

Goodwill Children's Homes



Slumdog Millionaire?

Newsletter Summer 2009

MESSAGE TO FRIENDS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Goodwill supporters,

First and very importantly, we have to tell you that Juliet Barton is leaving the post of Administrator for Goodwill in UK at the end of June. The Trustees want to put on record how much she has contributed during her period of work with us, despite a lengthy period when a serious medical problem and resultant hospital treatment greatly reduced her energies. Among her achievements has been the regular Newsletter which has been well edited and very attractively produced as she has worked closely with the designer printer. In addition she has implemented a new data base for our UK supporters which will be of lasting value to the charity; she was responsible for working with Susan Williams to re-design our website, and worked with the staff of Buffalo in two fund raising initiatives which they managed for us. She attended meetings of the UK Trustees and was able to contribute very constructively to our discussions. All this was in addition to the routine work of correspondence and record keeping which are vitally important to work of Goodwill. Now she has recovered from illness she believes it is the right time to find a new role. I am sure you will join the Trustees in thanking her for all that she has done, and in wishing her the very best for the future.

The second matter arises directly from Juliet's decision. After careful deliberation the Trustees believe that this may be the opportunity to consider a relocation of the Goodwill Office in UK. We are therefore advertising for a replacement without specifying a location and will work out an appropriate location with the person appointed. This means that there will be a transition period during which a temporary person will run the office in Poole, but we hope that the next Newsletter will introduce a new Administrator and give you contact details. In the meantime please continue to use the existing postal address, e mail address and telephone number if you need to make contact with us.

The third matter I would like to mention links the Newsletter and the project at Sanarpatti. Some supporters wonder from the pictures in the Newsletter whether the new buildings are too lavish. In funding the new site it has been necessary to resolve a tricky question on the quality of the new buildings and their equipment. On

the one hand it is very important that the quality should meet best practice standards for the accommodation of children and that the buildings should be robust and easy to maintain in the longer run: on the other hand it is important that we should not fund anything too lavish which would distance our children from the world in which they will live their lives and lead to unnecessary expense. In striking a balance on this we have been led by our partner Society in Tamil Nadu and their professional advisers as well as by Christine King as our Field Consultant. We can assure our supporters in the United Kingdom that we continue to monitor the project to ensure that standards of building and equipment are good but that costs are tightly controlled.

The final matter is quite different: Juliet has been contacted by a number of individuals (not Goodwill supporters) who were puzzled because Goodwill had been mentioned in e-mail messages asking for support (financial or otherwise) from other quite different fund raising organisations. We want to assure our supporters that these approaches were made without our knowledge and that we will never release contact details of supporters to any other organisation. We strongly advise you to ignore any such approaches, but if you need re-assurance a letter to the Administrator will be answered as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continuing support of Goodwill: we hope this Newsletter will give you a clear picture of what our partner Society in Tamil Nadu is doing to assist destitute children and how much is done with the funds which you provide.

Alan Hay

THANKS & GOODBYE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Goodwill supporters,

As already mentioned in this newsletter, I shall be resigning from the post of Administrator at the end of June and I would like to thank the trustees for the wonderful support they have always shown me, especially during my illness. I have enjoyed my time with Goodwill very much, dealing with the Indian office and communications with many of our supporters, I still feel very strongly that the work we achieve in India is important in helping the lives of a great many children, so thanks again for all your support.

Best wishes to you all.

Juliet Barton

• SPECIAL THANKS •

We all thank the printers of our newsletter, Corvette Printing for all the wonderful hard work they have put in over the last 4 years in the production of our newsletter, they are a company that Juliet used to work for and have always very kindly designed and produced our newsletter for the same price that our old newsletter used to be, even though the design is now in 4 colour and of a superior quality than previously. This has been their very kind way of helping with our work.

PREM KUMAR BACK AT SCHOOL

In our last newsletter we made an appeal to support an emergency heart operation for a young child at Thandigudi. Ten year old Premkumar was very poorly indeed and urgently needed two of his heart valves replaced.



Premkumar with his red hat

The operation went ahead in November at the Kovai Medical Centre and we are very pleased to report that it was a complete success. After discharge he stayed at our TORP office for some time to be close to the KC Patti Health Centre and his granny.

Premkumar's progress is checked every month by Dr. Rajkumar and his team and this June he will go back to Kovai Medical Centre for a review by the surgeon who carried out his operation. Last week he came back to our Thandigudi home where he's getting a special diet to boost his recovery. He has taken and passed his 5th class exams and will join the Government higher Secondary School at Sanarpatti on 1st June.

