

Newsletter

December 2015

Partners in Aid

Enduring, Capable Communities

Partners in Aid Ltd
ABN 50 006 946 550

PO Box 42, Narre Warren LPO
VIC 3805 Australia

Phone: 03 9704 6315
Email: admin@partnersinaid.org.au
Web: www.partnersinaid.org.au

Christmas Gifts and Donations

This Christmas why not consider making a donation to one of our projects as an alternative to buying a traditional gift for family or friends? You'll be making a very positive difference to the lives and prospects of disadvantaged and vulnerable people, while avoiding the shopping hustle and bustle and queuing for a parking space too!

You can also make a general project donation if you prefer, or set up a child sponsorship at ABWU or SEDS.

We are happy to provide a gift certificate on request; simply tick the relevant box on the donation form.

Here are some ideas for each of our project areas.

SEDS

- ❖ Notebooks & stationery for school child \$15
- ❖ School bag per child \$6
- ❖ Child medical & dental check-up \$20
- ❖ Sewing machines \$110 each

Symbiosis, Bangladesh

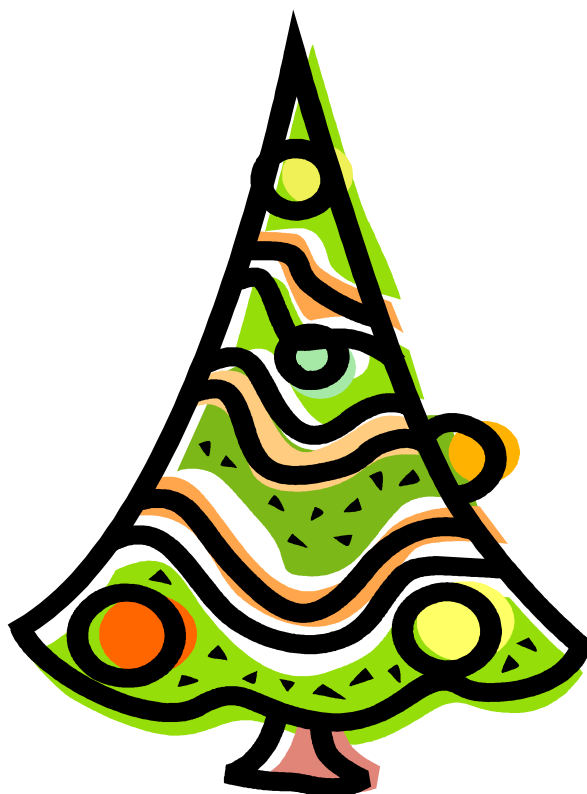
- ❖ Writing materials and books for school \$15 per set
- ❖ Kitchen garden materials \$50
- ❖ Super Kris Kringle – sponsor a teacher for a year, \$1800, or \$150/month

ABWU

Any donation towards:

- ❖ The orphans' holiday fund
- ❖ Sewing supplies
- ❖ School text books

A general donation will be used in supporting any of our projects needing funds at the time of your donation.



Bright Luncheon for ABWU

Joy Handley

Each year there is a fundraising luncheon run by the Alpine Women's Group, and held at Simone's of Bright, a family run restaurant in a rather gorgeous setting.

This year, the luncheon was held on Monday November 16, and the amount raised was an incredible \$4,424.90. The photos on this page are from the event, which was a lovely afternoon of friendship and fundraising.

The proprietress Patrizia Simone will accompany Joy Handley on her next trip to Kolkata in January 2016, along with two other ladies from the Alpine Women's Group.

If anyone has any questions, Joy would be delighted to take your call, on 03 5755 1344. There is also more news on fundraising in Bright later in this newsletter.



Joy and the Simone's



Jenny McNaught, Joy & Leigh Ramia



Our mission:

- *To improve living standards, capacity and resilience in developing communities with a focus on the Indian sub-continent.*
- *To fund and facilitate social and environment projects and child education sponsorship with local partners.*

SEDS

Lyn Pickering

For my newsletter report this quarter I thought I would tell you about all the great things that child sponsorship means to the students. I had been pondering what to write, because it is very easy for me to start the story with “we have just returned from another fantastic trip to India” - and we have!! Before I do that, I will tell you of my own personal observations of media of late. I have noticed the emotive television ads which appear regularly and I find them distressing and imagine many of you do also. I now switch to another channel whilst they are on, because they are repeated so often.

