



LIVE BELOW THE LINE

Global Poverty Project Dares Kiwis to Live Below the Line

Live Below the Line 2012 Launch Event
Snapdragon Restaurant, Viaduct

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For Immediate Release

The [Global Poverty Project](#) have begun their 2012 [Live Below The Line](#) campaign which calls for thousands of New Zealanders to live for 5 days in September on only \$2.25 per day for their food and drink. The symbolic act of empathy is part of a world-wide movement to raise awareness through direct experience of the challenges and hardships of extreme poverty. Over 1.4 Billion people around the world live in severe poverty, on the equivalent of \$2.25 per day.

“We’re building on the momentum from the *Live Below The Line* campaigns in Australia, the UK and the US, but also on the work of decades of sustained efforts by the international community to reduce global poverty,” said Will Watterson, New Zealand Director for the [Global Poverty Project](#).

The 2012 campaign will be launched at the [Snapdragon Restaurant](#) at the Viaduct where head chef Ross Birch accepted the first challenge of this year’s campaign by agreeing to prepare a gourmet meal for 150 people for just \$2.25 per person. To meet this challenge, Mr Birch undertook weeks of research before preparing two options of a goat tajine and a salted beef dish.

“It was certainly a challenge, but with the right thinking it was actually very manageable,” said Mr Birch. “The peasant dishes of North Africa were a great place to start and I’ve added special New Zealand touches and created incredibly tasty dishes on a tight budget.”

Mr Watterson says that the application of expertise to solve a seemingly impossible challenge is the essence of what *Live Below the Line* is about.

“What seemed impossible was overcome with thoughtful and intelligent action to pull together this meal,” said Mr Watterson. “Global Poverty can be overcome in much the same way; if we commit to taking action and focusing our efforts in the right way.”

Mr Watterson notes that the global percentage of people living in extreme poverty has dropped from 52% in 1981 to just 25% in 2010. He says that this sort of progress has been made possible by the international community working together within a common framework called the **Millennium Development Goals**

Live Below the Line works directly with **UNICEF, OXFAM, P3 Foundation, TEAR Fund, WorldVision, Christian World Service and the VSA** to raise funds for their projects in the developing world.

According to Mr Watterson, the goal of this years challenge is to raise over \$1million to be distributed between these charity partners.

“Living for \$2.25/day gets people to really understand the hardships of global poverty,” he said. “The people who take the challenge have hundreds of conversations with people at their office, home and school and it creates a ripple effect of tens of thousands of people thinking about poverty in a new, more engaged way.”

Live Below the Line has plans to release viral videos from **Helen Clark** and other notable New Zealanders to maximize the impact of the challenge. Mr Watterson hopes to make *Live Below the Line* part of the cultural dialogue in New Zealand.

“As an organization, our goal is to raise consciousness,” he said. “It’s a new model of activism that emphasizes building a movement of committed global citizens who are informed and determined to make a difference. A more globally aware citizenry has a better chance of working with our partners in developing countries to find new and innovative solutions to poverty that are sustainable and just.”

Ben McKinLay, the general manager of Snapdragon, says the *Live Below the Line* event was a chance for them to show their support for the altruistic cause.

“We support the efforts to raise awareness about these issues,” he said. “This was also a great chance for our chef to showcase his incredible skills and apply them to a complex problem. Tackling the issues of global poverty starts with getting people involved, and we’re delighted that we had a chance to get involved in this very special event.”

Mr Watterson says that the challenge of living for \$2.25/day is not about deprivation, as Mr Birch’s meal has proved. He says it’s about coming together with other people to share meals, celebrate the amazing progress that has been made in poverty eradication over the years, and to have meaningful conversations about how we can be the first generation that finally ends poverty.

Live Below the Line is welcoming participants to sign up for the 5 day challenge on their website www.livebelowtheline.com/nz . The challenge will run from the 24th until the 28th of September.

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