

EMC News - With a vested interest in human rights, Almonte-born charity SchoolBOX, and Equator Coffee Roasters (Equator) unite their passion and vision to create the Beans 4 Dreams program.

As of fall 2010, Equator will donate \$5 to SchoolBOX for every bag of Beans 4 Dreams coffee sold. For every \$5 donated, SchoolBOX can purchase one package of educational supplies for an impoverished child in Central America. Equator has also committed to giving an additional 10 cents per pound of coffee sold, resulting in a donation of \$10k-plus per year. The partnership aims to provide more than 2,000 children with educational supply packages in 2011.



"This partnership is not just about increased funding for our initiatives in Nicaragua," says Thomas Affleck, president and founder, SchoolBOX. "It's about raising awareness and working toward a common goal to support basic human rights, and at SchoolBOX, children's rights."

SchoolBOX is committed to Making Education Possible in Central America. It began with a gift of a pencil and notebook to a young girl in northern Nicaragua. The Beans 4 Dreams program goes back to the basics by providing the very gift that started it all. A package of notebooks, pencils, pencil sharpener, eraser, and ruler are enough to send a child to school.

"We want to better serve the communities we work in," says Craig Hall, founder of Equator Coffee Roasters and a resident of Mississippi Mills. "This program is only the beginning of a relationship that will continue to impact the lives of children in coffee producing countries."

As young socially-minded entrepreneurs, Affleck and Hall searched for a call to action. They thought globally and acted locally. Although their inspiration is deeply rooted in international development, much of their success is thanks to local support and a grassroots following in Almonte and the wider Ottawa Valley. By working together Equator and SchoolBOX are able to have a significant impact on Central American communities by empowering children with basic education and adults with fair wages.

"SchoolBOX is an example of what a community can do when they stand up, take risks and believe," says Affleck. Currently, SchoolBOX works only in Nicaragua, the relationship with Equator will lead to the development of educational programs in other coffee growing communities across Central America.

ABOUT SCHOOLBOX

Founded in 2006, SchoolBOX strives to make education possible by providing students, teachers

and communities with the basic tools to make the dream of literacy a reality. Based in Almonte, SchoolBOX is a Registered Canadian Charity with operations in Canada and Central America. SchoolBOX works with over 10,000 students and recently completed the construction of its 20th classroom. The SchoolBOX community is a diverse group working together to help children achieve their hopes and dreams through education. For more information, visit www.schoolbox.ca.

ABOUT EQUATOR

Equator Coffee Roasters Inc. is a 100 per cent fair trade company. Equator Coffee, which was originally started in Arnprior, wholeheartedly embraces fair trade principles. Equator is now a member of Cooperative Coffees, a green coffee purchasing coop whose buying practices exceed the current fair trade standards. Based in Almonte, Equator roasts its coffee on a weekly basis and supplies over 100 restaurants, cafes, and businesses in the Ottawa area.

Last year Equator roasted over 96,500 pounds of fair trade organic coffee for its customers. In addition to providing quality organic coffees, this family-run company empowers small scale farmers and their communities in developing countries by paying premium prices for their beans. For more information, visit www.equator.ca.