YES early marriage is a problem in most developing countries in OUR world

YES the death rate from preventable diseases is too high

YES people are facing wars and crisis, one after another

YES many people live in appalling conditions

YES many children do not attend school

YES many people do not have enough food each day

We take it for granted that we can open the door to our homes, walk in, switch on a light, turn on taps with hot and cold running clean water, have a separate bedroom and bed to sleep in, and be able to cook and eat the food we choose in comfort, and live a very good life. For many people in India and other countries, this is so far from their reality or expectation.

What Is So Good About Sponsoring A Child At SEDS, And Other Benefits For Students And Their Families:

- The students can attend school regularly;
- The majority of these young people now remain in school to year 10 on our program;
- The students receive a free Government lunch each day;
- Many of them are now going on to Year 11 and 12, with Government or family support;
- The students receive their clothes, school bag, books, shoes, and have their fees paid;
- This year 15 students passed Year 10, a 100% pass rate;
- Students attend one day each month at SEDS where they have cultural, sporting and art and craft activities;
- Once a year a Health Care camp is held on one of their monthly visits – this year one Doctor, two Dentists and an Eye specialist visited;
- Many Doctors and Dentists give their time voluntarily and on a regular basis throughout the year to assist families in their communities who cannot afford to pay medical and dental expenses; and
- This year – all the sponsored children under 12, both girls and boys received an MMR vaccination (Measles, mumps and rubella). The

girls over 12, and young married teachers received the Rubella vaccination.

A highlight of this recent visit was meeting seven of the former sponsored students, 4 girls and three boys who received support from donors through to Year 10. They are all in various years at University, with engineering a popular choice for both girls and boys. One boy is working on his Masters Degree. Some of these students were long term SEDS hostel students, and others came into SEDS for short periods prior to exams where they could be given access to study time, a bed and regular meals. All of these students told us that being involved on the SEDS sponsorship program gave them confidence, a very good understanding of English, and allowed them to dream of a future, which involved an education, and not that of their, in most cases, illiterate parents who relied on day labouring work in the fields when it was available

My thanks are extended to our very generous donors, some of whom have been with us since the program commenced in early 1995. 500+ children have received, or are currently receiving an education because of your generosity. I certainly appreciate this support and so do the students and their families also. There is now a much greater awareness from the families and the Indian Government, that educating the children will make a big difference, not only for the child, and the family, but also for the country.

****If you would like to make a difference in the life of a young person through SEDS in India, please contact me. The cost is \$240 and a further optional \$20 for those who would like to give a present to the student. The



Rajen & Manil - SEDS founders

present is a new set of clothes, given to them at the first SEDS monthly visit in January. Many of the clothes are made by the Vocational Training program for young women and girls. There may be people who may not be able to sponsor a child for a year, but might like to consider a new set of clothes for a child.

RUBELLA VACCINATION PROGRAM AT SEDS

Since my first visit to India in 1994, and Ian in 1992, we have both gone there “wearing our two hats” One has been as Directors (honorary) of Partners in Aid, and the other as Rotarians. We keep returning because we love the country and the people who live there.

I am not seeking funds for this vaccination program, because apart from my Rotary Club, other Clubs are keen to offer their support, however I do believe that it is of interest to people to know that there is other good work going on in this rural area of India, and if we and our friends, can bring about positive outcomes for deserving people, then we do it.

Over 18 and 19 visits to India, we have met and interacted with many different people, visited cities, towns and small villages, and sometimes when we are guest speakers here in Australia, find that our stories

cross over from one organisation to the other. This happened during my recent talk to my Rotary Club to report back about the rubella vaccinations. I had a presentation which ran whilst I spoke. Johnno and Cait from a Queensland University were at SEDS for a three months placement for their Social work degrees. They both had their cameras out, and the presentation was their observation of events that day, with some further vaccination photos at the other schools. There were many photos of children arriving at SEDS, the long line to register, children sitting quietly whilst this happened, the lining up again to see the Doctor for the vaccination, the Eye specialist and two Dentists, playing sport, and having lunch, a nice reward after all that activity and one which is enjoyed by all. Johnno and Cait helped out on the day, and were great young ambassadors whom Ian and I were very proud of. They should both do very well in their chosen careers.

I still find walking around a village and visiting the primary or secondary schools and kinder where we have sponsored children exciting, and interesting, more so when we meet the same people who we remember and who remember us. Project work in this very rural area, from tank desilting, tree planting, fish seeding, low carbon farming, bio gas projects etc., still keeps us both very involved and passionate being able to observe people achieving things with help and direction from SEDS and financial support from PIA.

