

ADVERTORIAL



What onions can teach you about life

The Martin Roberts Foundation focuses on the health and wellbeing of our children... and an onion could be a good way of explaining things

ACCORDING to one of DreamWorks' timeless anti-heroes, Shrek, "Ogres are like onions. They have many layers".

Absolutely true, like people, in fact. But sometimes the humble onion, a basic ingredient of some of the world's finest dishes, can make us cry. No matter whether we run the tap or freeze cut-up pieces of our multi-layered friends, onions create a physical reaction that start the tears a-flowing.

So as life imitates art, why is the onion relevant to broadcaster and advocate for child welfare and wellbeing, Martin Roberts? Well, in the first instance, Martin has written a series of children's books called *The Villes*. One of the books within the series is called *Sadsville*, focusing on a central character called Herman who solves the mystery as to why everyone is sad.

Without giving too much of the story away, Martin has created an engagement campaign as part of an assembly that is being rolled out across schools in Somerset, before a national campaign. The onion is used as a prop to demonstrate that tears and emotions are OK, and to help children discuss their emotions, and to talk about what makes them sad and how they deal with it. The backdrop of Martin's campaign falls under the remit of his recently launched charity, The Martin Roberts Foundation, to help support and improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people, through greater safeguarding, wellbeing and nationwide educational initiatives.

Martin says: "I am truly delighted to have launched my foundation at such a pivotal time in terms of national child safeguarding agendas. The mission of The Martin Roberts Foundation is to support educational, safeguarding and wellbeing initiatives for children and young people, whether this be understanding behavioural shifts through bullying and social or mental health challenges, to helping to empower a new generation of responsible young people



through financial education. The *Sadsville* campaign and the onion prop allows us to get children thinking in a different way - I can just imagine that most of them will go home and talk about onions at their family dinner table. A brilliant conversation starter, for sure!"

In 2018/19, the main priority for The Martin Roberts Foundation is to fundraise £500,000, in order to gift and deliver a free copy of Martin's *Sadsville* book to every child in Year 4 (eight to nine-year-olds). *Sadsville* not only encourages children to help shift upsetting situations or feelings but also includes information on how to approach Childline through the national helpline, should they need a bit more help and support.

Celebrity endorsement for both The

Martin Roberts Foundation and the *Villes* series has crossed borders and continents: Dame Esther Rantzen DBE, founder/president of Childline, recently offered her support to the *Sadsville* campaign, saying: "Thank you for creating this highly entertaining and original way of raising children's awareness of how they can reach out for help through support services such as Childline. I wish the *Sadsville* book project every success"

Some of the many personalities who have read extracts from *Sadsville* as well as Dame Esther herself include; David Hasselhoff, Jeremy Vine, Warwick Davies, Ben Shephard and Kate Garraway.

At the UK launch of The Martin Roberts Foundation, Martin welcomed sup-

port from celebrity and VIP names such as Calum Best, Helen Lederer, Charlie Webster and Kai Owen, as well as the CEO of the NSPCC, Peter Wanless.

Shrek was clearly on to something great. Here's to the humble onion and keeping young people safe and smiling in 2018 and beyond...

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