news

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Tory's support for mercy trip

report by
BEV HOLDER

PROSPECTIVE MP for Dudley South Chris Kelly has just returned from an eye-opening and emotional trip to war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina where he has been helping to rebuild lives and communities.

The 31-year-old prospective parliamentary candidate was one of a 30-strong team of aspiring politicians, MPs and volunteers getting involved in Project Maja – a social action project organised by the Conservative Party.

The project aims to help people living in the town of Srebrenica, which has spent the last 14 years battling back from the horrors of the July 1995 massacre in which more than 8,000 men and boys were slaughtered at the height of the Bosnian war.

Aspiring Conservative MP Chris and the team – led by Baroness Warsi – saw first-hand many of the projects underway in the town, including the building of a new house for a war widow, which was later opened by Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague MP.

They also helped to kit out a new IT suite at a secondary school and got busy chopping hundreds of logs for firewood for an elderly widow living in the hills surrounding Srebrenica before the harsh winter sets in.

The team also built a new football pitch that was later opened with a series of six-a-side games, which saw MPs and aspiring politicians taking on the villagers.

And before leaving via Sarajevo airport the party had the honour of meeting two of the three Presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the serving President.

Chris, who has worked on a similar project in Rwanda, said on his return to the Black Country: "It was a great experience and a really emotional journey.

"In Britain we lead such comparitively privileged lives, so it really puts things into context.

"I am confident we will have made a modest but significant contribution to the lives of the villagers we had the pleasure and honour to meet and work alongside, while at the same time contributing to our own understanding of post-conflict situations."

Chris, marketing director at leading truck dealers Keltruck, based in West Bromwich, also arranged for two pallets of toys to be shipped over and donated to nursery schools in the region at the start of the project.

He added: "There were some very happy children on the receiving end."

ABOVE: Chris Kelly and the rest of the team in Srebrenica.

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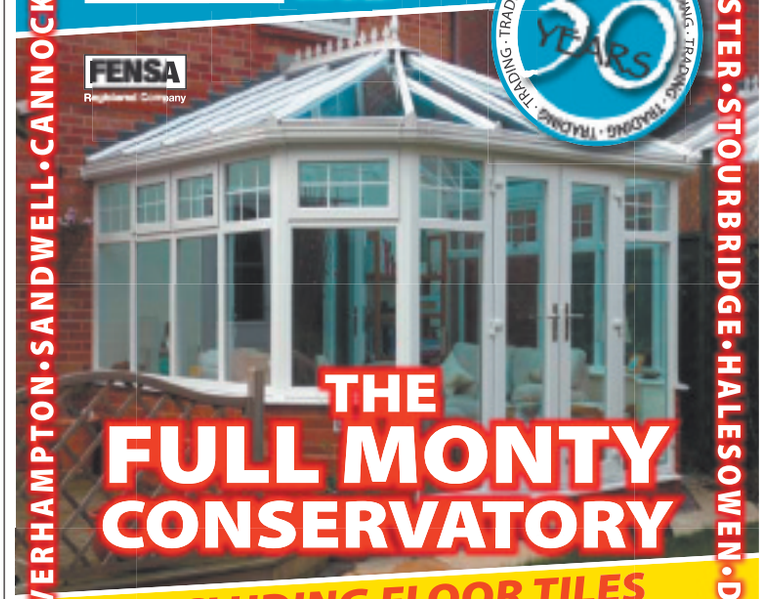

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