

Flashlight

Volume 4 / 2010

December 2010

• **Social
Commitment of our
alumna Henriette
Lundgren**

– by **Henriette
Lundgren & Alex
Leberling**

‘Free Cakes for Kids UK’

The special social commitment of our alumna
**Henriette Lundgren to improve children’s
birthday experiences**

Our alumna Henriette Lundgren is not only a business trainer, who works with major companies across Europe, but also a passionate baker. Two years ago, she decided to make a bit more of her hobby and founded Free Cakes for Kids UK, a community service for families who find it difficult to provide a birthday cake for their child. We reached Henriette in her home in Oxford (UK).

So what exactly is Free Cakes for Kids about?

We are really a community service, run with the help of a lot of volunteers. The idea is simple. Usually, a parent calls us about a week before the child’s birthday, and we match them with one of our 23 volunteer bakers. The baker then gets in touch with the family and the two of them discuss the theme of the cake, time and location for hand-over and any dietary requirements. The baker then prepares a homemade cake with the **kid’s** favourite theme and gives it to the family on the birthday. We just made our 101st cake last weekend.

Wow, that’s a lot. Do families actually have to pay for the cake?

No, the cake is 100% free. Usually, our volunteers buy the ingredients themselves, though we also have a farmer with a lot of chickens, who provides us with free eggs.

*One of the unique
birthday cakes from
the community
service, Free Cakes
for Kids UK’*



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We also get donations once in a while, but these are mostly used for special baking equipment that everyone can use. Of course, you don't need to be a superstar baker to volunteer. For example, Alban, a local cab driver, helps out with transportation and Simon, a graphic designer, prints the flyers we lay out in community centres.

How do the families know about your organization?

We work closely with a number of social projects here in Oxford, so we get quite a few referrals through them. This includes the Community Emergency Foodbank, children centres, an organization working with asylum seekers or the Young Carers project. We also sometimes bake for events at these organization. Word-of mouth travels far when it comes to delicious cakes.

Sounds fantastic. Who actually came up with the idea?

The project first started in the U.S. I read a story about it two years ago in People Magazine and thought “that would be a great thing to do in the UK”. So in, November 2008 I started to pitch the idea to local organizations. It was quite difficult in the beginning to find the right families and adapt the model to our local community. But after a few months it really took off and we got a lot of interest from local media and volunteers.

So is this something that other people could do, too?

Absolutely. An important part of our work at the moment is to spread the word and help other local groups to get started. We have a great and very active group in Cardiff for example, organized by Sarah Williams.

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And also other groups are starting up across the UK. It would be great to see the idea travel. There must be many more people out there, who are passionate about cake and their community!

If you would like to learn more about Free Cakes for Kids, you can contact Henriette at oxford@freecakesforkids.org.uk or visit their website at www.freecakesforkids.org.uk. You can also find them on Facebook and Twitter (@freecakes).



*Our alumna Henriette
Lundgren in her home in
Oxford (UK) – shortly before
baking-action!*