



# The Joe Homan Charity

... bringing joy and hope to children



The Joe Homan Charity | Registered Charity No. 1006060

## Members Letter 70

April 2018

Dear Member,

There is so much to relate at this stage in the development of our Charity, that it will be a longer message this time!

First, the somewhat sad and unwelcome news that Peter Church, our Chairman for 10 years, has decided to resign from the Board of Trustees and from Membership of JHC on grounds of ill health. Peter has a major chest problem which affects his breathing. We wish Jan, his wife, every strength in looking after him. We are so grateful to Peter for the huge contribution he has made over 35 years to a very special charity which has touched so many lives very deeply.

That is why John Bowman is writing to you in the capacity of Vice-Chairman, having had to become much more involved in the running of the Charity.



Next is the news that Kemal Shaheen, our newly-appointed Charity Manager, has taken up his post and has been officially working alongside Jon Crouch since the beginning of March. Last week, on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jon officially retired and a small group of Trustees had a pub lunch with him by the office to celebrate the occasion. He has given 21 years of outstanding service to JHC and will be missed not only in the UK but also by Gopi and all the children we help in South India and Thailand. Dr Raja of BTS said some kind words about Jon in the recent issue of Young Voices which you may have seen.

Kemal is in the process of helping Jon and Hazel pack up everything from the Glinton office at Peterborough to move to a new office in Oxford at the end of April. Russell Smith (Trustee), and a friend of his, will be helping with the move.

Please note that as from 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018 the new JHC Office address will be:

The Joe Homan Charity, Peterley House, Peterley Road, Oxford, OX4 2TZ.

Tel: +44 (0)1865 800 019

Meetings have already taken place between Kemal and most of the Trustees, and also with the members of the Coventry supporters group. He will soon be looking to contact other key supporters.

The Board are considering an 'Away Day' to share with Kemal our thoughts about where the future of the Charity lies. Following that, Kemal will make his first visits to the South Indian projects in the latter part of June. He is hoping that Arun Chinnaraj (Trustee) can accompany him. Our next Board meeting will therefore be early in July.

The Thailand Boys Town will not be forgotten and Kemal will make a visit there as soon as possible.

News from the Projects continues to come in. The latest is an encouraging annual report from DACS written by Tina Sahota. Other partner NGOs have also updated their web sites, notably the Inba Seva Sangam Girls Home (ISS) and the Society for Poor Peoples Development (SPPD). Boys Town Society has published its Pongal edition of their colourful newsletter, 'Young Voices'. The above should be available for all to read on the JHC website, or soon will be, as are the latest project reports, which will of course also be sent to all who directly support them.

As reported in JHC's annual accounts and at the AGM, JHC has been dependent for several years on drawing from financial reserves or exceptional windfalls to balance its 'bottom line'. Fortunately we had a strong balance sheet, but this situation cannot continue indefinitely and two years ago trustees set a target to balance the income / expenditure by 2020. There are several ways to achieve this: increasing fundraising; encouraging our project partners to find economies and complementary sources of funding; reducing the number of children supported.

Accepting the challenge, BTS management committee has made the difficult decision to close Nilakottai Boys Town as part of their strategy to steadily concentrate residential projects in the Tirumangalam area, adjacent to the Francois Meyer Matriculation School. There is sufficient capacity in the other residential projects to accommodate the Nilakottai boys. Parents have been briefed, then consulted on how best to manage the transition for each boy. The well-stocked library will be relocated to Pannaikadu Boys Town. One immediate benefit is that the green light has now been given for a programme of refurbishment for the three Tirumangalam residential projects (Rengasamy Children's Village, Tirumangalam Boys Town and Inner Wheel Girls Town).

It's certainly a sad moment when a Boys Town closes. All those personalities, history and anecdotes. But we need to see this as responding to change and a development to reflect

the very different kind of support we and our partners now provide compared with when the Boys Towns were built .... we now have a smaller number of youngsters receiving our support, but each for more years, leading to qualifications and in some cases degrees. This is inevitably at a higher cost per head.

Meanwhile, Madurai Sevashram girls home, the DACS Anbagam home and SPPD have all responded to the need to broaden their sources of local funding with some encouraging successes.



John and Sue Bowman made an interesting first visit to Japan recently and made contact with BTS supporters at Seibo Girls School in Kyoto. What began as a casual contact with a teacher, Mrs Noriko Ishikawa, grew into a request for an illustrated talk to 800+ girls. This John was more than happy to do, in the sports hall, to reinvigorate the link of many years, renewed by Dr Raja 3 years ago. Originally donations were encouraged by one of Joe Homan's sisters, Sister Mary, who had been teaching English at the school years ago. John and Sue were treated like special guests and received a warm welcome from all. Let's hope this produces more funds to support Athoor Boys Town which Joe eventually named Seibo Boys Town.

We were fortunate to have a runner in this year's London Marathon and we are delighted to announce that Chris (Dobson) completed the epic challenge for JHC in 5 hours 24 - a fantastic achievement in the heat! He has raised over £1000 so far for the charity and his fundraising page is still live at <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=JoeHomanCharity&pageUrl=1> so please do give generously!

