

Fun day to help needy families

Hundreds of school Children will be digging deep at Sooth Shields beach tomorrow for this Year's Sandcastle Challenge.

The event, first held in 1994, is designed to raise £13,000 for Children North East (CNE), the oldest children's charity in the region.

More than 700 children will be taking part with their teachers, with record 45 teams from 17 schools signed up. Teams are headed by local architects, designers and developers.

Schools receive a brief with a theme before the big day and work with their allocated designate to create their castles.

Last years creations included the Tower of London and the Royal Yacht Britannia.

Builders' merchant **James Burrell** is among the firms taking part. Business development manager John Matthews said, "Since 1891 Children North East and its forerunners have worked to provide support for local youngsters. This year's main sponsor Gleasons, have given us tremendous help by doubling the prize money awarded to winning schools. With so many teams competing we hope that we may go on to break the target set and raise even more money than originally planned."

Each year more than 2,000 families turn to Children North East for support. Its fundraising and PR manager Catrina Flynn said "Since being launched in 1994 the Sandcastle Challenge gets better and better. Last year we raised £10,000 and we're looking to exceed that by an additional £3,000 this year." Awards will be presented at a ball on July 18 at the Marriots Gosforth Park Hotel.