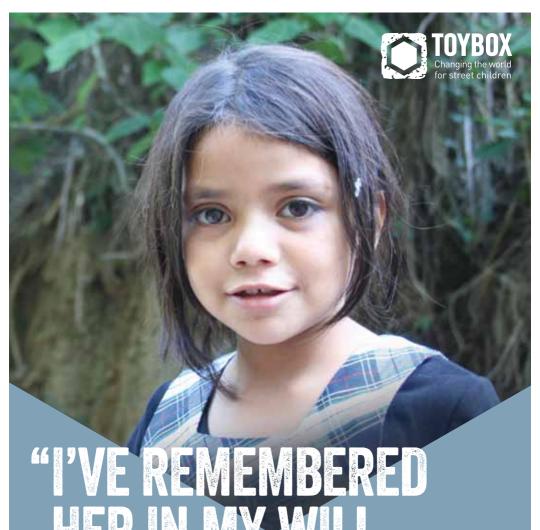
Just as I thought I had exhausted all my options and that setting light to my car and claiming on insurance was probably my only option, an honest and wise friend told me; "don't give up on it. That stuff you sprayed on yesterday made it a bit better...what you need to do now is spray it again, wait, and then tomorrow... spray it again."

No quick fix

That, above all else is why I love the Toyboxers, because they keep showing up, to do something today which makes a small difference. And then tomorrow, they show up again and do that same thing again, and again, and again...until finally the stench of child exploitation, loneliness and homelessness will be eradicated.

There's no quick fix, one-step, one-size-fits-all, easy solution. It won't happen today, and it won't happen tomorrow. It won't always be high-profile work and it won't often be pleasant, but that doesn't matter. The world is changed by people who just keep on stubbornly scrubbing injustice away.

So, if you support Toybox, whether as someone who gives, or prays, runs marathons, or walks or volunteers or works to help end the injustice of children living on the streets – keep doing it, and then tomorrow, keep doing it some more!



FINE RENEADERED HER IN IN WILL, BEGAUSE NO-ONE ELSE WOULD*

Our CEO Lynne remembered a street child in her Will. Find out how you can join her on page 12.

www.toybox.org.uk/legacies