



LIVING HER DREAM: Fleur Verhoeven heads to Kenya later this month to volunteer at an orphanage with the Global Volunteer Network for 10 weeks.

PICTURE / PICTURE / GLENN TAYLOR

Fleur visiting orphanage as part of African odyssey

Nineteen-year-old Havelock North woman Fleur Verhoeven will fulfil a decade-long dream to visit the African continent this month when she visits Kenya to teach at an orphanage in Africa's second largest slum.

Located outside of the capital, Nairobi, more than one million people live in Kibera, most with little or no access to clean water, electricity or sanitation, according to the Kibera Slum Foundation.

BBC journalist Andrew Harding called it "600 acres (242ha) of mud and filth, with a brown stream dribbling through the middle".

Ms Verhoeven, who has lived in Hastings for three-and-a-half years since arriving from her native Holland, said she had had a dream to visit Africa since she was 9 years old.

by Alister Thomson
alister.thomson@hbtoday.co.nz

She had been searching for a volunteer organisation on the internet and came across the Global Volunteer Network (GVN).

GVN is a New-Zealand based organisation aiming to increase access to basic healthcare and education in poor communities.

In Kibera she will work at an orphanage for 10 weeks although she does not know which one.

"I am really excited about going but I am also starting to get a bit nervous because I always get homesick."

She has been working at a childcare centre in Havelock North for the past 18 months.

At the orphanage her duties will include teaching as well as taking care of the children.

The trip, however, will not be cheap. It's costing her \$7000 although her accommodation will be taken care of by the GVN.

She hopes to live with a host family so she can experience how Kenyan people live from day-to-day.

While in Kenya she wants to go on a safari and travel to Mombasa, on the East Coast.

Next year she hopes to start studying towards obtaining a Bachelor of Social Science degree.

GVN chief executive Colin Salisbury said her trip abroad would be challenging. "Fleur will be working five days a week and will be provided simple living arrangements. Her dedication, and the impact she will have, is a noteworthy one."

■ For more information visit www.volunteer.org.nz.