

# Author's novel fundraiser is charity read-all-about-it

**A LOCAL author has brought his work to book to raise £2,000 for a group of Good Samaritans from Holywood and the charity they work with in some of the worst slums in India.**

David Park delved into the pages of his latest novel, 'The Light of Amsterdam', in aid of 'Asha', which means hope in Hindi, and has attracted a dedicated group of volunteers from Holywood Parish Church.

Retired English teacher David provided an insight into how he was inspired to write

and read quotes from his new book to some 150 book club members from Holywood, the Titanic Quarter and Lisburn.

The charity event was organised by Holywood's Moyra Richardson and will help fund a visit by pupils from Wallace High School in Lisburn to Asha projects in India.

Moyra, who is a teacher at the school, is organising the trip, during which the pupils will help out at Asha's very successful higher education programme for slum colony children in Delhi.

It is 25 years since the charity Asha was founded by Indian

paediatrician Dr Kiran Martin, who has been dubbed the 'Mother Teresa of New Delhi.'

Amazingly the charity gives hope to almost 500,000 of the four million so called 'slum people' in India's capital city with the help of seven support groups across Northern Ireland known as the Friends of Asha.

There are almost 50 Asha programmes working in New Delhi and they have helped teach thousands of youngsters, who have formerly begged on the streets, how to seek employment.

Thanks to the charity's help they have taken their first steps on career paths in everything from computer programming to engineering and even multimedia design.

The charity has also helped the young people to create cottage industries, like the selling of artefacts, and how to manage money. Women are taught how to be midwives too.

The charity allows all these people to realize their potential, regardless of background, caste or religious beliefs, by addressing deep-rooted social and poverty-induced problems and involving community members in every aspect of their work.

The aim is to make lasting benefits in the lives of slum dwellers through empowerment, healthcare, education, financial inclusion and environmental improvement.

The charity 'Friends of Asha Ireland', which keeps its administration costs to only 6% of its funding, recently celebrated its 25th anniversary locally.

The Asha website is [www.asha-india.org](http://www.asha-india.org) and Friends of Asha (Ireland) can be contacted on [ashaireland@mail.com](mailto:ashaireland@mail.com) or Tel 02890427201.



Author David Park and Moyra Richardson pictured at his book reading in aid of the Indian charity Asha.