

Nandri

The Joe Homan Charity – Bringing Hope and Opportunity



Newsletter Winter 2009



Putting the
FUN
into fundraising

Education for all • Success for apprentices

Chairman's welcome

Dear reader

As our summer has turned into autumn and as the economy begins to turn, it is worth pausing for a moment to consider how our charity has fared during the last few months. First of all, income has held up remarkably well and our projects abroad have benefited from the stable financial state we have achieved. This is of course a huge tribute to all our supporters and staff. However as I said at the AGM, raising money is not the whole story. Whenever we promote the charity whether by casual conversations with friends, colleagues or even strangers it results in others knowing more about JHC. Interest raised in this way can lead people to our website and eventually to more tangible support. In fact we hope in the future to create a virtual community of JHC supporters and volunteers who

can share experiences and keep in contact on social networking sites.

Secondly we are working very closely with Boys Town Society and hoping to be involved with them in a project to enhance the quality of spoken English among the children and staff in the residential projects. This will require a great deal of careful planning with BTS who are keen to see this project develop as a working partnership with the charity. Joe has always said that if boys and girls in poor rural communities can speak English and have some IT skills they are virtually guaranteed a job. This is the very best way out of poverty for them and their families and in time can make a real difference to whole communities.

Finally something about the future. We have a brilliant family of supporters who are second to none and we are

constantly surprised and delighted by their generosity. In the last few months for instance we have had a major legacy from Jeannie Philpott, our previous Chairman, and several significant donations. I am confident that whatever challenges we have to meet in the years to come The Joe Homan Charity will still be bringing hope and opportunity to all of our children.



Peter Church
Chairman

PS We welcome your feedback so please contact us jhct@btinternet.com



Boys and girls towns sparkle for Diwali

Celebrations with sweets, firecrackers and sparklers abounded throughout India when Diwali was celebrated on 17th October. One of the most important festivals in the Hindu calendar, Diwali (Festival of Lights) is celebrated throughout the world.

Front Cover Photo: The 'elephant' entered by our local support group in the Great Knaresborough Bed Race.

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Education for all

Hailed as a landmark in its history, India's parliament has recently passed a bill to provide universal, free and compulsory education for all children aged between 6 and 14. How, you may ask, will this affect our work and the children you sponsor?

Short Term

In the short term the bill will have little impact, since the majority of children already start to attend school once they reach six years of age, and a big incentive here is that they will be provided with a daily midday meal. However many schools are woefully lacking in teaching skills and

educational materials, and in some areas there will be a long wait until sufficient schools are provided and staff trained. As they grow older, children from poor families are often discouraged from attending school by parents who need them to work, while the cost of school books and uniforms can be a deterrent.

We should remember that many of the children being cared for in our residential homes come from families who are unable to sustain them at all, never mind sending them to school, and those children who are orphaned, semi-orphaned, or come from acute poverty and destitution need the holistic care that the Boys and Girls Homes can give.

Education for all – still a long way to go

While every effort is now being made to ensure 6 year olds have the opportunity to attend school, it has recently been identified that 80% of children who drop out of school, will do so at standard 8.



Economic exploitation

Once children in India reach the age of 13 they can be at serious risk of exploitation. In Tamil Nadu, thousands of children continue to be denied a complete education and will be expected to share the burden of family poverty. They may even be sold into bonded labour and a lifetime of debt and drudgery.

In addition to its traditional role of providing residential care for destitute children, JHC has already taken an important step in assisting poor children into education, and equally important, keeping them there. Working alongside several NGO partners to provide opportunities for education in the local community, and to supplement the poor teaching and facilities encountered in many village schools, we continue to fund after school centres where local teachers

volunteer to provide assistance with homework and cultural activities.

Currently we rely on donations, rather than sponsorship, to support our work



Cultural activities

with these children. If you would like to help, but do not wish to commit to a sponsorship, please consider making a donation to help these village children complete their education.

Summer camp – life skills orientation

During this year's summer holidays, groups of children from the Boys and Girls Towns came together for a Summer Camp, designed to help them learn about life outside their rural home villages.

