

In this issue there's a big focus on Education:-

Exam Results

We are delighted to be able to pass on the good news of 10th (GCSE) and 12th (A-level) standard successes at Vidiyal. Jim writes:-

"I have a happy news to share with you which will definitely cheer your day. The results of 10th standard 2011 have been published and our children (10 of them) have passed in all subjects. This has made my day since we could see more fruits in recent times. When Vidiyal was started the drop out rate in the slums were very high and the number of children on the streets were also very high. I can definitely say that our intervention has brought huge motivation to the slum kids and they started climbing the academic ladder. The Melavasal slum - the biggest in Madurai - didn't have any graduates in the year 1993 but now our children have reached post graduation. I am so happy that we could achieve this jointly by playing our roles effectively. Thanks for your prayers, support, encouragement and fund raising. Its only through your hard work we could provide these children of their needs. I thank God and humble my self in Thy hands for using me in more effective ways."

Of the 10 children, 5 were girls, which is an achievement in itself. 5 students, 4 boys and 1 girl have passed their 12th standard exams and will be moving on to college or university.

Only recently there was an article in the newspaper about the amount of money that the UK was pouring into education for the poor in India. Although more children are attending school, they are achieving very little and millions of pounds have gone missing. Although ours is a small scale venture we can be proud of the fact that our children are succeeding because of the support and encouragement given to them by Vidiyal and the sponsors and we can be confident that all of our money is being used appropriately. Thank you for your support in this and I am sure you feel encouraged by the success of these children.

A further e-mail from Jim tells us: "I am pleased to inform you that the school and college admissions are progressing well but still not completed. We have our newly elected Government which brought confusion over the common syllabus introduced in schools. Now the schools are closed for 15 days. This has been challenged in the court and we still do not know what the decision is going to be. We felt so happy when the common syllabus was introduced with a hope that this would minimize the disparities of the past. Now without any discussion this Government decided to postpone the implementation of this which would favour the rich and dominant caste groups. Kindly pray for this. Without bringing a reform in the education system it wouldn't be possible to break the chains of slavery 100%."

Weddings

Recently we heard of the marriages of three of our former Vidiyal children: Malarkodi to Aathi and Ramkumar to his fiancée. Malarkodi trained as a nurse and then went on to become a nurse tutor. Jim says: "I am happy to inform you that Malarkodi & Aathi's wedding was solemnized in a very nice way. I and Sharmila were asked to bless the nuptial thread which was very moving. Malarkodi stands as a testimony to what girls could achieve when an appropriate opportunity has been provided. She is one of our first generation girls who have climbed the academic ladder pushing away all the barriers of caste, gender inequality, poverty and so on. Aathi was one among the few boys who lived in our shelter home soon after we opened it in 1997. I conveyed your blessings to them and they were so happy. We invited them for a dinner at home which was a happy occasion."

Ramkumar was a very popular lad at Vidiyal . He then got himself into trouble and was so ashamed that he ran away. However, he returned to Vidiyal, where there was a forgiving and open door for him and we helped him to find work and become self-sufficient. We wish him well in his marriage.



Malarkodi and Aathi

Other news from Jim:-

"I have more happy news to share with you. The Unicef Chennai office is organising a media workshop on the 9th June at Madurai. I am invited as a resource person to conduct a session on Child Protection. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to influence the media. It is also recognition of our work by Unicef".

“We had an internal review with our children in which I have been personally involved for the past few months. I spent considerable amount of time with each children’s forum to get their feedback about Vidiyal. It involved things they like in Vidiyal, things they do not like, their preferred choice of programmes, programmes that need improvement and their suggestions for improvement. Children from 5 years to 18 years participated in it with interest. I submitted the findings to the children’s council for debate, discussion and decisions. It was a wonderful experience and now we will redesign, restructure the activities and move forward.”

“I do have a sad news to share with you. One of our community mentors, a mother of one of our sponsored children, has passed away which is a big loss to the Vidiyal family. She is a kind hearted woman who has been a great support to our work at Thideer Nagar. The whole family is struggling hard to cope with this loss. Kindly remember them in your prayers.”

“Happily we will be inaugurating a new drop in centre at Mapalayam today which has been in our thoughts and plans for more than two years. We will remember you at that time. We will be inviting only dalit children living in that area to access the facilities. We had a simple opening and introduced Vidiyal to the children. Some of our children will come to that centre.”



New Drop-in Centre

“I hope you have enjoyed my descriptions of the activities of Vidiyal. I am sharing everything to make you understand our operations. I do feel that you are very much part of us and you should know what is happening in the field. Thank you so much for being so close and supportive to our engagement with children.”

Quote from sponsor child, Chandru; “We have some problems at home but I forget those things when I participate at Vidiyal. I could continue my education only because of Vidiyal. Vidiyal is so important in my life.”

Finance Report from Neville Cooper

The last couple of years have been difficult ones for the Trust for three basic reasons. Firstly, the current economic climate has restricted many people’s charitable giving for understandable reasons. Secondly, Vidiyal’s costs in India increased by 13% last year, most of which represents India’s relatively high inflation rate. The third blow, again due to the international economic problems, is that the exchange rate between our countries has fallen from over 80 rupees to 70 rupees to the pound sterling. As a result, our funding needs have increased by 25% resulting in a revenue deficit of nearly £12,000 in 2010; increasing to a projected shortfall of about £20,000 for the current year. Fortunately, we are able to weather the storm in the short term as we were able to build up some reserves “for a rainy day” in earlier good years. We would therefore welcome any ideas for new sources of funding and respectfully invite our regular supporters and sponsors who have not increased their standing orders for a number of years to review their giving.
JNC

Fundraising Events:-

Charity Car Treasure Hunt Saturday 9th July at 2:30pm “Treasure from the East”

Starting from The Brook Inn at Washbrook (IP8 3HR) at 2:30pm

We will follow a scenic route of around 80 miles, including many of the most picturesque villages of South Suffolk, including Constable Country and the Orwell River.

There will be some fun questions to answer along the way, finishing within ten miles of the start point with a hot supper served from 6:30pm.

Tickets cost £10 per adult and £5 per child
Including route book and supper.

Places are limited. Please call Rose on 01473 311839 to book your place.

Supported by the East Anglian Section of Alfa Romeo Owners Club.



CAR BOOT SALE

ON SATURDAY 23 JULY 2011
AT THE BROOK INN WASHBROOK CAR PARK (IP8 3HR)
8AM – 11AM (sellers from 7.30AM)

- RAFFLE, TOMBOLA
- BACON BUTTIES, COFFEES & CAKES
- COST £10 PER PITCH (SELLERS)
- ENTRANCE £1.00 (PEDESTRIAN)
- CALL ROSE 01473 311839 TO BOOK PITCH



Come and join us for the

LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

LIVE

from the

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

*on Saturday 10th September
7.30pm ~ at Capel Village Hall*

*Tickets: £10 including supper;
available from Mo Clarke 01473 310057,
or the Beacon Coffee Shop (Tues mornings Vine Lounge)*