Press Release

25th January 2024

Islamabad

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**Serena Hotels sponsored Mashal’s Fund-Raising Event**

Serena Hotels, under the Cultural Diplomacy initiative collaborated with Bestway Cement Ltd, to host a fundraising event titled *'Muddat hue ha yaar ko mehman kiye hue’* for the Mashal Association at Serena Hotel in Islamabad on Thursday 25th January 2024.

Mashal Association is a social welfare organization which has been working for educating and empowering girls and women from under privileged families since 1988. It was founded by (late) Begum Shahida Azim and has gone from strength to strength with time, with a higher secondary school for girls with 300 students, a medical Center and a vocational training center. Its Welfare Complex caters to the needs of about 9 surrounding villages/ communities that live in and around Margalla Town which is the outer edge of Islamabad.

The audience experienced the true essence of the Urdu language as Adeel Hashmi who is a famous, talented and a prominent name of Pakistani Showbiz industry narrated selected pieces from Urdu literature, and he was accompanied by Ustad Raees Khan on his magical violin. The event witnessed a significant presence of dignitaries, official representatives from the corporate sector, members of the business community, and media personnels.

Serena Hotels takes great pride in the privilege of organizing and hosting events that play a significant role in encouraging the cultural and traditional essence of Pakistan. These events serve as platforms where diverse facets of the country's rich heritage are celebrated, embraced, and shared with a wider audience.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Mashal Association is a social welfare association registered under the Societies Registration Act XX1 of 1860 on August 31, 1988. It is a non-political, non-sectarian welfare association dedicated to the uplift of underprivileged women and girls in and around Islamabad. It was founded by Begum Shahida Ejaz Azim.

**What We Do?**

**EDUCATION CENTER:** The school has classes from One to Ten with approximately 160 children enrolled so far. The girls come from homes where usually both parents work as domestic help or cheap labor and cannot afford to send their children to school. The school provides the students with uniforms, books and transport. The syllabus taught is that of the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad. The principal and teachers are paid staff, but they are helped by some voluntary members who have a background in education and who also take some classes. The members also do student counselling for any problem solving when required. There is a daily morning assembly which has a PT drill too. The students are encouraged to take part in different activities and taken for field trips. The school will have the capacity to enroll 300 students once the additional classrooms are built. It also provides an opportunity for Mashal members and their friends to sponsor the education of one or more students.

**MEDICAL CENTER:** The medical center comprises of three consulting rooms, a waiting room for out-patients and a dispensary. Besides this, there is an operation theater where Tubal Ligations are held. There is a five-bed General Ward and a two-bed Private ward, which will be used for our mother and Childcare Project when it finds a donor. This work was done under the supervision of the late Dr. Samia Janjua who took a keen interest in establishing a medical center in the complex.

**VOCATIONAL CENTER:** Diplomas and courses are offered in different disciplines with a view to making the enrolled women capable of sustaining themselves financially. The handicrafts section develops different products in home linen which are sold at exhibitions and the Bazars organized by Mashal itself.

**HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITY:** Mashal has always played its role in hours of natural calamities, floods, earthquakes, drought, etc. The Association has been providing wheelchairs and other medical necessities to the Al-Farabi School of the Handicapped. The Children’s Hospital at PIMS, Islamabad, asks Mashal to procure medicines and other items that are needed, from time to time, for underprivileged children admitted there.