

CHIT CHAT April 2016

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Overview

To all our friends. We have delayed this newsletter to capture a range of developments over the last 6 months, starting with the celebration of our 10th anniversary. We cannot express our thanks to you strongly enough. In 2005 we undertook to raise £15,000 for the children homes, with your support we are now budgeting around £100,000 each year. Through this funding we are able to support a team of 40 staff in the homes and school, caring for and educating 250 children, and extending free education to about 100 children (and steadily increasing) from the Bapatla locality. Additionally Babu's team are facing up to a rising challenge to support children who are HIV+. We foresee further developments in these two streams of work, and want to give a clear account for them. There is much to pray for. So we have re-styled the newsletter to make accessing the latest information and other themes more straightforward. Do please use our contact details to provide feedback.

Howard (CHIT Chair)

CHIT is 10 years old !

With our 10th anniversary passing in September, we held a day of celebration in Kenilworth in November. The trustees were joined by over 50 supporters from around the UK, and the founder of the Indian homes, SR Babu as guest of honour.



A highlight of the day was a video link with children and staff from the two homes, with a special moment for some sponsors to meet the children they support. We wanted to use this opportunity to take soundings from our supporters on how we should meet the changing circumstances we foresaw in future: new issues emerging in India, like an ageing population and more family break-ups, increasing services to families suffering from AIDS/HIV+, and others. The message was clear: **STICK TO YOUR KNITTING!** Nonetheless, we are aware that we need to attract new supporters in the UK as the budget continues to rise



inexorably, and so, while we do not foresee any shifts in focus in India, we would like support from those who identify closely with this project to help us discover new sources of income so that we can face the next 10 years with confidence.



Home life

At Bapatla and Nidamarru the care teams are now in uniform, and continue to provide a safe and friendly environment in which nearly 200 residential children thrive (others being supported at college or university). We have learnt that the development of the state capital Aramavathi is unlikely to have an early impact on Nidamarru, and are reviewing the state of the facilities to ensure standards are maintained for the foreseeable future. Together with comparable investments in Bapatla and in support of the school we have committed to £10,000 of capital improvements during the next year. Against an otherwise positive picture, however, we are very sad to report that in February, Raju, the deputy warden at Nidamarru (shown top right) died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage, leaving the home in shock. With his late wife Saramma who was previously warden of the home, he leaves a son in his early twenties.



Education

Mr Rajeev has been Principal at our school in Bapatla for 18 months now, delivering English Medium education to children from 5 to 15 years old, as well as two kindergarten classes. We are currently awaiting the results of the second year to take their Year 10 examinations in English. There remains much to do, as the school has a number of hurdles to achieve its ambition of registration with the Central Board of Secondary Education, which will be a massive feather in Mr Rajeev's cap.

An early step is to develop and equip two classrooms as natural and physical science laboratories for which we need **£3,500****: pretty good value by UK standards! Can you help?

Appeal!

We and the school have been enormously blessed by the support of Stuart and Claire Brown, who for the last 9 years have been visiting the school for a month or so every winter to teach English to all ages of children and to coach the teachers in their English and styles of teaching. Previously we have encouraged others to volunteer in this way, and we want to underline how valuable it is to the school, as well as personally rewarding for the volunteer. We advise a minimum of 3 weeks, more is preferable, and we recommend timing it in the cooler months between November and February, excluding the Christmas holidays. If you, or someone you know, is interested, please contact the office, details at the top. This could be your class ...



Communications

We are overhauling our website, mainly to make keeping it up to date easier. Those who access it should see the changes by the middle of the summer. However, we mention this to introduce some discussions we have had on data protection. Working in support of children inevitably introduces risks associated with child and sensitive data protection, and this is becoming more complicated with the growth of support groups in the USA and France alongside CHIT, and the increasing use of social media like Facebook to give immediate updates on what we are doing. With the President of the American charity and Babu we had a "data protection summit" in India during the trustees' visit in January, and thrashed out a set of agreements that would maintain our moral and legal integrity, not least when using the boundless medium of the internet. Oddly, what was initially seen as a problem now seems likely to bring the charities closer together.



A welcome break in the proceedings of the "summit"!

HIV+

As predicted the numbers of children who are HIV+ is increasing. In January, trustees met 15 boys and girls who are now being supported at home (many with grandparents), and witnessed the monthly distribution of food and financial support. We saw that it was given to the children, lest for any reason it gets diverted. Since then, another girl has joined the support programme. The children attend school in their locality, and the state provides retroviral drugs. However their vulnerability to infection remains, demanding a good diet and other medical support, which CHIT is funding, as well as support to overcome the wider social difficulties that many sufferers face. We continue to watch developments.



Pauline Stanton-Saringer meeting some of the children: each receives two carrier bags of provisions and 750 Rupees each month.

Formalities

Our annual report and financial statements for 2014-2015 can now be seen in the Charity Commission pages at www.gov.uk. Please let us know any changes in your contact details. If you are receiving this by post please let us know if we can switch to email. Our contact details are at the top.

**Please make cheques, payable to CHIT, to Mrs V Gillman, Littlecombe, Portsmouth Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6TQ, or BACS transfer to CHIT Acc No 04631086 at sort code 30-90-54, Reference your name and 'Labs'