



## **Press Release**

**Immediate Release: Monday 14 July 2008**

### **FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES MOURN LOSS OF DEDICATED CAMPAIGNER**

**Cafcass, the organisation that looks after children's interests in the family courts, joins family and friends of Marianne Carolan in mourning her untimely death last week.**

Dutch-born Marianne Carolan worked as a Family Court Adviser for Cafcass for 15 years and lived in Marchwood, Southampton. Marianne was passionate about children and improving their life chances and she founded a UK charity called the Lalibela Educational Trust (L.E.T.). It all started with a study tour that Marianne made to Ethiopia. She was very moved by the poverty, hunger and poor health of the children in Lalibela. A young boy, called Amdemariam, told her that he had to chop wood to earn a living for his mother and sister, but that he wanted to go to school regularly, so that he could fulfil his dream of becoming a doctor. Marianne decided to sponsor him and from that time in 2002 the scheme has grown. Currently 26 children are being sponsored by people in the UK, the Netherlands and Austria.

Stephany Carolan, Marianne's daughter said, "My mother retired in January 2008 and her plan had been to dedicate more time to obtaining funds from grant giving bodies, so that the trust would be less dependent on fundraising and individual contributions. Sadly, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer a few weeks later. The trust will be a lasting testament to her work and commitment."

Amdemariam, the first young person to be sponsored by Marianne said, "I really cannot express in writing about her kind-heartedness, generosity and compassion of Marianne. I with all my family have lost her. We all are now in a deep sorrow. It has been almost 8 years since I first met Marianne while she was visiting the monastic township of Roha-Lalibela Province of Wollo Northern Ethiopia. I accompanied her on way to churches of Lalibela in the meantime she asked me about my schooling and I explained her living and educational circumstances. She was touched to hear about my deprived living situations and asked me to show her my family and promised me to help all she can on that day on wards. That day was a fortunate moment in my entire life."

Sally Butter, Cafcass Service Manager commented, "Marianne was committed to helping children achieve their potential and this attribute extended from her personal beliefs into her charitable work and her distinguished professional career – she will be sorely missed."

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive said, "Marianne was a completely committed and dedicated Cafcass professional. We will miss her".

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## **Notes for Editors:**

### **About L.E.T.**

L.E.T is a charity registered in the UK (**No. 1115891**) whose charitable objects are to relieve poverty and promote the education of children and young people in Ethiopia.

All the children sponsored by L.E.T. come from the poorest families, and have been selected by the town administrator together with the schools for their academic potential.

The cost of supporting a young person through higher education is considerable and can amount to £3000 for a three-year period. These fees are beyond the means of most sponsors and, so, the Lalibela Educational Trust (LET) was set up in 2006 as the first young people moved into professional education. The aim of LET is to ensure that all the children in the sponsorship project can achieve their ambition and independence by helping to finance further or professional education.

LET supports some of the older children who go to Summer School for two months in either Dessie or the capital Addis Ababa. They take computer classes and get extra English tuition; living away from home for the first time is also a good way of preparing them for their later studies. The fund can also be used as a backup if, for some reason, a sponsor is unable to continue. In addition, the fund supports the families of the older children who have to leave Lalibela for further education in another town, until such time as the children themselves can support their own families.

### **About Cafcass**

- The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) was formed as a new service for England and Wales on 1 April 2001 as part of the Government's commitment to supporting families and children. It brought together the services previously provided by the Family Court Welfare Service, the Guardian ad Litem Services and the Children's divisions of the Official Solicitor's Office.

- Cafcass has a statutory responsibility to ensure that children and young people are put first in family proceedings, that their voices are heard, the decisions made about them by courts are in their best interests and that they and their families are supported throughout the process. We operate within the law set by Parliament and under the rules and directions of the family courts.
- Cafcass' role is to work with Children and Families in the family courts. The following list provides some examples of the types of cases we work with:-
  - Adoption (public law)
  - Care Orders (public law)
  - Emergency Protection Orders (public law)
  - Residency and contact following divorce and separation (private law)
- Cafcass is sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and is a non-departmental public body.
- For the year 2007-2008 CAF/CASS promoted the interests of 77,134 children. This does not factor in the work we do with children and their families in dispute resolution and our support of contact centres.
- Cafcass recently established a Young People's Board who have experience of our services. They advise us on matters of policy and practice.
- Cafcass' new National Standards are available for download at our new website [www.cafcass.gov.uk](http://www.cafcass.gov.uk)
- For 2008-09 Cafcass is implementing a major practice improvement programme to improve the quality and consistency of frontline practice.

**For further information:**

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