

First published two years ago, Charity Chat is now firmly established as part of our information network, as we bring you news of the people who are involved with the Charity, including their fundraising ideas, the experiences of sponsors, and introductions to various individuals such as our Trustees and staff in India. Please remember to let us have YOUR news and YOUR photographs.

Excellent Return on Investment

We have just had the joy of visiting the children in India, and also joining in with the Pongal (rice harvest) celebrations held for the first time at Rajapalayam Boys Town, when all the Boys and Girls Town youngsters celebrate together. We arrived at Athoor Boys Town unannounced (telephone problems) and although not expected, Arunpandi, our sponsored boy who is 15, greeted us with a warm smile and handshake, although it was two years since we had seen him. Despite the gap, the contact was so warm, dignified and gracious. He immediately took us to his house and introduced us to other boys.

We had first met him in one of the children's villages when he was seven. He had come from tragic family circumstances, and was very small and looked under-nourished, but even then we were impressed by his dignity and personality. Over the years we have been able to visit him several times and see him develop as a wonderful dancer, as a sportsman who is full of fun and determination, and as a leader in the Boys Town. We were delighted to see him again at the Pongal Celebrations in the Athoor Boys town athletics and dancing teams.



We took small gifts, such as toothbrushes, for each of the other children in the communities in which our sponsored children live, and it was a delight to observe how these were distributed without fuss by the appropriate Minister.

Moving on to Anthony Abs Children's Village, we met 8 year old Hemapriya, whom we started sponsoring last year. She was absolutely captivating. We soon discovered she was in the dance team for Pongal, and she put on a team rehearsal especially for us.

Although the children we sponsor are very special to us, every contact we have had over many years with the many children in various projects reinforces our expectation of meeting well-motivated young people with a growing capacity to make something of their lives and contribute to their families and communities. The various clubs to which they can belong stimulate curiosity and develop skills, and the responsibilities which they shoulder so competently are developed by their democratic self-government system.



There cannot be many investments producing such certain returns as the sponsorship of children through the Joe Homan Charity.

John and Hilary Barratt

Not Millionaires....but getting richer every day

We wish we had the resources to help every child living in poverty and deserving a chance, but unfortunately that is something unlikely to be achieved by anyone in our lifetime. However, those children who have been born into poverty, and are now lucky enough to be cared for in one of the Boys and Girls Homes supported by The Joe Homan Charity, have an opportunity that many only dream of. With the support of our partner NGOs, a decent education, and the encouragement to reach their full potential, for some of them the sky's the limit.

Please spare a short time to consider whether you could become a sponsor - if you could help just one child, it would change your life too! Contact our Peterborough office (02733 574886) if you would like some further information about becoming a sponsor.

Introducing

Many of you will already be familiar with Trustee John Bowman as a long time member of the Coventry Support Group - let's get to know him a bit better.

John has long had an interest in India following two years' VSO teaching in Madras (Chennai) in the early 1960's. Later, in 1973, a colleague in Coventry introduced him to the local Joe Homan Support Group, and he has been hooked ever since! John first visited the Boys Town Projects in 1989, whilst on a teacher exchange to N. India, and saw the impact of the work being done.



Over the years, John and his wife Sue, have sponsored children and have helped to raise funds through the Coventry Group's activities and given talks to Schools and Rotary Clubs. On retirement from Science teaching in 2002, John became a Trustee, recently helping to create publicity for Legacies. They have also enjoyed working as volunteers in S. India for a few weeks in 2004 writing reports, and in 2007 surveying the work in some of the villages.

They have found meeting their Sponsor Children a real delight, and hope to go out again in the next year or two. At home in Kenilworth, John spends time with grandchildren and is Fixture Secretary of the local Orienteering Club.

Legacies

In the last issue of Nandri, we distributed a Legacy Leaflet to all our supporters, in an endeavour to make everyone more aware of our need for their help, not just today but in the future. Sincere thanks to everyone who has returned the information slip. If you haven't already returned a slip, it's not too late to do so and will be of considerable help with our future planning.

Recently we have received a legacy that has provided sufficient funding to allow 50 Apprentices to continue and complete their training. New sponsors often prefer to help a younger child, and over the following years enjoy sharing their successes and encouraging them during the more difficult times. If a sponsorship is cancelled for any reason, it is often the older boys and girls who are left without a sponsor, which is especially tough when they are facing the final hurdle of gaining vocational qualifications. Several smaller legacies have also provided funding for the community projects, which turn a less than average education into something really worthwhile.

