



NewDawn India Newsletter

March 2008

It's official! The Cooper Atkinson Charitable Trust for India has a new name - NewDawn India. Vidiyal in Tamil means new dawn and our logo is the top part of the Vidiyal logo. Jim is delighted with the obvious links between the names and logos and we look forward to everyone getting used to the new name. Please remember to write cheques in favour of "NewDawn India" in future.

We are pleased to be able to send you the latest news from the Trustees in England and from Vidiyal in Madurai.

NEWS FROM VIDİYAL

Pongal sports

This year the harvest celebration did not just involve the Vidiyal children, but was opened up to other Melavasal slum children and their mothers. More than 250 children joined in the events, which began at 9 am and ended at 8pm with cultural displays. Several of the older boys shared about "Vidiyal in their lives".

National Children's Consultation



A team of four children with helpers travelled to Gujerat for this convention. The trip necessitated a total of 5 hours train travel, but everyone felt that was well worth while. Here is an excerpt from an e-mail sent by Jim following the trip:

"Our children enjoyed every bit of the consultation. Translations were ensured to make their presentations effective. All of them participated so well in the entire consultation. They became very popular for their skills in drumming. This consultation reinforced the fact that our work is highly regarded in the national scenario of child rights. Our children were very proud of being themselves and confidence in them was much appreciated by the other delegates."



Trip to Trivandrum

An e-mail from Jim following a weekend visit to the beach for the sponsored children:

"We are back from Trivandrum this morning around 5 am. We had a great time. Actually we missed you all. This group included 65 children, 9 young adults (volunteers who are our senior children) and 3 staff. Most of the children who were on this trip were new in the sponsorship programme which added value to them. Many of such children were travelling in a train for the first time in their life and visiting the sea for the first time too. The other children who have visited Trivandrum before enjoyed the beach so much. The weather was perfect for two days.

Children enjoyed the food very much. Children thanked their sponsors for giving them such a nice holiday. Since many of them are very small we have given the maximum care possible. It was such a joy playing with them on the beach.

The children prepared a flower bouquet during this visit to show their token of love for their sponsors."



The New School

At the moment building work on the new school has had to be stopped. There are plans for extending Madurai airport and there is a possibility that the government will reclaim the land for this purpose. The school is being built in a designated educational area which also includes a government college and a theological college, both of which would have to be pulled down if the airport expansion uses this site. No final decision has been made, and there is plenty of other land available on the same side of the road as the present airport but it was felt wise not to continue with the building until we have more information.

Sharmila has planted trees all round the site to provide shade and there is plenty of space for play and even a football pitch. The site is also convenient for outreach to the local dhalit communities—families of very low caste. We continue to hope and pray for the good news that a different area is being used for the expansion and that the school can be completed. The worst case scenario would be that building would have to start again on another site.



NEWS FROM NEWDAWN INDIA

Fund Raising

Our fund-raising team has had a busy time, organising events and managing the virtual gift scheme. The curry evening revealed some delicious recipes and the team who visited Madurai in August reported back on the trip. Apologies to those who attended that the talk was so long, there was so much to tell you, but we promise to keep it shorter next year! The curry evening was followed by another successful barn dance, when a good time was had by all.

A recipe book has been produced with some very tasty recipes for main courses, desserts and cakes.

The virtual gift catalogue has proved to be a big success and has been an ideal way of buying presents for those people who already have everything!

Plans are now underway for fund-raising events for the coming year so look out for future newsletters or visit our website at newdawnindia.org.

Meeting Belinda

At the end of January the trustees had the privilege of meeting Belinda Bennet, Jim's sister. Belinda was in England in her role as Director of Christian Aid for Southeast Asia. She visited Suffolk and spent time chatting about the work of Vidiyal with the trustees. In the early years Belinda founded the registered society Sakthi, to work with vulnerable young women from the slums. When Vidiyal was formed it came under the banner of Sakthi rather than registering another charity and now Sakthi and Vidiyal are synonymous.

The trustees really enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with Belinda who, in spite of now living in Delhi, is still remarkably close to all that is going on at Vidiyal.



Sponsor Children

Jim has recently sent through a new group of children needing sponsors. He has emphasised the important part that a sponsor plays in the life of a child. That child knows that he/she is special to someone in the UK, someone who cares what happens to him/her. For sponsors, the commitment is to drop the child a line every now and then, the more frequently the better. Postcards are ideal for this. The contact and encouragement you give is more important than the financial commitment. Maybe you know someone who enjoys writing letters and you could suggest sponsorship to them. If you feel you could take on the responsibility of writing, even if you are able to contribute little or nothing financially, please contact the sponsorship secretary: Mrs Sandra Davies, 10 Longfield Road, Capel St Mary, Ipswich IP9 2UA. (01473 311148)

For those of you who are already sponsors, here is a reminder of the contact address:

Initial and name of child
c/o Jim Jesudoss
Vidiyal
6 A.A. Road
Rathinapuram
MADURAI 625011
Tamil Nadu
S. INDIA

NewDawn website: newdawnindia.org
Vidiyal website: vidiyalchildren.org