

CHAIRMAN NEWSLETTER

May 2016

Dear Supporter,

Many of you will have attended Joe's Memorial Mass in Peterborough on April 27th or received the sad news of Joe's death from Jon Crouch or other friends.

Joe was cremated in Madurai on 31st March among scenes of great rejoicing for his extraordinary life. Hundreds of friends and past graduates of the Boys and Girls towns came out to take part in the last rites. Apparently it was by no means just a sad occasion but an opportunity to thank Joe for his life's work. His memory lives on in India and Thailand among the children who are presently cared for by Boys Town Society and the Youth Development Society of Khon Kaen - but also among those, now grown up, who are passing on Joe's values to their own families and communities.

The memorial Mass provided a fitting conclusion to Joe's great life which not only changed opportunities for thousands of children in the poorest parts of the world but inspired us in our more comfortable lives to care about the less fortunate.

I am sure you will agree that Joe would expect us to go on with the work he dedicated his life to and for that reason we are looking to the future and new ways of raising funds for all the projects we currently support. We are also searching for new opportunities to help some of the poorest children in Tamil Nadu who are outside the care of existing organisations.

However for the moment we are concentrating on helping the Dindigul Aids Control Society and working out ways of providing bursaries to enable more poor children to attend the new BTS School.

We also want to provide more support for children in the Education for Life schemes and Evening Study Centres.

Dindigul Aids Control Society (DACs)

We have reported on the DACs home in the past and Jon Crouch was able to visit again in January. The wonderful new building for the youngsters is now in full use and a second building is nearly completed for private accommodation and training. We have already had some volunteers working at the home and a few of the children are individually sponsored by some of our supporters. A full report on the project is available through our website - <http://www.joehoman.org.uk/our-work/project-reports>

Thankarchan, the Founder and Director, continues to give love and support to some of the most vulnerable children in the area and has been very active in getting funding from the local community. He is an amazing man who made his money selling banana chips in Kerala and then moved to Tamil Nadu and opened up his house for the cast off children and mothers who were infected with the AIDS virus.

We are trying a new initiative for raising money for DACs – using mobile phones. We are registered with JustGiving so to donate for DACs please just TEXT the code GKVK12£ followed by any number of pounds from 1 to 10 after the £ sign to 70070.

After your donation could you possibly text at least one friend and ask them to do the same and then to pass the message on to someone else – perhaps using the message JHC AIDS India Project together with the code?

BTS François Meyer Nursery and Primary School Bursaries

I sent the latest news about the new school building back in November and since then problems with the contractors have led to delays. However the building work is back in full swing and Dr Raja hopes to keep to an opening date soon after July 2016.

The numbers in the school have escalated and now there are 220 children in all seven Standards. This has led to considerable overcrowding in the existing building - the François Meyer Technology Building. If you have access to Google Earth you can see the problem. Put in Boys Town Society, Alampatti, Tamil Nadu and you can just see the Administrative block – with two yellow school buses nearby - and then nearer the

road, Tirumangalam Boys Town itself, the FM Technology building and the groundwork of the new school next to it. It gives a sense of the impressive size of the new building!

The children at the school come from both Rengesamy Children's Village and local children from the villages. All of them pay school fees, and although modest it means that the poorest local children find it very difficult to attend.

Joe and Dr Raja, the General Secretary of Boys Town Society, always argued for the Aravinda model of financing the school – after the remarkable man who runs eye camps on the principle of those who can afford an eye operation paying for those who can't. However until this operates effectively we are hoping to provide bursaries for the poorest children and are currently working with BTS to establish a pilot scheme. We will be writing to you at a later date to explain the scheme more fully.

Finally I want to assure you that despite Joe's death the work he inspired goes on into the future and that the Joe Homan Charity will continue working with the poorest children and their families for as long as the need continues. Despite the huge changes brought about by the Indian Government in recent years rural poverty is still with us and we are determined to play a part in making life better for some of the most deprived children in the world.

I hope you are enjoying the better Spring weather which is with us at last.

With all good wishes,

Peter Church
Chairman of JHC