

MasterChef Gary Maclean creates more smiles with Mary's Meals

MasterChef winner Gary Maclean is serving up hope and joy to hungry children all over the world with one of his most amazing dishes yet – a cheery Porridge Smile!

The National Chef of Scotland is teaming up with charity Mary's Meals to celebrate World Porridge Day on Wednesday, 10 October.

Gary couldn't wait to put his culinary skills to use by creating his very own Porridge Smile 'selfie' – complete with glasses and his distinct red beard – to raise awareness about how young lives in the world's poorest countries are being changed every day with a simple bowl of porridge.

Mary's Meals provides nutritious meals in school to more than 1.3 million impoverished children in 17 countries. For children receiving meals in Malawi, Zambia and Liberia, the simple bowl of likuni phala (vitamin-enriched porridge) attracts them to school and provides the nourishment and energy needed to focus on their education.

This October, the charity is inviting people across the UK to join its World Porridge Day celebrations by creating their own Porridge Smiles to share online and raise vital funds and awareness.

Gary, who is also Senior Chef Lecturer at the City of Glasgow College, said: "I'm delighted to be part of Mary's Meals' Porridge Smiles campaign this World Porridge Day. As someone working with food in education, the amazing work of Mary's Meals is something that really resonates with me.

"I find it scary that in this day and age, there are children going hungry and out of school. By providing a meal in school, Mary's Meals is bringing children to the classroom where they can gain an education and the skills to live free of poverty.

"Porridge Smiles remind us that a simple meal in school is life changing for a hungry child. They're great fun to and I'd love to see lots of Porridge Smiles this World Porridge Day. Let's all make a hungry child smile with porridge!"

There are many ways to take part in Mary's Meals' Porridge Smiles campaign, supported by official porridge partner Stoats. To request a free fundraising pack, visit www.worldporridgeday.com.

Families, friends, classmates and colleagues across the country can come together to host a fundraising porridge party. Porridge Smiles can be shared on social media using #PorridgeSmiles, while donations can be made by texting "OATS18 £2" to 70070 to provide a hungry child with a meal in school for an entire month.

Kirsty White, Fundraising Manager at Mary's Meals, said: "Creating Porridge Smiles is a great way to support the work of Mary's Meals, while bringing people together to make a real difference in the lives of hungry children."

Tony Fullerton, from Stoats, added: "Stoats is delighted to be the official partner of World Porridge Day 2018 and we hope to build on the success of the previous years of this partnership with Mary's Meals.

"Oats are at the heart of everything we do, so it's the perfect fit for us to support Mary's Meals as they provide vitamin enriched maize porridge to hungry children every school day.

"Please join us on 10th October in sharing your #PorridgeSmiles when tucking into your breakfast. By sharing these with you friends, family and colleagues and donating to Mary's Meals, you can help make hungry children smile."

Notes to editors

- Mary's Meals is a simple idea that works. The charity provides one daily meal in a place of learning in order to attract chronically poor children into the classroom, where they receive an education that can, in the future, be their ladder out of poverty.
- Mary's Meals feeds 1,361,586 children every school day, across five continents, in 17 countries: Malawi, Liberia, Zambia, Haiti, Kenya, India, South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Benin, Lebanon, Syria, Myanmar, Thailand, Ecuador, Madagascar and Romania.
- The average global cost to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year is just £13.90.
- Independently verified research from Malawi, Liberia and Zambia shows that in schools where children receive Mary's Meals, hunger is reduced, enrolment increases, attendance improves, drop-out rates fall, absences dwindle, concentration in lessons is heightened, attainment levels increase, parents are less anxious, and children are happier.
- The Mary's Meals campaign was born in 2002 when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked her eldest son, Edward, what his dreams were in life, he replied simply: "I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."
- Mary's Meals is committed to spending at least 93% of donations directly on its charitable activities. This is only possible because much of the charity's work is done by an army of dedicated volunteers – including more than 80,000 in Malawi alone.
- Please visit www.marysmeals.org.uk to find out more about the work of Mary's Meals.

Media contacts

John Berry, Communications Officer, 0141 336 7094

Roisin Eadie, Head of Communications, 0141 336 7094