They were given an introduction to banking, and learned the basics of other everyday activities, such as making a railway reservation and how to buy a ticket.

Daytime visits included a trip to the famous Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, lunch at an hotel, and visits to the Post Office, Fire Station and Bus Station, and a demonstration of how the signal box works at Tirumangalam Railway station. In the evenings, after dinner, they were given first aid training and also had the opportunity of discussion among themselves and with their tutors on the day's activities. The programme included time to get to know each other better, with opportunities for sport and indoor games such as chess and carom, and the whole event was rounded off with a lesson on the history and the fundamentals of Computers.

The children found the practical lessons very beneficial as they were shown what to expect when they eventually experience city life for themselves.



Learning how the signal box works

Congratulations for 10th Standard Boys 2008–2009



High Marks for 10th Standard Boys

Passing Annual Public Examinations at 10th Standard is a mark of real success for school children in India. General Secretary of Boys Town Society, Dr Natarajarathinam, recently awarded a prize of a scientific calculator and a dictionary to each of six boys who scored highly (more than 400 marks). Selvamurugan from Tirumangalam Boys Town was the highest scorer, with others being Prakashkumar and Harisankar from Rajapalayam Boys Town, Periyasamy and Kumaresan from Athoor Boys Town, and John Rosori from Nilakottai Boys Town.

Four of the lads will now continue at school in 11th standard (equivalent to our 6th Form) and the other two are both

undertaking three year Diploma courses in Engineering. The General Secretary congratulated the boys, encouraged them to study well in the coming days, and assured them that Boys Town Society will give them every assistance in their studies.

Unfortunately, only one of these boys has a sponsor to share his joy and success – sadly it appears that nobody loves a teenager – or do you? Would you like to support one of these boys at this critical time for his future... see Short term sponsorship on the next page.

The next step... apprenticeship

Career guidance is a vital part of guiding our boys and girls as they prepare to move on from secondary education. A few, who have the ability to continue studying at a higher level, will go on to the equivalent of 6th Form studies, however for the vast majority learning a work-based skill and gaining a nationally recognised qualification is vital if they are to gain decently paid regular employment in the future.

At around 15/16 years of age, each youngster is carefully counselled to help them make the right choice. Often they will undertake a 1 or 2 year course, depending on the subject being studied. Higher level diploma courses are normally of three years duration.

Once they start their chosen course, this often means a move to a hostel providing accommodation close to their place of study, although they will remain under the care of their respective Boys or Girls Home. Once course fees are also taken into consideration, the cost of supporting each apprentice is higher than that for children living in the Boys and Girls Homes.

Popular choices include Electrical Technicians, Fitter/Electrician, Diesel



More students are now studying for vocational qualifications

Mechanic, Diploma in Tailoring, Engineering, Nursing and Midwifery. 64 apprentices completed their qualifications this summer, and 52 have already found good jobs at starting salaries their parents could only dream of. One girl has since married, and 2 have gone on to further studies, with only 9 awaiting interview or seeking employment.

Charity Manager's sponsored bike ride will support apprentices

As we launched our new Fundraising Pack at the AGM, Charity Manager Jon Crouch

volunteered to set the ball rolling with a sponsored return journey from

Peterborough to Kenilworth. It was a chilly morning, but Jon arrived in good time albeit looking a little tubbier than usual due to several layers of warm clothing. Jon's ride raised £1300, which will fully support four apprentices who are in vocational training (see above) during the coming year. Thanks to everyone who supported him.



Sponsored bike ride pays for their training

Short term sponsorship

Currently 200 of the boys and girls in our Boys and Girls Homes, who have completed their basic education, are now studying as apprentices in approved training centres for formal qualifications, before they take the final step into the adult world. 60 of them are sponsored, but they would really appreciate the support and encouragement a sponsor can give.

Perhaps you are not in a position to make a long-term commitment, but may be able to support one of these young men and women. We seek a minimum donation of £15 a month towards their education and accommodation costs, although if you were able to afford more that would be appreciated. Courses are from 1 to 3 years duration. Please contact our Peterborough office for more details.

