

This newsletter is accompanied by a letter from Jim, originally written for the curry evening, but addressed to all of us. In the main newsletter we hope that you enjoy reading about the experiences and emotions of two sets of young people who have visited Vidiyal this year. We also have a special plea for your help. Please read on.

Lowri Davies is a sixth former at Ipswich High School and wrote a report for the school bulletin.

Dawning Realisation

When the opportunity arose to travel to India in support of New Dawn India, the charity Mrs Sandra Davies and the school have supported for many years, my sister Rhianna (Old Girl) and I jumped at the chance to go to Madurai and see the charity in action. The assemblies hadn't quite prepared us for the amazing and very humbling experience we had there this summer.

Jim Jesudoss and his wife Sharmila run a shelter home and school for the children who live in the slums of Madurai; some children are orphans, some have been abused and some have resorted to crime. We had no comprehension of the difference the charity makes to so many young people's lives, with the commitment of such dedicated staff. We took lessons, played with the children and generally helped out where we could. We were asked to run a seminar on 'first aid' for some of the younger children and helped in the medical camp. Medic Rhianna was in charge of stitching and dressing of wounds and I was to dispense the drugs! It was a delight to deliver the letters and gifts from the IHS sponsors and to see how much the children appreciated them. It is difficult to put into words the experience that we had in India, but I would urge anyone who has the opportunity to go, to absolutely *do it*.



Katie Lifford and her family have been sponsors for many years and Katie made her first visit to Vidiyal, along with her friend Lucy Ainsworth. Here are their thoughts.

In August we spent 2 weeks with the Vidiyal family in Madurai, and were given the opportunity to take part in lots of what they do. While we were there we visited the 5 different centres around Madurai, and were always greeted with the excited, beaming faces of children wanting to practise their English, and play games with us. We took small toys such as bouncy balls, bubbles and balloons for the children, and in return many dances and songs were performed for us. Each centre runs a different evening programme, which includes allowing time for school work to be done. The Main centre also has a library, and offers music and computer lessons to equip the children with at least basic IT skills.



We spent time with children who had been found on the streets, or who had run away from home, and were housed at the Reception Home. There were 35 children when we were there, and we spent quite a lot of time getting to know them. This included running four workshops, mainly involving crafts, games and parachute games. The boys liked asking us about our (limited) cricket knowledge, while the girls covered us in glitter and put flowers in our hair!



It was the annual Child Rights Day festival during our stay, and we were fortunate enough to be a part of it. Held at a local school, all the children involved in Vidiyal join together for a morning of fete-like activities and games. Parents and families of the Vidiyal children arrive after lunch, when the afternoon is split into two parts: the prize giving, and the cultural programme. First, awards are given to those who have been actively involved in leading different parts of Vidiyal's Child Rights Movement, as well as those about to start higher education.

Then each centre performs something they have prepared: the cultural programme. These included dances and a drama written by Jim on child rights in schools, performed by Vidiyal's theatre group. With around 300 children and their families there, it was amazing to see the overwhelming impact Vidiyal is having on the communities surrounding the centres.



We also spent 3 mornings with the younger children at the Vidiyal Nursery School for 3-5 year olds, who were so cute! Their teacher was keen to show us the English rhymes the children knew, and we were able to join in and teach some actions to the songs too. We took some pictures to colour in and some craft activities for the children, as well as playing with the counting games, beads and puzzles they already had there.



One afternoon we visited the Tailoring school, where 6 women from the local area were being taught how to sew. The course runs for 6 months and on completion, they are given a sewing machine so they can continue to sew at home, and are able to create an income for their family. The women were enthusiastic in showing us how their skill had progressed, from making small sample items, to full size items of clothing.



Vidiyal is incredible, and we were so encouraged by the visible effect their work has on the children and families involved. Each day we learned something new of the great work Jim, Sharmila and their excellent staff team do, so much so that it is hard to summarise it all! We feel extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to spend time with such an amazing family.

We need your help

As our faithful supporters you will be aware that with Jim Jesudoss at the helm, the work of Vidiyal is growing and developing all the time. At present they are caring for a huge number of children, meeting their basic physical and medical needs, providing sponsorship/education, counselling and therapeutic services. They also work with parents and elderly relatives in the slums. Jim is a prominent figure in the Child Rights movement in India and Vidiyal has gradually gained the trust of Authorities. The Police bring rescued trafficked children and other young victims of crime to Vidiyal for safety and care. Abandoned and abused children are brought via Vidiyal's outreach workers, Police and other authority figures. This year Vidiyal set-up a Childline Centre in Madurai.

With expansion comes rising costs and at a time of recession, when all charities are struggling, we have found it more and more difficult to raise enough money to support Vidiyal through NewDawn. We are ever grateful to you as constant supporters, but we also need to widen our efforts to raise the amount needed and avoid using up all the reserves we have. As a small local charity we are not widely known, but we are able to promote that we have virtually no overheads and every penny raised goes directly to Vidiyal and is accounted for. Also, the sponsorship scheme is more personal than other larger charities are able to offer.

How can you help? We are looking for someone with relevant experience who would be able to advise us on the issue of fundraising. We need ideas and advice regarding organising large events, fundraising publicity and seeking support from businesses etc. If you know of anyone who might be willing to share their expertise and experience with us, please let us know. Ideally we need someone, or a couple of people, to oversee this area of the work, but they would need to be volunteers, as we all are at NewDawn. However, even just a couple of larger events a year could save us from running at a loss. We have a very good team of people who are ever willing to help and organise/ provide catering. We envisage we will need more volunteers for the team, but we do have this firm base to work from.

Or you could hold an event for us? Maybe you could organise a fund-raising event in your local area or at work?

If you are able to help in any way, please contact 01473 311148 or email us at

info@newdawnindia.org



Children at Vidiyal learning a new craft

IMPORTANT

Could you help to reduce postage costs?

Would you be happy to receive future newsletters and up-dates by e-mail? If so please let us know by e-mailing

info@newdawnindia.org

Facebook

NewDawn India now has a Facebook site which, at present, is in its infancy. It can be accessed easily from the website www.newdawnindia.org

Jim has set up two Facebook pages Vidiyal Madurai and Childline Madurai, which give up-to-date news on events in Madurai.



Fun in the reservoir on a Vidiyal camp