



**Speech by David Mackintosh, Chair of the Board of Trustees,
at the launch of The KidsAid Foundation on Thursday 17th January 2008**

I'm delighted to welcome you here this evening to our launch and to tell you a bit about the charity.

We formed at the end of last year to bring together a Board of Trustees with a good sound knowledge of charity management from a range of backgrounds in the public and private sector to work with an experienced team of therapists who have worked with traumatised children and families across the county.

Our aim is to help children who have been traumatised in some way through bereavement, abuse or some other distress to set their lives back on track and to stop them becoming the problems of the future. Early intervention is increasingly recognised by a number of charities and organisations as the way forward for helping get children back on track.

Children want security and stability. Modern life is difficult enough for the best of us but the pressures on family life are growing. As families break-down and reform in all different guises, the pressures on parents and children are greater than ever so organisations like KidsAid are in ever greater need to provide support to families and to help children overcome their trauma in their own way.

Anyone, as I have, who has experienced the death of a parent at a young age or who was perhaps traumatised or sadly abused, will know that children are not equipped with the same skills to express themselves as an adult or perhaps given the chance.

Children cannot communicate in the same way as adults but the world of play - or drama or art - is a safe world which allows them to re-live traumatic memories in a safe environment. If an adult, for example, is involved in an accident on the way to work then they feel the need to phone or text everyone they know!

Children have the same desire when they suffer trauma but they express it in different ways. Bad behaviour or mood swings can be a traumatised child's way of expressing trauma which is often blamed on naughtiness without the real trauma being treated. Some children just need to be given a chance.

I was lucky. I was given that chance and allowed to express myself and to be healed by attending a group for bereaved children here in Northamptonshire which at its time was ground-breaking and won awards.

But what about other children. We've all read stories about young criminals and delinquents and dismissed them. Who ever takes the time to look beyond the headlines at their family life or history.

I'm not here to excuse criminals or give them a way out of what they have done. But what if we could give young, damaged children a chance? A chance to express themselves in their own way and be allowed some time to heal as a child through the ways of a child and then to grow up and hopefully lead a life with a slate clear of their childhood troubles.

That's what KidsAid is about and why I am delighted to welcome you here tonight.

I am very pleased to be one of the charity's founders and am honoured to work alongside a first class Board of Trustees and team of therapists.

We are also very lucky to have the support of Natalie Pinkham who is currently starring in ITV's Dancing on Ice which started last Sunday. Unfortunately Natalie can't be here this evening as she is busy training for the next show on Sunday. We really wish Natalie the best of luck for Dancing on Ice which is on again on Sunday.

Now you may wonder why we asked you along here tonight. Well each of you plays an important part in some way in the community. A teacher at my school always said to me - if you've got the skills, ability or opportunity to help somebody then you would be wrong not to.

Well we need your help. And there are so many ways you can help us. We need money - all charities need money and I'm delighted that in a few moments we are going to receive a generous donation.

We know that money is tight for charities and we aim to keep our administration costs as low as possible and - whenever we can - to seek out other charities or organisations to work with and we will be making a very exciting statement about that in the coming weeks.

We also need people who can devote their time or their skills or their expertise. Or simply by taking one of our information packs and telling people about us.

KidsAid is a very exciting new initiative and I'm pleased to welcome you here tonight to be a part of it.