Please consider leaving a legacy to The Joe Homan Charity, and help improve the lives of the next generation

Happy Birthday Hilary !



The photo is my birthday morning at 7.00 am! A wake-up call from Muthupandi, saying I was wanted outside the guest house at Tirumangalam Boys Town, where I was staying. Outside, blinking in the bright sunlight, I was garlanded and given flowers and a present, while the boys sang Happy Birthday. I blew out the candles, then cut the cake and we all had a piece. It was a very emotional day, Dr Nat and Antony came to supper, and Muthupandi served a super meal.

I enjoyed meeting my sponsored girl Latha and other children who are sponsored by friends of mine. It was one of my most rewarding visits to India.

Hilary is a frequent visitor to India and is always willing to visit local groups in Suffolk to talk about her interesting travels. Contact her through the Peterborough office 01733 574886.

Knarborough's Elephant Comes Up Trumps



Our supporters in Knarborough already sponsor 16 children between them, and the generosity of this Yorkshire town continues to touch the lives of children in India. This year their efforts have been helped by a team from Knarborough Churches Together who took part in the 43rd Great Knarborough Bed Race. The Race is a gruelling run with the crowds cheering encouragement as the teams hare around the town. The final exhausting and sometimes hilarious leg of the Race is crossing the River Nidd.

With their 'bed' disguised as a magnificent elephant, fit for a Maharaja, the intrepid racers raised funds to help with another group of children in really *desperate* need. Well done.

Meet "The Doctor"

Dr. Natarajarathinam, M.B.B.S., M.S., F.I.C.A. (USA), better known as Dr Nat, or simply Doc to his friends, has been involved for more than 25 years with the Boys Towns. Originally introduced to Joe and to the projects by his father, he has been one of the most steadfast supporters ever since. Over the years Doc has held various posts, such as President, General Secretary, and Committee Member, and has recently taken up the post of General Secretary again, as he continues to serve the needy children in the care of Boys Town Society.



Educated at the famous PKN High School, Tirumangalam, where his father was Headmaster, he subsequently studied medicine at Madurai Medical College, and later at St. Joseph's Hospital, Chicago, USA. Following a period working at a local hospital, he eventually started his own surgery at Tirumangalam 'Arun Clinic', and is a highly respected surgeon in the local area. A busy man, he also works as a part-time Lecturer at the RL Institute of Technology, Madurai, and makes time for frequent visits to the Boys Town projects.

The youngest child of his family, he is lovingly known as 'Kutty thambi' (small brother). He and his wife, Amutha, have three daughters, all of whom have studied in the USA and now live and work there. Doc and Amutha regularly keep in touch with them by video-phone.

Doc is a dedicated and hard-working man, with a modern outlook, and is a great asset to Boys Town Society.

A Moving Experience

After reading Hazel Beuret's article on sponsorship in Charity Chat Winter 2008, I was moved to write a few lines after fulfilling our own ambition to visit India.

Following a tour of Kerala, my husband and I travelled to Tamil Nadu, where a meeting was kindly arranged for us to see our two sponsored children - a 12 year old boy now in Athoor Boys Town, and a teenage girl in the Child Labour Prevention Scheme, who is now completing her training and hoping to become a policewoman.



Both children have worked hard at their education. We too have corresponded and received progress reports, photos, and interesting letters. It was for us a moving experience to be able to talk and take photos of these two delightful children and one of their families.

The highlight of our stay was attending a concert at Athoor Boys Town, performed by the children there.

The welcome we received was second to none and their enthusiasm in proudly showing us round, their politeness and infectious smiles, make it an experience we shall never forget. We too feel privileged to have shared in their lives.

David and Margaret Bishop

Charity Golf 16th October 2009

2008's successful Charity Golf Tournament was barely over before organiser, Bryan Goudman, set the date for the competition in 2009. You can enjoy a hearty breakfast followed by a superb day's golfing at Chipping Norton,. Team and individual entries invited. Further details from the Peterborough office 01733 574886.

Loyalty Points

Most of us have now personally felt the current economic crisis in some form, whether it's redundancy, shorter working hours or generally less money to go around. Your continued support is a lifeline for the children we are helping, and on their behalf we offer a very grateful thank you for your loyalty and compassion.