



Friends Update

August 2016

News from Kolkata

High quality fashion



Since 1996 CRS has run a women's empowerment programme in Pally Mangal, a neighbourhood in south Kolkata. Training is available in tailoring and embroidery.

Having completed their courses, women are encouraged to form self-help groups and then use their new skills to set up small business enterprises.

Ten self-help group members received a boost in February when CRS arranged a special training session led by a fashion designer from the National Institute of Fashion Technology in Kolkata.

With the focus on "quality products" the women learned how to improve the quality and finish of the items that they make. This will hopefully enable them to sell their tailored clothing at a higher price and boost their income.

Health and hygiene hints



Poverty, illiteracy and lack of education can leave many people without basic knowledge to live safe and healthy lives.

CRS regularly organises community-based sessions to raise awareness about different aspects of physical and mental health, sanitation and hygiene, so that people can improve their personal and household practices.

25 adolescent girls and women from the Sukantanagar community gathered in February to learn about "Reproductive and Child Health". The event was led by Dr Prasenjit Saha who works within the Maternity and Child Welfare Department of a government hospital.

Attendees learned about pre-natal and post-natal care including what to do and what to avoid doing during pregnancy, the importance of timely check-ups, good nutrition, hygiene and immunisation.

More news from Kolkata

The end of the school year in March brought evaluations for students completing their year-long skills training courses as part of the CRS women's empowerment programme, and time off for students and teachers of the CRS education programme

Sewing their way to success



Tailoring and embroidery is the most popular skill training programme. This year's batch of 125 students from six different CRS centres in Kolkata gathered in March for their end of year evaluation.

Over four hours, the students had to complete a series of tasks to demonstrate skills they had learned during their course. This included embroidering a flower; demonstrating hemming, darning, and picot stitch along the edge of cloth; and measuring, cutting and stitching a shirt and a bag.

Brides for the day



Meanwhile 81 girls from five CRS centres in Kolkata gathered in May for the final evaluation for their beautician course.

During a year-long course, students learn a range of skills including skin care, make-up, waxing, manicure and pedicure, facial treatments and hair cutting. The final practical test lasted three hours and the girls had to prepare a friend in bridal attire including face make-up, sari, jewellery and hair styling. They also had an oral test about things they had learned in their course.

Teachers plan for coming school year



17 teachers from CRS's education centres gathered in mid-May for a three-day programme of review, discussion and planning.

Led by the CRS Director and the Coordinator of Education Projects, the group reviewed the teaching syllabus for different age groups, discussed the setting of test questions for each unit, and presented ideas for enhancing the students' experience.

Children get creative at camp



Although school was out, CRS organized a 'Shishu Jagat' (Children's World) summer camp in late May for children from the CRS education centres at BD Colony and Sukantanagar.

30 boys and girls took part in four days of activities focused on exploring and expressing creativity including art and crafts, dance and singing, games and a treasure hunt.

Corporate support

CRS receives donations in cash and kind from corporations in India as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes

Larsen and Toubro

Larsen and Toubro, an Indian multinational conglomerate, has been supporting CRS activities for some time.

In March they sponsored a dental camp in the slum community of Bibibagan. 92 men, women and children received a check-up and advice on improving dental health, as well as an oral hygiene pack to take home. The dentist also referred some people to a government hospital for further treatment.



Also in March they provided the funding for a blood donation camp. The portico of St Paul's Cathedral was converted into a makeshift clinic as over 60 volunteers lined up to donate blood.



In April they donated three new sewing machines to be used as part of CRS's women's empowerment programme. Khatiza Begum, an instructor at CRS's Bibibagan centre, said "I am very excited on receiving the new machine and this is going to help more women to take the tailoring course".

Hindustan Petroleum



Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, the leading oil and gas company in India, donated a new 4x4 vehicle to CRS. It will be used as a mobile medical van for the CRS Health Programme.

The vehicle will be a great help to health teams visiting different locations in both the city and rural areas, and for carrying medical supplies to replenish clinics.

The vehicle was officially handed over in early April with members of the CRS Executive Committee in attendance – and the Bishop of Kolkata was particularly keen to examine the engine and other features.



Fundraising news

Pennies make pounds

Naresh and Rashmi Gelani, newsagents in Cambridge, have a CRS collection box on the counter in their shop.

When the box was handed over in early April, the staggering number of coins took four hours to count! In just a month they had raised £267.



Canadians count cash

The Canadian Friends of CRS held their 6th Annual Penny Pot Tea in April.

The loose change put into the Penny Pots during the year amounted to C\$2,000 (about £1,200); to this was added a further C\$3,000 from cheques received from other donors.



A big thank you to Naresh, Rashmi and their customers, to the Canadian Friends of CRS, and other supporters around the world. Your pennies and pounds, dimes and dollars make all the difference to what CRS is able to achieve in Kolkata.

And finally ... some celebrations

A Bengali birthday



Rabindranath Tagore, the writer, poet, playwright, musician and philosopher, is much beloved by the Bengali people. His birthday anniversary is celebrated around the world with a cultural festival called Rabindra Jayanti.

This year children from the CRS education centre at BD Colony celebrated the day by performing some of Tagore's songs and dances, and reciting select poetry and prose. One of the teachers also gave a talk about his contributions to society and culture.

A new Bishop



In February, the Right Reverend Mike Harrison, Chair of the UK Friends of CRS, was ordained and consecrated Bishop of Dunwich in the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese.

The service took place in Westminster Abbey in London and was conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury (pictured left with Mike). It was a magnificent and moving occasion with the Abbey filled nearly to capacity. The UK Friends join in wishing Bishop Mike every blessing in his future ministry.