Sponsors celebrate



Vidhya – specialising in eye care

Supporters in Yorkshire and Oxfordshire are celebrating the outstanding success of their sponsored girls this summer. Firstly, Vidhya, who has moved on from the Madurai Sevashram Girls Home, is currently undertaking a one year general nursing course in Coimbatore before going on to Aravind Eye Hospital for a further three years to specialise in eye care. The second, Aruvagam has graduated from Inba Seva Sangam Girls Home to study in Chennai for a four year degree course in Computer Studies. They have both done extremely well to be accepted on to these high level courses, and we congratulate them on their wonderful achievement.

Putting the FUN into fundraising

How do we raise funds in a recession? Quite a vexing question when the global economy has suffered so badly and recovery is slow. But, it is something we must continue to do and there are still so many ways you can help. We hope you will request one of our Fundraising Packs, or download one from our website. There are plenty of ideas and sensible advice – you can even raise funds with your weekly shopping.



Abseiling

Many of our supporters already support our work through sponsorship or donation, but there are all sorts of ways to raise additional funds, and have fun at the same time. If everyone is having fun, it can make a big difference to donations and money raised.

Don't forget to get the children Involved. Children love the idea of fundraising. Not only does it teach them a lot of essential skills such as organisation, money handling, responsibility and planning, but it also shows them that it's an honourable thing to raise cash for those less fortunate than themselves. Even small events will get the children involved and having fun. Getting them to create works of art, making cakes, developing dances and songs – all of these things are fun and can be sponsored or sold to raise funds.

So let your imagination run wild, and whatever you decide to do, be it – Abseiling , a Bring and Buy sale, a Coffee Morning, Disco Dancing, Eating, Flying Kites, Gardening, Hiking, Ice Skating,



Eating

Jumping, Knitting, Ludo, a Marathon, Needlecraft, Orienteering , Parascending,



Parascending

being Quiet, Running, Swishing, Trampolining, Underwater Swimming, Volley Ball, Walking, Xylophone playing, a Yo-yo competition, or Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

(sleeping) – make it FUN.



Make sure you have a copy

We also really need your help to raise awareness of the Joe Homan Charity and the wonderful work being done in India and Thailand. The children we help would

never achieve such marvellous things without a charity like ours. The Girls and Boys Towns are not drop-in centres offering a bowl of rice and a bed for the night, but provide a real home from home. Please do tell someone today.

Been there, done that, got the t-shirt

Stretching from the Solway in the west, to Tyneside in the east, Hadrian's Wall was commissioned by the Emperor Hadrian almost 2,000 years ago. Now designated a World Heritage Site it attracts many visitors and walkers, and JHC supporter Bill Turnbull who completed a walk along its 84 miles length this summer is now the proud owner of a passport of certification and... the t-shirt.

Accompanied by three scouting friends, Bill experienced all sorts of weather and a

great variety of landscapes over the 8 day trek. While much of the wall has been 'recycled' into farm buildings, churches etc, there are stretches that are well-preserved where you can get a very good impression of what it was like all those years ago.

Most importantly for us, through generous sponsorship, he raised funds to help the women and children affected by HIV/AIDS, who are cared for by the Dindigul AIDS Care Society (DACs).



Bill completes his walk along Hadrian's Wall

Annual meeting

10th October 2009

Hosted by our local support group, we enjoyed a great day in Kenilworth. Chairman, Peter Church, swiftly and efficiently completed the formal business of the day, allowing supporters to settle down and enjoy a varied and interesting programme of presentations. These included a highly amusing account of the Rickshaw Rally across South India last January, and a closer look at Thailand Boys Town by Terry Quadling and Rosemary Phillimore, as the project prepares to celebrate its 20th Anniversary this December (more in our Spring 2010 issue). An excellent lunch was served, and the break provided an opportunity to chat with Founder, Joe Homan, who had travelled from India to join us.

Despite the recession, the charity remains in a sound position, with adequate reserves, and is making excellent use of funds from donors, with considerable success in the projects both in India and Thailand. Head of fundraising, John Bowman, emphasised the need for continued fundraising effort, in order for the charity to continue its good work.