On an administrative note, the new Government Data Protection Regulations which come into force on the 25th May, require us to seek your permission to hold any digital data about you. Hence the slip enclosed which needs to be returned to the office if you are happy for us to store the normal details about you on computer.

I will leave Kemal to introduce himself to you in his own style. I think you will agree that he has brought a lot of potential to the post.

### **'Welcome and Introduction from Kemal'**



**Kemal and his son Israh enjoying a walk in Dovedale!**

There are so many reasons why I feel both privileged and excited to have joined this quite exceptional and inspirational little charity as the new manager. However, I can think of no better words than Joe's to explain why the values and vision of the Joe Homan Charity resonate so deeply with me. I speak not just as someone who has spent the majority of my 'professional life' working in Asia, Africa and Latin America to challenge poverty and promote social justice but also as the father of a four year old boy who has made my life immeasurably brighter since he came into it:

"There is no greater role given to a human being on this planet than bringing up and educating children. To help develop a child to be as complete a personality as possible is both awesome and wonderful".

Reading Joe's book 'Miles O' Smiles', Freda Rees' 'Dear My Mother and Father' and having talked to a number of people who have supported and believed in Joe's work (some for more than the 43 years that I have been alive!) I have been inspired and moved by Joe's profound commitment to recognising and nurturing potential in young people. Young people who have experienced some of the toughest shocks that life can throw at one, such as the death of one's care-givers or the ill health that so often accompanies crushing poverty. Often seeing what others overlooked Joe helped thousands of children to develop a strong sense of self-esteem and self-reliance through his unique blend of entrepreneurial spirit and dogged determination. It strikes me that this was at the core of Joe's vision more than 50 years ago and I firmly believe it will have to remain at the heart of all we do to

improve the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalised young people in India and Thailand.

As a doctoral researcher in 2003/4 I fell in love with Tamil Nadu when I spent 4 months there trying to deepen my understanding of the barriers to, and opportunities for, education faced by children with disabilities and those belonging to Dalit (former untouchable) communities. Since completing my PhD in 2007 I have continued to volunteer for a small charity based in Tamil Nadu (called Children Watch) whose work to educate and rehabilitate young people released from bonded labour inspired me to offer what little help I could from a distance. And, over the last eighteen years, I have worked for a variety of international development charities (both large and small) in a number of different capacities from campaigning, fundraising and programme development to a 4 year period as Chief Executive of Village Aid (a small charity based in Derbyshire supporting education in rural West Africa). During that time I have had the good fortune to work on some fascinating issues - from peacebuilding initiatives with Fulani cattle herders and indigenous farmers fighting over access to land and water in North West Cameroon to working with local partners in the favelas of North East Brazil providing skills and learning opportunities for young people vulnerable to gang violence.

As such I hope that I am able to draw on these experiences in a number of ways to support the invaluable work of this very special little charity which I can already see has inspired the kind of loyalty and devotion in our supporters, volunteers and members that other charities would give their eyeteeth for! This is something very precious indeed and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the AGM in October and perhaps welcoming some of you to our new office in Oxford that we will be sharing with Young Enterprise, a charity that, like us, seeks to recognise and nurture potential in young people. I am excited about the potential for collaborating with them going forward so please do watch this space!

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Jon and Hazel for helping me to settle in to the new role in what has been a frenetic handover period and to wish them both well in their onward journeys. I would also like to say a huge thank you to our wonderful trustees (including Peter who has just stepped down as Chair but whom I had the good fortune to meet on my first day in post). I am delighted to have this opportunity to work closely with you all so that together we can keep Joe's dream and spirit alive as we write this next exciting chapter in the 'Joe Homan Charity story'! Nandri.

After the heat wave recently I do hope you have a pleasant summer and I hope to see most of you at our JHC AGM on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October at Kidlington.

With best wishes,

John Bowman Vice Chair JHC.

**Protecting your data privacy: changes to the law in May 2018**

In May a change to data protection law will give you more control over how organisations use your personal data and this means that we will not be allowed to contact you via email unless you tell us we can.

We would be very grateful if you could **confirm what you want to receive from us** (news and information, ways of supporting the Joe Homan Charity, relevant events etc.) **and how we can contact you** (email, post, phone and which is your preferred contact method).

**So that you can continue to receive updates from us we are kindly requesting you to complete the information below to give us permission to contact you.**

**Many thanks for your continued support.**

**Email Address**

**Title Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other.....(please delete)**

**First Name**

**Last Name**

**Address and telephone number**

**Tel:**

**I wish to receive:**

News about the work of the Joe Homan Charity.....**Yes/No**

Information about ways of supporting the Joe Homan Charity.....**Yes/No**

Information about relevant events.....**Yes/No**

**The Joe Homan Charity will use the information you provide on this form to be in touch with you and to provide updates and marketing. Please let us know all the ways that you would like to hear from us:**

Email.....**Yes/No**

Post.....**Yes/No**

Phone.....**Yes/No**

You can change your mind at any time by contacting us at [jhct@btinternet.com](mailto:jhct@btinternet.com). We will treat your information with respect. For more information about our privacy practices please visit our website: [www.joehoman.org](http://www.joehoman.org). By returning this form you agree that we may process your information in accordance with these terms.