SEDS has also become intertwined with our Rotary friends and the YOURS Foundation, operated by some of these friends as they have been supporting the annual Health Camp at SEDS for several years. The Doctors and other specialists are arranged by Dr S. and the team, and

we appreciate the support they have given SEDS and the beautiful young people.

I am in the process of arranging with SEDS and YOURS for students to visit the large town for some dental treatment funded through the PIA medical fund for SEDS (the PIA – SEDS medical fund can be supported if anyone would like to).

Dr S spoke to us three years ago during a visit, regarding the many problems associated with a mother contracting rubella in the early stages of pregnancy, and throughout the pregnancy. Many of us are aware of the blindness and deafness but there are other issues including heart defects, which can be devastating for any family. Poor families often do not attend Doctors, due to ignorance, affordability or accessibility. Dr S advised they only become aware of problems after a baby has miscarried or has been born with multiple health issues.

The Rubella vaccination program for 200 sponsored children was funded by my Rotary Club. A visit to a large town one hour from SEDS saw a further 600 secondary girls, University students and more young married teachers attend to receive the rubella vaccination over a very long two day period.

Dr S. and other like-minded friends have for the past two years visited schools to promote the awareness of immunisation, specifically for rubella, but also raising a general awareness of non-vaccination.

In 1985 Rotary International decided on an ambitious worldwide program to eradicate polio from the world. It has taken far longer than anticipated, and we are almost there. There are two or three countries to go and because

of instability in those countries it is a very slow process. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation over recent years have matched all money raised worldwide by Rotary to complete this program.

We can't help everyone, but I am pleased that 1,600 young people now have protection against a preventable disease – rubella. The Indian Government came out last year, three days after our first program and advised that “due to the success of the polio eradication program that

Rubella would be the next area to be targeted”. They plan to vaccinate all girls from 9 months to 15 years. There has been no obvious sign that we are aware of, that this has commenced in the past 12 months, but we are pleased that there is an understanding of the need to do it.



Our partnership with the amazing All Bengal Women's Union in Kolkata is run by Anne-Marie Maltby and the indefatigable Joy Handley. The following is their report on the very successful year at ABWU.

ABWU 2015

Anne-Marie Maltby & Joy Handley

ABWU seems to be a pretty happy place at the moment. After one of the worst summers in years, the weather has settled and they have just celebrated the Durga Puja, the biggest festival in Kolkata. This festival is celebrated on a huge scale over a five day holiday period. There is a real carnival atmosphere in the city with many social and cultural events, streets full of food stalls and the major feature is thousands of pandals - religious statues and temples. At the end of the festival there is a massive procession of the pandals which are carried to the river to be dipped.

It's an exciting time to be in Kolkata and many of the ABWU girls were taken around the city to see some of the different pandals and enjoy the atmosphere. Later in the month they managed to get to the beach for the annual orphan trip which had previously been postponed due to the terrible weather. The postponement was hugely disappointing as the girls look forward to it all year but they apparently had a great time on the beach, paddling and socialising. Paddling is as far as it goes as women in bathers are quite a rare sight in India, particularly in non-tourist areas.

Many long term supporters will know of Mita Das, a girl born without sight, who has been at ABWU since she was a baby. Despite completing a degree in music a

couple of years ago, Mita hadn't been able to find a job and there was quite a bit of concern about her future.



ABWU have just emailed to say "We are extremely happy to inform you that Mita's marriage has been fixed on 13th December, 2015. She met this boy at 'Voice of the World', part of the Blind School. He is partially blind and a Primary School teacher. They have been friends for quite a long time. He stays with his mother.

Her marriage will take place at ABWU including the registration.

Though, she has not been successful in getting a job, we hope that, after her marriage, things will work out for the best. At present, she is very excited about her marriage".

We wish her all the best and look forward to the photos!



ABWU are also pleased with how well the 20 sponsored older girls are doing in the After Care Home (for over 18 yo). As happens on occasion, one girl was admitted last

year along with her mother. Her mother had mental health issues which are now stable enough that she has been able to start work as a House Mother in the Children's section. They report that the bonding between mother and daughter is getting stronger day by day and the girl is achieving well academically. Sounds like a total win win situation.

Of the 20 sponsored After Care girls, four girls are doing university courses, and four General Nursing & Midwifery training. One girl who completed her Ancillary Nursing Training has been able to leave ABWU and live independently while doing her B.A. (History) Hons. Five girls are still doing secondary school and one has left school and has been employed full time in the kitchen of the Children's Home. One girl completed training in a hospital house-keeping department and has rented a flat and brought her mother from her village to live with her. Another ex-resident conducted a five month Beautician Course for some of the After Care girls. It is really pleasing to see the efforts that ABWU make to try and cater for individual girls' needs.

