

5 November 2008

## NEWSLETTER

There are times when things in our work become almost unbearable. We are living in a huge area where there are only small villages and hamlets with only the most basic needs of life. Thus having even one tap in a house for water is the exception, furniture of any kind is non-existent, and the huts are miserable. Life can be and too often is really harsh. These interior and remote villages are far removed in every way from the big cities, certainly places like Chennai and Bangalore are places to be seen only in films. Most villagers hardly move out . . . .

And so tragedies, everyday tragedies, especially for us those affecting children, often arrive on our doorstep. Just now an ancient granny comes with her 11 year old grand



daughter Jeyanti who looks no older than 8. They are from the lowest of the low castes in a village we know well, we have built many low-cost houses there and put in handpumps for the only water supply. The little girl's father died 10 years ago with TB and the mother abandoned the child to marry another man. Not much chance of remarriage if there is a girl included, so she was left with the granny. Granny was struggling for survival anyway – too old to work, no other family members to support her, her house badly in need of repair – and so it goes on when you are at the bottom of the pile. We have admitted Jeyanti to one of our Children's Villages. We always keep places for those who come in over the year. No child in real need is ever turned away.

Last month two of our HIV+ little girls went to heaven. They ended their brief lives in the wonderful care of Jeevan Jyothi Hospice. For both it was a merciful relief. One child, Jaya, had appeared in recent newsletters. She had a gross cancer tumour on her face which had gone completely out of control, no matter what we did. When I went for the Diwali Festival at the hospice Sister Anastasia inaugurated a beautiful garden in memory of the children (most of them our children) who have died there from AIDS. For each child we planted a tree sapling bearing the name of the child. This was so appropriate and so touching. It is so very consoling to know that these children pass away with the best possible terminal care. And now there will be a beautiful memorial in each of their names in a flowering tree: seven saplings, seven little children.

Many children with AIDS spend time at Jeevan Jyothi to receive medical care for the various symptomatic illnesses they are so prone to. Eventually they come back to us cured and stable once again.

At about the same time five children came into our care: 4 girls and one boy. The youngest, one year old, the oldest 8. Their father was killed by a hit-and-run vehicle. The mother was studying to be a teacher and was in the second and final year. Now that the bread-winner had gone, Thenmoli, was at a loss what to do: who would pay the college fees, who would care for the children, should she take a loan, how, even to survive now with five children. So we admitted the children, and gave her a special scholarship support until she finishes the course and will be qualified and thus support her family. How else could she cope?



The new Pushpa Rani Centre for handicapped children is now fully functioning in the brightly coloured halls and classrooms. There is an abundance of good equipment and it is a delight to see all the children coming in the two mini-buses each morning. The Centre is in a reserved woodland where peacocks wander. One can hear their calls to each other and if you are lucky witness a peacock dance in all its glory. Food and water is left out for them each day. The large site is an ideal place for this centre.



“This morning a baby girl born two months ago is brought to us by its mother from a remote village. This baby is HIV+ and medical documents are brought to prove this. Two months old and already afflicted with this dread disease. The mother is HIV positive and the two year old little girl with her is also HIV positive. The husband died in October this year from this disease. He gave the

wife and so the children the virus. To take care of such a child will give us a big problem: a new born baby with this incurable disease. And yet we have admitted it to one of our Children’s Villages.”

I wish to greet all our supporters at this season and tell them of my and RTU’s deep gratitude for all your support.

Cordially yours, Brother James Kimpton.

*May the Christ-child whom we serve in all the children, and His Mother, bless you abundantly.*



I am Mrs. Rani, Manager of the Medical department. I am working for the last 28 years in our RTU. After completing my school studies, I attended one year Health Course. There are 8 staff in our department. A few of them completed the

ANM course and rest of them are well trained by us.

Daily 100-150 patients are coming to our clinic. About 10 pregnant women come for Anti-Natal (ANC) check-up. In the afternoons we go for house visits to the nearby villages and operate mobile clinic services to the interior villages where the people have no access to health facilities and transport. 15-25 patients benefit in each visit.

Two nurses are caring for the HIV/AIDS children in our Sirumalar Children's Village. Good care and treatment is given to all the children who are in our Children's Villages. All our HIV+ children are taken regularly to Government Hospitals at Madurai, Theni ART Centre for ART treatment and CD4 count tests are done once in six months. For the children's immediate/emergency care we contact Govt. Doctor at any time.

Some patients who come to our clinic for getting treatment are referred to the other hospitals. Some patients who are coming from very poor backgrounds are getting assistance from us to meet their treatment expenses in other hospitals.

We care and support the TB patients by giving treatment in DOTS method.

One of our staff takes Health Education in the schools in the afternoon. She goes to all the classes She also teaches adult health care education to the X, XI & XII standard children.

Medical check-up is done twice in a year for full-time school children, 3 times for nursery children. Treatment is also given to all the needy children.

Weekly assistance is being given to 350 old-age people. Some people are getting assistance with daily meals. We give clothes to them at the time of Deepavali and blankets are also given to the needy. They are getting treatment in our clinic.

We are giving care for 120 little children who are under 3 years through our 4 day-care centres. 8 staff are working in these centres.