



Friends Update

August 2015

News from Kolkata

New partnership to train women

A group of underprivileged women living in Pally Mangal in south Kolkata have the opportunity to learn new a skill and earn an income.

St Xavier's College in Kolkata, runs a project called Enactus which supports livelihood programmes for slum women, and have identified CRS as suitable partner organisation.

Undergraduate students from the college are training women to paint clay pots with attractive and colourful designs which can then be sold on the open market. The women chosen for the programme are already showing great promise



Cathedral service focuses on CRS

On Sunday 2 August, the whole of the morning service at St Paul's Cathedral in Kolkata was given over to CRS.



Members of the congregation learned more about the activities of CRS through presentations from the Director and other staff members. They heard choral pieces by children from some of the slum-based Education Centres and from young adults who attend the Training Centre for Differently-abled Persons.

After the service, women from some of the self-help groups held an exhibition of their wares including embroidery work and tailored items.

Youngsters learn about the environment

A two-day event at Basanti Devi Colony in August saw 60 people learn the importance of caring for the environment.



Children from Basanti Devi Colony school and nearby Sukantanagar school, along with women from the community, attended sessions that culminated in the planting of saplings in the compound of the school. Children from the Environment Club have committed to caring for the trees as they grow.

All eyes on Basanti Devi Colony

At the end of July, CRS teamed up with Netaji Eye Hospital to hold an eye camp at Basanti Devi Colony School in Kolkata.



87 people had their eyes checked. Eight people were identified as needing a cataract operation while 25 people were prescribed spectacles. Treatment and medicines were given free of charge thanks to the event's sponsorship by Larsen & Turbo, an Indian engineering company.

Fundraising

Funds raised for new roof

In April 2015, Jono Marcus took part in the 10k Mercy4Mankind run in Hyde Park. The aim was to raise money to replace a damaged roof.



CRS works in partnership with neighbourhood organisations. These organisations provide premises while CRS funds and staffs programmes for the community. However, many of the buildings are either small or in poor condition. Over the years, CRS has supported infrastructure improvements through special fundraising. Different centres have received brick walls, new floors and flushable toilets.

Thanks to Jono's efforts, Mullajan Welfare Society in Bibibagan now has a new roof! Inside, children from the surrounding slums can once again attend a school run by CRS both in safety and protected from the monsoon rains.

Wedding guests donate over £1,000

Anashua and Robert Davies from Sidcup, Kent, were married in June 2015. Their guests were invited to donate money to two chosen charities rather than give the couple gifts.



We are absolutely delighted that CRS was one of those charities and overwhelmed by the generosity of their friends and family who gave over £1,000 towards the work of CRS in Kolkata. Congratulations to Ana and Robert, and a heart-felt thank you!

New football kit for 3 teams

Melbourne Parish Church in Derbyshire kindly donated £500 to support the football project in Kolkata. New kit was bought for teams from 3 CRS Education Centres.



B D Colony now have a yellow strip, Sukanatanagar team play in green and G B Lane wear blue. In addition to shirts and shorts for all the boys, equipment was purchased including 10 new footballs, 40 coloured cones, 12 low hurdles and 2 ladders so that the boys can practice drills.

Mohammed Aman, who studies in Class II at G B Lane school, said "Before we were playing with one ball, now have received 5 footballs. We are enjoying the game very much. We are pleased to have the new jersey." He and his teammates found it strange at first to use the new training equipment as they were unfamiliar with it but now they are really enjoying football practice.

Spare change for BIG change

The Canadian Friends of CCRS held their annual Penny Pot Tea at St Mary's Church, Kerrisdale in Vancouver on 14 March.



Around 50 supporters came along and the "penny pots" were collected. A total of 1,924 Canadian dollars had been raised through the year as people had put loose change in their pots. Thanks to the Canadian Friends for all their fundraising efforts!

New project

Nari Dana project now launched

The latest initiative of the Friends of CRS is an exciting new partnership between a UK textile product manager and ladies in Kolkata's slums, which will give many poor women a new beginning and enable them to earn a livelihood.

Veronica, who lives in London, is a product manager in the textile industry. She is starting a web-based business under the name of Tabitha Living, which will sell products that she has designed made by women in the CRS slums. The initial intention is to produce and sell good quality sewn and embroidered tableware.

Last November, Veronica visited Kolkata. She visited some of the CRS training centres where the ladies have learned their skills in tailoring and embroidery. About 140 women who have received training from CRS congregated at the Cathedral to find out about the project.

Since then, a small group of women have been selected. They are receiving additional training and are starting to practice making the various products and embroidered designs. The team in Kolkata is led by production manager, Ritu. Meanwhile, a trading company is being formed to be a vehicle for the new business.

Nari Dana, which means 'women's wings', represents a significant step beyond the existing provision of skills training and self-help groups. It will provide regular and sustained income for many women from deprived backgrounds, as well as additional funding for CRS.