For Premkumar this has been an extraordinary time. His illness made him very frightened and having the operation took a great deal of courage. He found himself the centre of much attention; it seemed that a lot of people were interested in his wellbeing. He

received emails and telegrams from overseas well wishers and was featured in a French newspaper! Now he feels strong again, he's happy to be going along with his classmates to Sanarpatti home on the reopening day, he goes with all blessings from our school and staff at Thandigudi Home.

Premkumar's grandmother and father are happy that they have their healthy boy back again and send their thanks and greetings to his sponsors and the supporters for making it all possible.

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD FOCUS ON POVERTY

Many of you who read our Newsletter will have seen or read about the film Slumdog Millionaire.

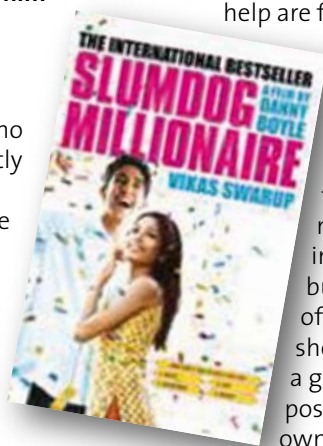
It is the story of a boy born in Mumbai's urban slums who answers all the questions on "Who wants to be a Millionaire" correctly because of his life experiences. Reactions to the film however are as varied as they are extreme; from "horrific" to "compelling" and even occasionally "hopeful". Branded Poverty Porn in the media and condemned by Bollywood stars, the film shows extreme violence and scenes of misery as hungry children are beaten, abused and perverted.

The film also portrays children as potentially resilient; the poor boy as a hero who achieves his dream and rescues the girl. But the truth is that children are vulnerable to exploitation, and whether urban or rural, children from the poorest families are easily targeted and used by adults for their own ends. When they lose one or both parents or when a family faces a financial crisis children are especially at risk and sadly happy endings are rare.

Nearly 70% of the Indian population - 390 million people - still lives in villages, mostly landless labourers and peasants, they continue to survive on less than 70p a day. Health care and education facilities continue to be abysmal in rural areas, driven by poverty, debt and the dream of a better future, migration to urban slums continues.



Kadayamalai school children



The dream is rarely realised, much more often a downward spiral leads families to desert their children or worse.

India has the highest number of working children in the world, the majority of whom (65%) are working due to parental or family pressure, handing over their earnings to their parents, half of them work seven days a week and often in illegal or hazardous occupations. Children who work are denied the education or training that could enable them to escape poverty.

At Goodwill Homes we give vulnerable children the help and support they need, from full time residential care and support, to go to school and then to learning job skills in our own Trade courses or by attending college or University. Most of the children we help are from very poor rural and

tribal communities, all of them are in desperate need. Our intervention and your support helps to ensure that these children in need are not caught up in a downward spiral but have the chance of a better future; safe shelter, proper nutrition, a good education and the possibility to create their own happy endings.

SUCCESS STORIES FUTURES IN ENGINEERING

Magudeeswaran was just eleven when his mother died.

He joined Goodwill in 1998 and stayed at Dindigul Home where he proved his ability, and was school first in 2005. Goodwill supported him to complete his Bachelor of Engineering this year. He has been successful in getting a job as Trainee engineer with a starting salary of Rs 12,000 per month; a very good beginning. Magudeeswaran has been supported and encouraged throughout by his sponsor Mr. Passmore; we pass on our thanks to him and wish Magudeeswaran all the best in his future life.



Poongodi lost her father when she was six and her sister was just a few months old.

She came to stay at Thandigudi and blossomed into a very bright young woman. Last year she got a place at an Engineering College in Madras and has now completed her first year. She sends her love and deep thanks to her sponsors and all those at Goodwill who have helped her over the years.



OLD BOY 'NETWORK' COMPUTER BUSINESS

This is Murrugan; he was helped by Goodwill from 1993 and completed his education to A level standard.



Murrugan and the Sanarpatti boys

Now he's doing well and has his own business in Coimbatore sourcing and distributing computer hardware as well as providing technical back-up to customers. Recently he's won a contract to provide a number of schools to teach basic computer skills to children as well as providing the computers. Because his work entails a lot of travel, Murrugan has visited Dindigul home whenever he passed by, now he comes to the new site at Sanarpatti to see how he can be of help. I met him when he was working on the old computer at Sanarpatti; it was on its last legs and the Home manager, Suryanarayanan, was desperate to get it going. Murrugan got the necessary parts at cost price and gave his time for free to install them. The children at Sanarpatti were really impressed and clearly saw this successful young man as a role model, he spent the day talking to them and helping with home work. Recently Murrugan helped organise an old Goodwill boys day at Sanarpatti; 50 young men attended and spent the day talking and planning future events. They made a donation and promised to increase it next year. Murrugan and his friends are very grateful to Goodwill for helping them; they still feel part of the Goodwill Family.

