

This summer saw a visit to India by five NewDawn supporters. As always it was an amazing experience with bonds that have been built up during the years becoming even closer. We found ourselves feeling part of Vidiyal rather than just visitors, with the volunteers even insisting on including us in their dance on the final evening. I don't think we quite carried it off as well as they did but we did our best!

It was good to be able to meet up again with these young men and women who were among the first to grow up under Vidiyal's wing, with opportunity for education and building a better life for themselves. In spite of undertaking college degrees they are prepared to give up large chunks of their time to help the younger children in their "Vidiyal family". We were able to show them our appreciation by inviting them for a meal at our hotel's roof-top restaurant. Far from being a strained time coping with the difficulties of language, we had fun, laughter and interesting conversations.



Childline

Last year the Government initiated a 24hr Childline in Madurai and asked Vidiyal to operate and man the service. This has developed with great success and enabled Jim and his team to reach more children who are being subjected to child abuse, child labour, school violence, torture, child marriage and child trafficking. With the support of the Police & Social Welfare, the street teams of Childline have the authority to rescue these children and bring them to Vidiyal as a place of safety. Here the children can be assessed over a period of time and receive counselling and support while plans are made for their future care.

The Government appointed Jim as Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee of Madurai District which gives him magisterial rights and enables him and the committee to initiate criminal proceedings against offenders as well as being able to advocate in the best interests of the children. Already many children have been helped, trafficked children have been intercepted at an early stage and many child marriages stopped.

Work is underway to raise awareness of Childline in the schools, on the streets and in other institutions, meaning that anyone can make a call if they suspect a child is being mistreated or that their fundamental rights are being denied. Childline promotes: The Right to Life, The Right to Development, The Right to Protection and The Right to Participation.



Jim outside the Childline building

Reception Home

The children rescued via Childline are brought into Vidiyal's Reception Home, which has led to a need to expand. NewDawn has helped with the purchase of a piece of land beside the Home so that it can be extended to meet the present needs.

We met up with some of the rescued children during our visit and enjoyed playing games with them and singing together. Balloons were the usual success, whatever the age of the child.

Shelter Home

Formerly, Vidiyal has been able to provide long-term care for a limited number of children in its Shelter Home. When a child was admitted to the Home, Vidiyal became committed to their care until they reached adulthood. Under Indian edict this means that Jim & Sharmila effectively adopted the children and took on responsibility for them at every stage; including for their marriages.

Considering their own circumstances and the vast numbers of children now being taken into the Reception Home, Jim & Sharmila have had to cease offering permanent residence to any more children. However, they are committed to the lives of the children they are currently looking after in the Shelter Home and these children continue to thrive under their care.



We have so many stories to tell you of our visit to Madurai and the beach camp with the children in Kovalam, so please try to come along to the Curry Evening to hear more.

The Street Children



Work with the street children, families in the slums and the sponsorship scheme is growing from strength to strength. Far from being separate, Childline dovetails-in with the slum and street children work. The development of relationships with the police and officials has been of great benefit within the slum communities where the Vidiyal children come to their drop-in centres. As far as Jim and Sharmila are concerned their work with the children in the slums is at the centre of all they do and will always remain the root of their work. That is why it is so important for us to keep supporting them in this. We have seen first-hand how much the sponsorship programme means to the children and their families. We experienced the warmth of the welcome as we visited the slums and individual homes within the slum. We noticed that the parents' trust in Jim and his staff is growing. In the past fathers had been particularly cautious, but some even took time off work to ensure they were there to meet us.

Annual Curry Evening

At Days Road Church
On Saturday 16th November

Reserve your place by contacting Neville on
01473 310574 or nev@longperry.freemove.co.uk



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

India is often looked on as a rich country
BUT
47% of children are malnourished
And
28% are severely malnourished.

THANKYOU FOR THE SUPPORT YOU GIVE
US TO TRY TO CHANGE THIS