General schooling is also going pretty well - to everyone's delight, all the girls passed the Madhyamik, Year 10 exams. That's quite an achievement. The Cutting, Tailoring and Knitting Project vocational training is continuing and the products seem to sell quite well at the in house shop and biannual sales.

Earlier in the year, an optical company visited ABWU and provided glasses to all of the school children that needed them. A visiting USA dental team also visited and treated over 200 children, staff and older ladies.

Possibly not as much fun as a beach trip but very much appreciated!



Shantanu, before his surgery.

One cloud on the horizon has been the need for open heart surgery for a 16 month old boy in the Infant Home. ABWU have arranged for blood for transfusions and everything else necessary for the surgery, some paid, and some donated. By the time this newsletter is printed, the surgery will be over and hopefully little Shantanu will be well on the way to recovery. Although it is sad that he has needed this surgery, he is lucky that he was taken in by ABWU who have worked so hard to give him a chance. This seems to be an ongoing theme in our ABWU reports – these children from terrible circumstances get their first real bit of luck in life at ABWU. That's the reason we all support them.

Symbiosis Project Director Graham Moore has written the following report on another busy and successful year in our partnership with Symbiosis in Bangladesh.

Symbiosis Bangladesh 2015

Graham Moore

In the last newsletter I showed some data about flood levels on the Jamuna River. I have since had correspondence from the project about the impact on the people involved in the Jamuna River Sandbar (Char) Peoples Development Project (JRDP Project) in mid-September as follows.

The people of Kazipur sub-district were suffering a lot from recent flood. All important roads including main road have gone under water. Thirty five group members' houses out of 63 have gone under water, their crops have been destroyed, cattle are under threat and suffering lack of food.

Leadership training for the group leaders has been rescheduled and pre-primary and primary schools are temporarily closed with the discussion of Sub-district Education Officer. Other groups' activities have been re-scheduled also. But project team is taking regular news of group members, teachers and pre-primary and primary schools students.

The community and Symbiosis team are expecting that the flood water will go down within 2 weeks and they will go back to their normal life of cleaning up after the flood, getting crops planted, kids back to school and so on.

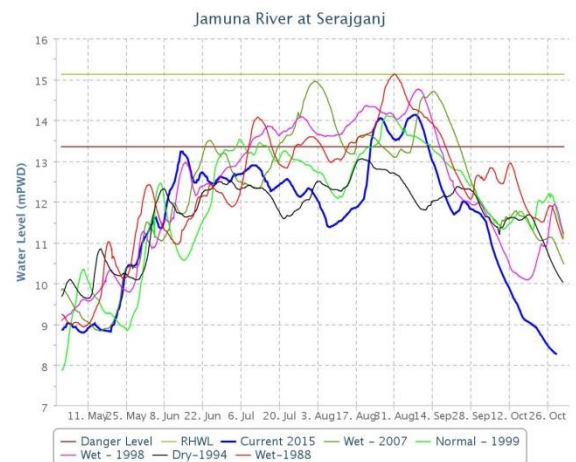
The photo above right shows the main street in village where the JRDP training centre is situated. It is the

highest point in the landscape for at least 10 km in any direction. There is no refuge. People just have to get on with their lives.



The updated hydrograph is below. It shows the water level depicted in the photo persisted for about 1 month, but is about 1 metre less than the record set in 1988. The water level at the end of October has receded about 3 metres. While this will leave some food gardens ready for planting, the main rice fields will still be inundated.

You can help by making a general donation to Partners in Aid. Well over 90% of what you donate will be delivered to our partner, Symbiosis Bangladesh, to continue the work of building the resilience of this community to cope with the annual floods.





BAYLES DINNER 13 FEBRUARY 2016

Our annual World Food Day fundraising dinner is on again at Bayles! The food is all donated and home cooked, and the meat is home grown on the farm at Bayles.

Last year was a wonderful success again, and we would love to have you come along and join us on Saturday 13 February 2016, and help make it into another wonderful night.

Menu: finger food starters, roast meats, baked potatoes, salads, (vegetarian options available), variety of desserts

Drinks: soft drinks provided, BYO alcohol.

\$35.00 per person/donation for children (tax deductible receipts are issued).

Starters served from 6.00pm, main meal to commence serving at 7.00pm.

