

HORIZON

SHANIA KIDS CAN
REACHING

CHILDREN

UNDER THE RADAR

& LIFESTYLE

**AN AQUATIC
ADVENTURE OF A
LIFETIME**
AT RIPLEY'S AQUARIUM

**AN INSIDER'S
PERSPECTIVE
OF EUROPE**

**DISCOVER THE
MAGIC OF MEXICO**



REACHING

CHILDREN

UNDER THE RADAR

By Holly Cambruzzi

"As a child, I often went to school without having had breakfast, without a lunch, no money to take part in pizza days or many field trips for example, because I wasn't able to pay or get the authorization signature from my parents because they were not available or unable. Reflecting back, I realize that my disadvantages created a lack of self-confidence and insecurity, causing me to withdraw and be less social than I would liked to have been otherwise. In addition to feeling inferior, hunger caused a lack of energy, enthusiasm and motivation to interact with others."

Shania Twain

Founder of Shania Kids Can Charity Foundation

These are the words of world-renowned Canadian country pop singer and song writer, Shania Twain. In a heartfelt personal note Shania reveals the struggles of a youth shrouded in poverty and isolation. Often lacking access to proper nutrition, clean clothing and parental support, Shania shares the challenges of growing up in a disadvantaged family. She describes being forced to stay home at times to avoid the discomfort of trying to focus on school work on an empty stomach and missing out on field trips as she didn't have the proper clothing or equipment to participate. However beyond the obvious challenges, Shania's words tell a powerful story of a child in emotional crisis. Struggling with shame, insecurity and guilt, Shania exposes the unseen hardships that so many underprivileged children are forced to endure. "My average classmate had cleaner clothes, freshly washed and brushed hair, healthy teeth, appropriate lunches, that nurtured their self-assuredness and overall better health than disadvantaged students. Unlike me, my classmates' parents were present at school assemblies, attended parent-teacher conferences and showed a general interest in their child's education," Shania reveals.



While society has become more mindful of family dysfunction caused by domestic violence or substance abuse, there are many circumstances in which kids can suffer that may not be as obvious. Economic challenges, over-worked parents, illness in the family and many other issues can also result in kids going to school tired, hungry, and emotionally stressed. Some of these children may not be abused or neglected, but nevertheless have problems in their personal life that interfere with their social and educational experience.

Unfortunately, more often than not these issues are left unaddressed which can result in destructive behaviour as these students mature.

STATISTICS SHOW VERY CLEARLY THAT TROUBLED CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME BURDENS ON SOCIETY IN THE WAY OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY, DRUG ABUSE, HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, VIOLENCE, PROSTITUTION, SUICIDE AND CRIMINALITY. —SHANIA TWAIN

Unwilling to stand by and watch as other children suffer in silence, Shania has created her own non-profit organization to address the needs of primary school children who fall into the gap between a dysfunctional home life and qualifying for a social service intervention. "I promised myself early on in my own childhood that someday I would help kids just like myself, cope with their disadvantages and prosper in spite of those challenges. Shania Kids Can Charity Foundation (SKC) is fulfilling that promise."

Realizing these goals, SKC strives to even the playing field for underprivileged kids by applying proven initiatives where they can make the most difference—at school. Working with individual school boards, SKC creates a safe and discrete space onsite where kids can go to receive the essentials they need to succeed academically and in life. Lovingly referred to as "SKC Clubhouses," these designated areas are managed by professional staff who are dedicated to providing educational, nutritional, therapeutic and extra-curricular support. Each day, these kids are able to go to the clubhouse for fresh and nutritious food, help with their homework and any social/psychological support that may be needed. They can also receive field trip expenses, basic hygiene tools, school supplies and clothing items in confidence. Further help can be found at SKC's after school program which includes other key support elements such as musical, writing and artistic development, practical life skills, vocational training and assistance from a therapist. Designed to empower children and teach them to become responsible, confident and productive members of their school community,

the program encourages camaraderie amongst students with its "buddy" support system. Pairing a younger and older pupil together, the younger student is given a confidant that understands their struggles, and the mature student acquires a sense of pride and empowerment knowing they have made a significant, positive change in the world.

By providing this basic support in the daily lives of primary school age children, not only do you see an immediate change in the education, social life, and self-esteem of students, the long-term implications are also impressive. "I believe very strongly that they will have a much better chance at personal success in the future and grow to be positive contributors to society rather than becoming a statistic and burden on society," said Shania.

Those wanting to get involved can help with a donation online or by sponsoring a student in the SKC program. For more info shaniakidscan.com.



**HELPING
UNDERPRIVILEGED
CHILDREN REACH
THEIR POTENTIAL**



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