



UK Friends need Volunteers

I now work full time for Christian Aid, heading up a new office for them. This means that I am no longer able to keep going the day to day running of the "Friends" alone. The trustees have been inputting on wider issues. We need volunteers to assist with : (1) obtaining grants from trusts and foundations, (2) our "Friends" website, and (3) our 'Friends Quarterly'. You will find brief details of each of these roles with this newsletter. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these tasks, please do get in touch with us at secretary@friendsofcrs.co.uk and we can provide you with a more detailed role description and answer any questions. There is a lot happening in Kolkata and we need to build our team quickly to adequately support Rig. Please do get in touch if you can help. Thank you.

Adrian Whalley

English language training

CRS is taking further steps to train its key staff in use of the English language. This is both to give them greater confidence in communicating with the UK and Canadian "Friends" and to enable the staff team to build the 'English' capability of the slum teaching staff at an elementary level. In addition, practical classroom activities using both the Indian and English languages are to be started. Another benefit of this greater awareness of English is that it should empower the teachers to develop a better bonding with the children in their care and, over time, open the door to some children who are filtered into the mainstream schools becoming young professionals in the future.



Teachers from Basanti Niketan Vidyapath being trained in English language

Rig David

Canadian Friends visit to CRS

In September, Sheila Johnston, founder of 'Canadian Friends of CRS' and Simon, her husband, visited CRS' training centre for Differently-abled Persons and the slums where CRS is working at Bibibagan, Basanti Devi, Pallymangal, Kolabagan, Dumdum and Topsia. Sheila and Simon were given a wonderful welcome at the members of each slum, particularly the children, which left them with an unforgettable experience. Just as memorable was a performance by students from the Training Centre for Differently-abled Persons dedicated to them. This was Sheila and Simon's first visit to CRS projects which has made Sheila all the more determined to work hard to develop things further in Canada to support CRS to help make a difference.



Simon with the student performers

The CRS family expands

CRS welcomes two new staff members. Trina (Banerjee) joined the team in July 2013 as the Human Resources Coordinator and Anamitra (Dasgupta) arrived in September as the new Communications and Resources Coordinator. CRS warmly welcomes them both into the team.



Anamitra



Trina

Meeting with Rotary club of Kolkata Outram

The Canadian Friends' of CRS met with the Rotary Club of Kolkata Outram to investigate scope for collaboration. Intrigued by the Club's success towards making India polio-free - which was on target to be achieved by the end of 2013 - Sheila and Simon agreed with those they met that the possibility of a collaborative venture would be discussed by the Club's Board and that there be further communications with Rig regarding this.



Canadian Friends meet at Kolkata's Rotary Club

Rev'd. Anita Matthews' visit to CRS

Revd. Anita Matthews, Assistant Curate at St. Peter's Church, Derby, visited CRS' outreach at Topsia, Basanti Devi, Kolabagan and Pallymangal slums on 11 November 2013 paying particular attention to the Education, Nutritional Supplement, Health and Women's Empowerment Projects with which clearly she was very impressed. Expressing particular interest in microfinance initiatives, Rev'd Matthews is planning to revisit the projects in March 2014 with 8 members of the St. Peter's congregation and requested to know whether CRS could involve these visitors in the education projects. Rev'd Matthews brought with her the best wishes of Bishop Alastair, Bishop of Derby, to Bishop Ashoke in the hope that the links between their respective cathedrals can be strengthened.



Update on CRS interventions at Gumla, Jharkhand

CRS has provided finance for the construction of a community hall at Gumla, Jharkhand, a state recognized officially by the Indian Government of being in special development need. The hall will enable the tribal communities to gather together to celebrate their local festivals as well as being a venue for important community meetings. New classrooms and toilets are being built for the tribal children enrolled in the CRS - managed education centre at Gumla.



Learning to reuse, reduce and recycle

The children of BD Colony's Environment Club organized an 'environmental awareness campaign' to spread the word on **sustainability** to promote a better tomorrow. Over thirty children from the 3rd and 4th classes of Basanti Niketan Vidyapith slum school mounted a peace march which drew significant attention from the passers-by. The teachers behind this education project, encouraged by the children's enthusiasm, guided them to make colourful animal masks to wear during the march and posters with slogans on environmental issues to display. Supporting the cause of safeguarding the environment, the children left their hand impressions on a poster which read "We Support Green" (below). The environmental awareness campaign was greeted with huge success ending the event with the planting of a sapling in the Children's Park.



The Anglican Overseas Aid (Australia) Visit

Tracy Matthews from Anglican Overseas Aid (Australia) visited the CRS education and empowerment projects in September 2013. The children in the Pallymangal and Dumdum slums welcomed her to their community. The women's skill and livelihood training provided by CRS which has led to 17 women opening their own bank accounts with the Indian Overseas Bank. In particular, Tracy was interested in the staff performance appraisals process as an effective way of maintaining internal reporting and quality standards.



Tracy introduces herself to the CRS staff in St Paul's Cathedral

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www.friendsofcrs.co.uk**