



CHILD AID UK NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S NEW FROM TAMIL NADU ?

Somewhere to eat !



This is where the children shown below are supposed to eat, the trouble is, the



Nuns who look after them cannot afford to build their dining room. They currently sit on the floor in an external corridor. That is O.K. when it is nice and sunny but it gets a 'bit damp' in the monsoon. So Child Aid is trying to raise £ 2500 to finish the building of the dining room.

Children to Sponsor

We have another group of children who would like your help. **Nithya** is one who can say 'Thank You' to Susan but take a look at our web site at www.childaid.org.uk



There is **Shanthi and Parthiban, and**



...
...
... naming but two hopefuls !



A long walk to School



This little girl's name is Vana Roja, which in Tamil means Forest Rose. Vana lives in a mud hut, in the middle of a large field, miles from anywhere. Each day she has to walk for one and a half hours to get to school, in bare feet, often the temperature is over 35°. Vana wants to become a doctor when she finishes at her school. So, to help make her life a little easier we bought her a bicycle, now she can cycle to school in a quarter the time it took her to walk.

Talking of walking: in England, these small children did a little walking themselves to help their friends in India. These children are from Downsend primary school in Leatherhead, Surrey. Look at their Wellington boots - they all agreed to do a sponsored walk round their school playing field in these Wellingtons, and how much did they raise ? A massive £ 1592. But the generosity of the children of Downsend School didn't end there, they took on the task of raising some money to help build a school for children in Tamil Nadu. Throughout the year the children have been Carol Singing, organising sponsored breakfasts and doing all manner of things to help. Raising so far, over £ 2150.

Two Indian Classical dancers in the making

Their names are Daisy and Janci and both love to dance. But apart from



learning classical dance from their village elders, how can they really become expert and earn a living for themselves other than 'in the fields' ! Child Aid came to the rescue, Child Aid sponsored them to take a BA in Indian Classical dance and they start this year, Daisy on a three year course, Janci on a five year course. It was a dream come true for these young students.



Who are the people we are trying to help?

Indian culture is difficult to understand, nearly everyone has heard about the 'untouchables'; officially in India they no longer exist, in reality, they still do. It is hard to know exactly where to start our story, most people arrive by accident. Our 'untouchables' live in very poor rural communities, where two bowls of rice a day is often luxury - no, they are not all starving and unlike many in the 'west', they are reasonably happy with their lot. But they have no real future without help. The principal aim of Child Aid is to help the young have that future, to be able to earn more than a coolie's wage. If you saw some of these 'untouchables' you would wonder where the name came from, they rarely see westerners and it was only last year that a coach load actually 'found' the Indian Ocean! Although our main task is to educate the young, to set an example in these villages we also try and help the disadvantaged of all ages - for the small amount of funds needed to do this, it helps us convince the parents of the children of the need for their children's education. So, let us introduce you to a few of the 'untouchables' we are currently helping.

John lives in a Manimangalam, his home is a mud hut with no running water, no electric, and no facilities!



Jenifer lives in Seeyalam, her home is also a mud hut, with no running water and similar facilities to John.



Our next 'untouchable' is **Mugunthan**, yes, surprise, he too lives in a mud hut with absolutely no facilities.



Just look at them, 'untouchables'? Well, with William's, Dorothy's and Colin's help, these three will almost certainly have a better future.



CHILD AID UK



This is a home for the aged who have no home of their own; it looks like a shed - well to us it would be a shed, but inside are fifty beds, each of which is 'home' to one old person. We say old, because no one is under seventy a few are nearly 'one hundred'. One gentleman is ninety eight and is looking forward to his 100th birthday which we have said we will give him a big party



The guy in the middle is a 98 year old, but what is amazing is that this little community is under a self-help programme. We have bought them a few cows, some chickens and they make a few 'pence' from their farm to enable them to survive - just. Their problem? Not much really, you see that red roof, it leaks and in the monsoon the shed becomes a swimming pool. They don't grumble, they are the lucky ones with a roof of their own, but for £ 4000 we could build them a new shed, with a roof that wouldn't leak!

Some of our workers in India

There is no way we can do anything in India without support on the ground. There is one very hard working Priest, Fr Pathrose (he is pictured above, to the right of the three). Fr Pathrose works with a 'dozen' other Priests in villages around Thiruvannamalai, in which city there is a Priory, staffed by sisters trained in Bognor, Sussex by the sea in England! We will tell you all about these people in our next Newsletter.

Our major project this year - a Community Centre and children's school

We cannot tell you much more than the land has now been purchased and we are waiting to see if some large gifts may allow us to complete the project this year - everything looks promising.

We have asked the Princess Diana Charity if they can help, we have already had one substantial benefactor providing well in excess of a thousand pounds - Paul, we thank you. We also have another benefactor asking how much we need, together with a large publishing house working to provide a large donation at the end of the year.

So where is this Community Centre and junior school?



If you travel 250 Kms South West from Madras, if you are very lucky you may find the village. It is near to Vandavashi and very near to one of the Sri Lankan refugee Camps, at Osur. We will pin-point it better when we have more to tell you.