If you would like a night out with great food in a friendly, relaxed environment, we would love to see you there. You are most welcome on your own, or bring a group of friends. Children are very welcome.

RSVP: Monday 8 February 2016

For more information or to book in, please contact the office on 03 9704 6315 or email:
admin@partnersinaid.org.au.

A map will be provided if required.

2015 AGM

On November 21st, the board of Partners in Aid met in Narre Warren, to hold our Annual General Meeting. We will include the reports from the AGM in our March newsletter. If you'd like to know more, please do touch base with the office by phone or email.

Keep in Touch



03 9704 6315



www.partnersinaid.org.au



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GOODWILL WINE

As we have noted in earlier newsletters, you can enjoy quality wine and support Partners in Aid projects at the same time.

For every case of wine sold, a proportion goes directly to Partners in Aid, with no overhead costs.

Goodwill Wine has been established to support charities and not-for-profit organisations.

For further details go to

<http://www.goodwillwine.com.au/charities/partners-in-aid> – you can order wines or buy gift vouchers.

Bright News

Joy Handley

1. Alpine Women's Group

As many of you would know, the Alpine Women's Group are based in Bright and raise funds for the ABWU each year with a wonderful luncheon at Simone's of Bright. The AWG also have a monthly dinner at different venues, and at the November dinner, it was another fundraiser for the ABWU! This came about after a local Bright business, Kimono Girls, indicated that they'd like to do a Fashion Parade. The AWG put together a night at the Ringer Reef Winery, which was very successful in attracting around 70 guests. \$5 from each attendee is to go to the ABWU through Partners in Aid.



2. Rotary Club of Bright

The Rotary Club of Bright recently asked me about funding 'something' and as the Karate classes had recently lost funding I suggested that. Very quickly they put something together and plucked \$1000 out of the air. It went to their meeting in November for formal approval and: they will fund it!!!

So lots of support from within the Bright community – Partners in Aid says a big thank you to these remarkable women.



Past Member News

Mary and Len Bramley

Mary joined the board of FTWHL in the early 1970s and was Treasurer well into the 1990s. Once she retired, Len was a huge support both to Mary and to the office, coming in regularly to see if there was anything he could do while Mary was attending to many others 'jobs'.

Back in 1984 when I started working in the office in Dandenong, Mary and Len were a huge support to me. When it was 'Newsletter' time, Len came in and helped get it all folded, labelled and then to the Post Office. Back then there were something like 2,000 names on our mailing list and they had to be sorted into postcodes for Post Office. Bit of a nightmare.

When I first started, the Bramleys were in Bangladesh on Bola Island visiting the orphanage

there that had been set up in the 1960s. I thought they were very brave as it entailed getting on a fairly rickety boat!! The entire Bramley family was involved in supporting various projects every year as well as sponsoring girls at ABWU. Their son Ed and daughter-in-law Wendy still sponsor and attend the Lunch in Bright every year. It was when they visited last week that I got this latest photograph of Mary and Len. Len still looks the same as he did 12 years ago, which was the last time we saw him. Mary has had many health problems, but actually looks very well indeed. Len is celebrating his 99 birthday on 19 November and Mary is 95. A fantastic innings!! The photograph inspired me to write a little bit about them. Precious people who should never be forgotten.

Joy Handley



*We would like to thank Computer Initiatives, who help us keep our administration costs low by kindly providing their services at a reduced rate:
• Computer Initiatives, Berwick, 9707 4850 (Tim Moore)*

Partners in Aid Donation Form



Partners in Aid

Donations

Gift cert
required?

I would like to make a general donation to Partners in Aid

\$

☐

I would like to make a donation to (circle/note where applicable):

ABWU (orphan trip/sewing supplies/books/project support)

\$

☐

SEDS (stationery/school bag/check-up/sewing machines/project support)

\$

☐

Symbiosis Bangladesh (stationery/garden/teacher/project support)

\$

☐

Child Sponsorship

I would like to begin/continue (please circle) to sponsor a child at ABWU/SEDS (Please circle and note in the box number of children you would like to sponsor)

Please tick the appropriate payment box:

3 months = \$60 ☐ 6 months = \$120 ☐ 12 months = \$240 ☐

Total amount enclosed (donations and child sponsorship)

\$

If paying by EFT please email admin@partnersinaid.org.au for bank account details. If paying by cheque, make it out to Partners in Aid and send to PO Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, VIC 3805

Name for receipt: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email (for internal use and occasional updates): _____

Gifts of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible (receipt will be issued)

Thank you for your support