SPONSOR DELIGHTED

One of our supporters; Mrs Connor has supported us for 22 years and recently wrote in with some wonderful news of her sponsored children's success:

One of them, Soundrapani now has a Phd in Siddah Medicine and has recently sent her the book on the subject that he has written. She also sponsored a child called Shanmugavel who got his B E in engineering a few years ago and has now been offered the post of assistant manager of Hyundai Motors in Chennai. As she says: "It's amazing what these children can do when they get the chance".

KAVUTCHICOMBU NEEDS YOUR SPONSORSHIP

As a supporter of Goodwill you will know about the TORP programme which provides assistance to children from some of the very poorest villages of the Palani Hills.

Sponsors of the TORP villages pledge £1000 per year for five years so that the programme can have a long term benefit to the children in their village settings.



One of the first villages to be sponsored in this way was Kavutchicombu which was chosen because of the extreme poverty and isolation of its population. Unfortunately the sponsor who has supported Kavutchicombu since 2005 is no longer able to continue and Goodwill in the UK really needs a new sponsor to promise funding so that the work can continue.

Lack of education is a central cause for the high levels of poverty in Kavutchicombu and before Goodwill's TORP programme intervened the children of the village were unable to go to school. But TORP provides books, school bags, and raincoats so that about thirty children can attend the primary school at Koppithotham village about half a mile away.



Kavutchicombu scene

TORP is also supporting that school to handle the additional numbers of children by funding teaching aids and the appointment of supplementary teaching help. TORP is encouraging the children's families to form women's self help groups to ensure that the children attend school regularly; and the Kavutchicombu group is developing other income generating initiatives like goat rearing.

We realise that £1000 per year is a lot of money for an individual or household but maybe you could recruit a group in your church, school or neighbourhood who together could ensure that the work in Kavutchicombu can continue and develop.

TORP sponsors receive information about the village they support and updates about the school and the children who are involved.

If you would like to help and want more information please contact the Administrator at the Goodwill Office as soon as possible.

LOCAL DONATIONS HELP FROM NEARER HOME

Local company, Rasi Seeds, visited Thandigudi home and were so impressed with the care that the children received that they wanted to join in and help.



New clothes and shoes

They purchased clothes and shoes for all 150 children and gave them out at the children's Christmas party. Each girl received a dress or skirt and blouse and each boy received a sweatshirt or shirt and either long or short trousers; everyone received socks and shoes. The children loved their new clothes and especially the shoes, it's been cold in Thandigudi and the shoes keep their feet warm.

Thank you to the Ayyampalyam branch of State Bank of India, which is near to our Thandigudi Home; the bank has undertaken to support four Goodwill children for their educational needs.

The "Adoption of a Girl Child" scheme run all over India by the state bank provides Rs.5,000 for each child and is renewable every year. On 16th December, the Branch Manager, Mr. Baskaran, handed over a cheque for Rs 20,000 to Goodwill Tamil Nadu. Goodwill Tamil Nadu is really happy to have won support. The girls were chosen because they had no sponsors and they do well in school.

EDUCATION IS WORKING KEEPING GIRLS IN SCHOOL

In rural India girls are the last to get an education, the last to eat, the first to be forced into work.



These three girls are being supported through our Tribal outreach programme. All three go to school at KCPatti School; the two elder girls, Nivetha far left, and Nithya far right, have now completed 5th class and are looking forward to joining the KCPatti Higher secondary school in June. Nivetha and her younger sister (middle) live in Gandhipuram Village; because their father died four years ago, their mother was left to support the family doing the only work she can get; poorly paid agricultural labouring. Nithya, far right is a tribal girl from Kadiyamalai Village, she is cheerful and doing well in school, her mother is very sick and being provided with life saving medicines through TORP. Goodwill TORP continues to engage with poor hills communities proving the value of education and supporting children to stay with their families.

Without support from Goodwill, these girls would not be going to school and by now Nithya and Nivetha would be anticipating an early marriage. The help they get makes a real and positive difference to their lives; they have dreams of a good future and see the world as full of possibilities. The statistics back up this intervention, showing that because they are educated the girls will tend to marry later, they will have fewer children who will themselves be healthier and better educated.



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