



# Newsletter

March 2017

## Partners in Aid

Enduring, Capable Communities

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### World Food Day - 2017

World Food Day at Bayles is something to look forward to, and was held this year on Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup>.



The weather held for us, and whilst it was a little cooler, IT DID NOT RAIN!! Thank you to our donors and friends who attended on the night, and those who sent a donation and/or an apology.

Very special thanks to Andrea (Treasurer) and Geoff Pickering for again opening up their property for us to hold this event. They spent considerable time preparing things for us, and I know Andrea spent much time also making all the lovely entrees and sweets we all enjoyed.

Thanks to everyone who contributed – you helped us raise a total close to \$18,000! Your continued support for SEDS in India and our annual World Food Day dinner, and their acknowledgment of our efforts, keeps us motivated to continue. We'd particularly like to thank three generous donors who asked to remain anonymous, making the result this year so wonderful.

Helpers included Rudy, Joy, Ian, George, Bart, Anne-Marie, Lilian, Tania, David, James, and the four little Pickerings whose home was the venue. A special thanks also to Walsh Hardware Supplies in Pakenham South, for allowing us to use their marquee yet again.

THANKS EVERYONE FOR MAKING THIS THE SUCCESS IT WAS.

*Lyn Pickering*

## SEDS Snapshot

Amanda Stone – Project Director

The annual tank desilting has commenced in Andhra Pradesh with villages in the tank catchment area contributing matching funds with Partners in Aid donations. As always there has been a strong local response to this project with demand for more desilting outstripping our capacity to fund.

Donations to the SEDS Tank Desilting Project on the back of this newsletter will go a long way towards improving access to water for farmers, their families, animals and crops.

Last December, it was lovely to host SEDS CEO Manil Jayasena in a short visit to Melbourne. Pictured here at the Abbotsford Convent, Manil enjoyed catching up with the Pickerings and Amanda Stone before flying off to Sydney and more scenic beauty. She has promised to return!



Partners in Aid is proud to be registered with the ACNC, a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, and registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria. Whilst compliance is an onerous task for a volunteer organisation, we are committed to maintaining transparency, in which you can be confident your funds are going to where they are needed most – to those in India, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

## SEDS Child Sponsorship

Lyn Pickering – SEDS Sponsorship Director

The new year has begun and children in Australia have all returned to school happily, at least our grandchildren have. In India, schools are in the last semester and will close down for their long hot summer break. Ian and I never plan visits around March through to May because the heat can be very extreme, rising to 45 C regularly. Power supply can be shortened sometimes to 6 hours each day. At the SEDS farm the generator is used as necessary to enable work to continue in the office.

During our visit last August, I spent considerable time visiting schools and villages to ensure our sponsored children were attending classes. The higher expectations from parents and their children, and a push from the Government, has meant that education is now receiving more support. This higher awareness has meant that students willingly remain in school to pass Year 10, and then continue to higher studies in many cases. The majority of sponsored students at the Primary schools do not have a desk to sit at, and not all secondary students do either, but this is slowly improving. They do not have educational supplies for individual students, that we expect for Australian students, but what they appear to have is more enthusiasm. Some of the younger more innovative teachers who are now teaching in the rural schools have assisted this change. Ian and I watched some very inspirational teachers in action during our visit. The number of students exiting

below Year 10 has decreased markedly, although the normal exiting of a small number of students to other cities or towns continues.

This new drive has also seen a change in the sponsorship program. Manil Joshua, the CEO for SEDS spoke with us about including more boys on the program. The program was started in late 1994 and at that time there was a very strong emphasis on the education of girls. Whilst this still remains a focus, due to the specific request of our sponsor donors, there are many boys who require support to remain in school. Attitudes both here and in India have changed.

Sponsorship of a child at SEDS covers the following -

- \* School books and fees
- \* School uniform, including shoes or thongs
- \* Monthly visit to the SEDS campus for activities, including cultural days, sports days, craft days and Health Care camp. Medicines, reading glasses and minor dental treatment for the students comes from a separate medical fund with our donor's support.

