

Change For The Better

By Kate Calderdale • Stouffville Free Press

Young Stouffville entrepreneur Jared Henriques was inspired to establish his non-profit venture, Pocket Change Apparel, in 2007.

"I was at a conference and Compassion Canada had a booth there," said Jared, who graduated from Stouffville District Secondary School in 2009. Compassion is a Christian organization that works with local churches in 29 developing countries to offer a sponsorship program for children in need, serving communities in Africa, Asia and Central and South America.

When Jared saw the work the organization was doing, he was eager to help. The money he raises through T-shirt sales is used to bridge the financial gap until new sponsors are signed up. "Children get support as soon as they are in the system and don't have to wait until they find a sponsor. I launched Pocket Change three months ago and from May 1st until now we have sold just under 500 T-shirts, which is pretty big."

Jared designed the Pocket Change logo himself and found third world manufacturers who could supply good quality

T-shirts in exchange for fair wages. He credits his church, Springvale, with helping him get his venture off the ground. "It's been great. Before I got things started I was just a kid with a good idea. Now I've produced something that is generating sales and interest."

At present, sales are internet based, but he hopes to expand his reach through retail outlets and music festivals, and he has enlisted the support of a number of bands to get word of his initiative out to a wider audience. Asked what people can do to help, he said, "Support us in any way you can by buying a shirt and telling other people about us."

Jared's mission statement sums up his philosophy beautifully: "Pocket Change Apparel will sell quality clothing in order to share love, transform lives and foster generosity." He is living proof that one individual really can make a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate.

Pocket Change T-shirts come in a variety of colours and designs and Jared plans to add sweatshirts and hoodies to the line in the near future. Meanwhile, you can order a T-shirt by visiting www.pocketchangeapparel.ca. You can also learn more about Compassion Canada at www.compassion.ca.

Stouffville entrepreneur helps children in need



Jared Henriques is seen here in the back yard of his Stouffville home sporting one of his stylish T-shirts.



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