Remember to make a note in your diary that next year's meeting will be on Saturday 9th October 2010.



From left to right: John Bowman, Peter Church, Joe Homan and Jon Crouch

Smile please

The Jephcott Trust has granted us funding that has provided Dr Mascarhenas of the Pasam Trust with essential equipment to set up a new Dental Unit for the poorest tribal people of Kodaikanal. Many of the people, who inhabit the rural hill villages of the beautiful Palani Hills surrounding Kodaikanal, are illiterate and their health would be sadly neglected without the help of this voluntary service.

One private dentist does practise in Kodaikanal, but his costs are way beyond what the hill people can afford. Those in need include 40,000 children who may go on to develop secondary health problems without primary dental care. The equipment being provided not only includes the customary Dental Chair and ancillary equipment, but also an X-ray machine which will help detect problems at an early stage.



New Dental Unit serving rural community

Greek night

Park Grove Methodists, in Knaresborough, North Yorkshire, regularly raise funds to support JHC, and their latest venture was a Greek Night. Experience tells us that food plays a central role in their fundraising activities and this time was no exception as supporters enjoyed a starter of moussaka, lemon chicken for main course, and a choice of fruit tart or orange and lemon cheesecake for dessert. The



Knaresborough supporters enjoying their supper

meal was followed by a very entertaining talk entitled 'Boats, buses and bees' delivered by Rev Shirley Ludlow, describing her adventures in the Greek mainland and islands. Nearly 60 folk supported this major fundraising effort, with the result that approximately £750 was added to charity funds.

Golfers do it again

Twenty five golfers tucked into a hearty breakfast and enjoyed an excellent day's golfing at Chipping Norton on 16th October. Thanks to Bryan Goudman who organised the event, once again raising substantial funds for our girls and boys in the process.

Rotary generosity

A long-time supporter of The Joe Homan Charity, Gordon Whitcomb was pleased to receive a cheque from Rotary Club of Perth Kinnoull. Through their fundraising this year their donation will go towards equipping the school at Inba Seva Sangam with benches for the pupils. Their generosity also included a gift of art materials for the children to encourage their artistic skills.



Cheque presentation by Rotary Club of Perth Kinnoull

Seasonal gifts

Almost every one of us has had a tough year, but at Christmas we should try to remember that the children we are helping in India and Thailand have experienced poverty and traumas far worse than most of us will ever know. Like children everywhere, they love to receive presents, but an opportunity in life is priceless!



As a Charity, we are not offering a range of alternative gifts, because the children we support have NO ALTERNATIVE until we step in and help with their care and education.

However we do welcome donations in lieu of gifts for any occasion. If you would like to make a donation on behalf of a friend or family member we will send an attractive card to each recipient, thanking them on your behalf, and explaining how this gift could be the start of a new and exciting future for a needy child.

Sponsor gifts



A gift from a sponsor

With Christmas on its way our thoughts turn to the giving of gifts, and no doubt your sponsored child will be among those you wish to include. It is normally preferable to send a small donation to our UK office, who will arrange for

a suitable and appropriate gift to be purchased in India. However, if you wish to send a greetings card, photograph, or small gift you can do so by post, via our JHC India office (for address see page 2). Please remember to include the child's name and your own name and address. It may take several weeks for letters/packages to arrive, and although children are encouraged to write and thank their sponsors we are not able to guarantee a reply, dependent on the availability of translation resources.

Leaving a legacy

If you would like to make a lasting gift that will give a child hope for the future and a real chance of happiness you can do so by leaving a gift in your will. We are able to make a huge difference through the generosity of those who support our work. Legacies represent future funding that helps The Joe Homan Charity to develop its work with its local Partners overseas.

Festive cards

There's still time to order our popular Leaf Cards. Seasonal designs have been painted on to leaves from the Poplar tree, by artistic village women, and each one is unique. Priced at £1 each they make attractive greetings cards and every one purchased helps support the destitute children of India.



We hope you have enjoyed our Newsletter. Once you have finished reading this issue please pass it on to someone else who may be interested in supporting our work. If you would like to receive additional copies of Nandri to pass on regularly, please inform our Peterborough office.