

Friends of India

News update

December 2011

A Flavour of India raises over CHF 16'000 for the FOI Residential Learning Centre

Money raised on the evening of 11th November in Nyon, Switzerland, will help complete the new FOI Residential Learning Centre building down in Tirunelveli in the south of Tamil Nadu. This residential care and support centre will provide a home for vulnerable and orphaned children living with HIV.



Brother Victordass flew over from India to give a first-hand update on this project. Representing FOI's Indian partner, *the Brothers of the Sacred Heart*, he explained the centre's importance in "assisting orphans affected by HIV who experience social stigma, isolation and discrimination, and a lack of access to basic education and health care."

Thanks to your help, incredible progress has been made on this project over the past year. First introduced last year as a new major project for FOI, the foundation stone was laid in February and although the building is not yet finished, there are already 20 children living there and attending school. The plan is now to fit bunk beds so that the centre can accommodate 70 children.



Although they all know that they are living with HIV, the younger children do not understand what this actually means. They all receive a good support system

and as well as attending school, they receive nutritional care, medicines and treatment, and also life skills training, such as cooking, sewing, computer training and typewriting.

The children come from 40 villages within the wider Tirunelveli District and have all been identified through the integrated counselling and testing centres, primary health care centres, anti-retroviral therapy centres, and the district HIV networks.

Most of the children are orphans who have been rejected by their extended families. Others have parents who are unable to work or look after their children due to their own HIV status.



On a recent visit to the site, the Chair of FOI's Chennai Board, **Dorene Bernard**, wrote: "I was humbled to see the happiness on the children's faces as they took us to their NEW HOME".

The aim is to have the building completed and more children on site by Christmas.

► But we still need a further CHF 8'000 to purchase beds.

► Can you help us with this?

Next steps...

The second phase of this project will be to convert some existing sheds on the same site into a vocational skills training and production unit. The initial cost to build this will be around CHF 10'000 – with a further CHF 36'000 to buy the production machinery. This facility will allow the students to learn a vocational skill and help generate resources to maintain the residential learning centre.

Experiencing a Flavour of India

Apart from hearing about our projects at our evening event, guests enjoyed 'a flavour' of India - a delicious Indian meal served at table, beautifully performed classical Indian dances and a display of exquisite saris, modelled by FOI supporters.



FOI President, Pam Walsh expressed deep gratitude to all FOI supporters, for their continued interest in our work.

We still need your support for the Richard Walsh Music School

110 visually impaired children are now being taught at the Music School, which was opened back in 2009, with a further major extension inaugurated earlier this year. Set within the residential Amalarakkini Special School for the Blind, the children learn a wide variety of western and Indian musical instruments. Their current music teacher is also blind.



But these children still need your help!

- ▶ CHF 5'000 is required for extra fittings, including doors and windows, and wooden flooring at the music school.
- ▶ CHF 1'650 will cover all tuition and accommodation fees for one blind student to continue into further education for 3 years, after graduating from the music school.



Can you help provide a future for these children?

The Friends of India boutique

As displayed at our *Flavour of India* evening, we still have a range of beautiful woollen shawls from India for sale at a mere CHF 60 each – ideal for Christmas presents! Please contact Pammi Type on 022 776 2418 or visit the Christmas Fayre at the Hotel Crowne Plaza, Avenue Louis-Casai (near Geneva airport) between the 7th and 11th December.



Friends of India

Making your money go further – a note from Pam Walsh OBE, FOI President

“Dear Friends and Supporters,

As reported back in the summer, we are looking at how FOI can move forward and adapt to the changing times in India. It is important that our vision remains the same while adapting to new challenges and opportunities. Our desire is to make your money go even further and to create a bigger impact in the lives of more women and children in the poorest communities within Tamil Nadu.

The FOI Board asked our Vice President, Nigel Majakari to meet with successful entrepreneurs, foundations, and potential corporate sponsors in India and Europe to give us feedback on what we can do going forward. The meetings and discussions have been very positive. There is clearly an appetite and interest for improving the effectiveness of local grass-roots partners so that they can impact more lives and develop networks of local donors within Tamil Nadu. To get this started, Nigel is now looking for seed money to develop a social entrepreneurship pilot training initiative, and we would like to hear from anyone interested in being part of this exciting new venture.

Can you help us with this? Do you have contacts within your network who you could introduce to us? If so, do please contact me via the FOI address below.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish you every happiness for the Christmas season,

Pam”

Ways in which you can help us

▶ **Become a member** – your annual membership of CHF 110 (CHF 170 for a couple) helps fund our ongoing work. **NB. Membership renewals are due 1st January 2012 (and please note new membership fee!)**

▶ **Make a donation** - 100% of your donation goes directly to supporting our projects in India.

To make a donation or pay annual membership

Bank: UBS Geneva
Bank account name: Friends of India
Bank account number: 240-439931.40 D
IBAN number: CH 68 0024 0240 4399 3140 D

Post Office: CCP17-753012-7

▶ Or you can do this online at www.friends-of-india.org

How to contact us

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