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Help support local volunteer going to Ecuador
Richard Hunt



Michelle van Walraven is planning to volunteer in Ecuador this May.

Michelle van Walraven, resident, student and active community member of Bolton and the Town of Caledon for many years, has volunteered to participate in a self-funded MINGA volunteer experience in Ecuador with Free the Children. The term MINGA originated in Ecuador and means *the coming together of people for the betterment of the community*.

Free The Children (www.freethechildren.com) and Leaders Today (www.leaderstoday.com) have combined their efforts to both build and teach at a high school in Santa Anita, Ecuador during May 2007.

Leaders Today is a division of Free the Children created in 1999 by the Nobel Prize nominee Craig Kielburger, and is an organization that is now the worldwide leader in providing youth with leadership education, inspiration and action tools in more than 45 countries.

Growing up in the small but rapidly expanding community of Bolton has prepared Michelle for endless opportunities and challenges. She is currently in her third year of a biomedical science degree with a concentration in nutrition at the University of Guelph. She is proud to be able to balance a continuing busy life and be a Residence Life Staff (RLS) member. She lives a lively life in the student residences where she dedicates herself to impacting, empowering and helping students navigate and learn in university, creating small MINGAs every day.

With four successful years in academics, travel and athletics at The Humberview, Michelle is also recognizable around the Town of Caledon, particularly working with many local children and youth at the Town's Summer Day Camps as the special programs and leadership coordinator. These local experiences have challenged Michelle and provided her with the foundation of volunteerism and leadership she has continued with as a role model at the University of Guelph. Michelle is now challenging herself to not only impact youth, children and even adults in her community, but also truly make a difference in the lives of children in Ecuador.

With many thanks to community sponsors, such as Richard Hunt, Michelle is reaching out for donations to help fund her \$3,200 trip to Ecuador. Any donations are welcome and charitable receipts will be provided (for contributions made before March 1). Make your cheques payable to Michelle van Walraven (MINGA) and mail to her home at 132 Beaver Court, Bolton Ont., L7E 3W6.