

Sign up for Christmas giveaway

CHARITIES and community groups are being urged to register with a budget supermarket to collect food donations on Christmas Eve.

Supermarket chain Aldi announced earlier this year that 95 per cent of Aldi stores will donate surplus food up to five days a week, all year round.

Aldi currently has one store in the district, in Epping Forest Shopping Park in Langston Road, Epping.

Anyone who successfully applies for the Christmas initiative can collect fresh food near the end of its shelf life after 6pm on Tuesday, December 24.

Last Christmas, Aldi donated just under half a million meals to charities across the UK, and is hoping to spread festive cheer to even more families.

Fritz Walleczek, managing director of corporate responsibility at Aldi UK, said: "This is our third year of Christmas food donations and we're hoping this year will be just as successful."

Charitable groups should contact aldichristmas@Neighbourly.com.

Students build toilets and dig wells on Cambodia trip

'You hear your parents say there are starving children, but we have seen it'

By Hannah Hastings

A MONTH-long trip to Cambodia gave teenagers the experience of a lifetime.

Year 11 students from Epping St John's Church of England School and Burnt Mill Academy, in Harlow, brought their school days to a close with the extended trip.

Each student had to raise a total of £3,800 to enable them to go on the trip – with a fundraising quiz night at Epping St John's attracting support from 140 people.

During the trip, students learnt about the culture and the day-to-day dangers faced by the people of Cambodia while themselves travelling and working.

The group built wells and toilets, made water pots and reinforced a dam in 87 per cent humidity, before heading out on a four-day trek through a national park.

The 13 students visited sites including the temples of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom.

Finley Jacobs-Roth, now in Year 12 at Epping St John's sixth form, said: "The children in Cambodia knew an-



Students from Epping St John's School and Burnt Mill Academy enjoy their time in Cambodia

young person who was not local was there to help them. I got the opportunity to go to a school and teach English.

"I feel I made a difference during the trip. It felt amazing; what we did was real. You hear your parents say there are starving children around the world, but we have seen it now and realise how lucky we are.

"I would like to take a gap year now after sixth form to help some more."

Students were unable to access much technology during the trip.

Sammy O'Brien, head of Year 10 at Epping St John's, said: "The people there have nothing, yet we noticed how happy they were. Their way of life was so nice. Our technology didn't work out there, so we were able to switch off, too. Instead, we sat around a table playing card games –

that is the lifestyle we lack.

"In terms of enrichment, this trip showed students how people in other places live and gave them an understanding of another country. It also gave them that overall feeling of supporting others and making a difference to people's lives. It brought people out of their shells and gave them a sense of selflessness."

The schools are now planning a joint trip to Kenya in 2021 for Year 9, 10 and 11.

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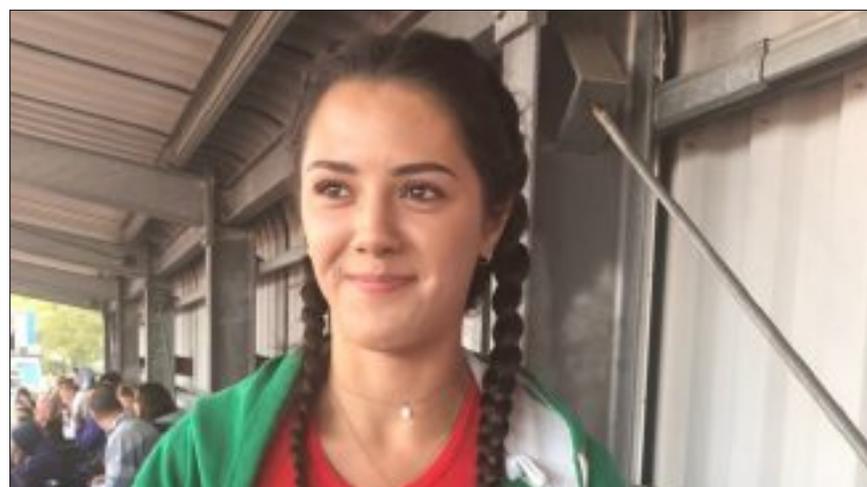
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Shona Vincent hopes to one day represent Team GB in athletics

Shona has her sights on Team GB place

A TEENAGE girl hopes to join Team GB one day after she won a bronze medal in the 100m at the National British Championships. Year 10 student Shona Vincent from Epping St John's School, in Bury Lane, Epping, took up athletics after being spotted running at an after-school club.

The athlete, who trains with Woodford Green AC and Essex Ladies, competed in the under 15 and under 17 categories at the event in Bedford. Speaking about her racing achievement, the 15-year-old said: "I hope to compete for England or Team GB one day. My coach has

said that if I keep going the way I am, I will be able to get there. "I get involved in all the school competitions I can and train three times each week at my club." Last month, Miss Vincent also picked up a silver medal in the 100m in the Southern Championships.