

## Redeemer students meet Kreviazuk's challenge for kids



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When Timothy Epp sent an e-mail inviting Chantal Kreviazuk to come to Redeemer University College to speak to his sociology class about her charity work, he knew it was a long shot.

But to Epp's surprise, the popular Canadian singer-songwriter responded with a challenge -- raise \$2,500 to help children in war-torn countries and she'd come.

Epp, a professor of sociology and pop culture, passed the challenge along to his students and they got to work. They held loose-change drives, offered fellow students discount haircuts and gave faculty members cut-rate pedicures. Some even shaved their heads.

Yesterday, their efforts paid off when Kreviazuk stood on the stage of Redeemer auditorium and accepted a cheque for \$5,056.01.

"The students more than doubled what she asked for," Epp said.

In return, Kreviazuk stayed another two hours to chat with about 200 students. She probably would have stayed longer, but she had to prepare for a concert at Hamilton Place last night.

She told the students about her work with her favourite charity, War Child Canada, visiting some of the worst slums in the world. She told them about Ethiopian

drinking water that made her sick and bed bugs that made her itch. She recounted how she met two-year-olds who were dying of AIDS and teenage girls forced into prostitution after burying their parents.

Kreviazuk also told them how she has witnessed what groups like War Child can do, providing schooling, clothing and medical help.

"I want to thank you all for stepping up to the plate and making my cause your own," said the Winnipeg native, who now splits her time between homes in Los Angeles and Toronto. "The world is going to be a much better place because of the journey that you are on. Keep up the good work."

She then sat at the piano and sang two of her hits -- Feels Like Home and Julia -- before opening up the floor to questions. The students wanted to know what Ben Affleck was like (his wife is nicer, she joked) and who she'd like to write songs with (Paul McCartney, of course).

They also wanted to know how her work with War Child has affected her relationship with her three young sons.

"My son's birthday party was a War Child birthday party," she answered. "He didn't get presents for turning five. We set up a web page for him and all of our friends sent money to War Child ...

"He was really sad," she said, adding that he still got some presents besides the donations. "But it was a great experience for him to realize that he's not alone in the world."

One of the students who presented Kreviazuk with the cheque was 19-year-old Melissa Hogeboom, of Kingston, Ont.

She's no stranger to fundraising. Two years ago she shaved her head for a cancer fundraiser. Last Monday, she did it again for War Child. Kreviazuk's talk, she said, made her realize the importance of her contribution.

"It was really exciting to learn how it affects people personally," Hogeboom said.

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