The cost to sponsor a child is \$260 per annum (as of the 1st January 2017) plus an optional extra \$20 to cover the cost of a new set of casual clothes given to each child around late December/early January. The clothes are given as a wrapped present from their donors, and are very much appreciated. New clothes are acceptable as a gift.

Donors receive letters and photos during the year including the new clothes presentation, school reports and a Christmas card prepared by the students.

**CAN YOU HELP** - The following children all require a sponsor.

1. R. is seven years old, lives with her parents, older brother and grandmother in a small village. She is in Year 1 and her parents have requested sponsorship because they wish to educate her.

2. D. is 6 years old, in Year 1, and lives with her parents and two little sisters. The local teacher has requested support for her as the family are struggling. Both parents are day labourers.

3. J. is four years old and has a twin brother. He lives with his twin, his parents and grandmother in a large village and will be attending school this year. He is attending a kindergarten. His parents were both educated to year 10 standard.

4. J. is four years old and the twin brother of mentioned earlier.

5. A. is 6 years old, in 2nd grade and lives with her parents and her older sister who is a deaf mute. Her sister is also attending school. The teacher at her village school requested sponsorship.

6. M. is 5 years old, in 1st class and lives with his parents and older sister and younger brother in a very small village. His older sister is mentally challenged and mute. His father is a day labourer, and his mother cooks school lunches (Government funded program in Govt. schools)

7. A. is 6 years old, in 2nd class. Her mother died when she was 16 days old and father has struggled with the loss and does not support her. Her Aunty who is currently pregnant with her first child has been caring for A. since she was born. Aunty has sought support for A. to attend school.



*Images appear with parental permission.*



## Sinangpad Healthy Village Project

Dr Cecily Neil – Project Director

The recent Partners in Aid visit to Kalinga was somewhat restricted by the advent of a severe typhoon shortly prior to departure. The typhoon did serious damage to rural roads, water systems, housing and other infrastructure. The province is gradually recovering from its impact. However, at the time it proved impossible to visit any of the communities currently participating in the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project.

Nonetheless, it was possible to have several meetings with Sinangpad Association members, who are keen to expand their community development activities to support a new government push to improve the situation in the province's most isolated and poverty stricken rural communities. To this end, the Provincial Government of Kalinga has recently adopted a new strategy for tackling development in what have been identified as 'Geographically Isolated Depressed Areas (GIDA)'. This approach is a non-sectorial approach bringing different departments such as health, agriculture, planning etc together to work simultaneously and in an integrated manner to address the key developmental issues in these communities. This approach closely resembles that of a new model of development for ultra-poor communities that was first adopted in Bangladesh, but has been increasingly adopted in other countries. The model is now being piloted by the



Asian Development Bank, including in some areas in Mindanao, although the Provincial Government of Kalinga is acting independently of any other implementation of this developmental model.

Sixty two geographically isolated and depressed areas have been identified in Kalinga. In 25 of these communities, the Sinangpad Association is already, or has been, working with residents to help them create a healthier village, primarily through improved environmental sanitation. As an extension to their ongoing Healthy Village Project, Sinangpad members have offered to integrate Sinangpad's involvement in these communities into any multi-sector intervention the government might initiate in them as part of the GIDA Program. The Sinangpad Association has also offered to participate in the government's renewed efforts to improve the situation of people living in the other ultrapoor communities in which Sinangpad has not been previously involved. Again it proposes working in conjunction with other departments when the government starts to implement multi-sector interventions in these GIDA communities, the role of Sinangpad members being to provide, as elsewhere, community health development training, facilitate subsequent community health planning and mentor communities ongoing implementation of their healthy village plans. These offers have been

accepted by the Provincial Government of Kalinga. By becoming involved in the Government's GIDA Program, the Sinangpad Association will also be taking one further step towards ensuring that their Community Health Development strategy ultimately becomes part of everyday government strategy, thus achieving long-term sustainability.

Sinangpad still intends to carry out independent interventions in communities interested specifically in participating in the Project, but are not identified as GIDA communities. It is still covering at least three new communities each year as agreed as part of the Partners in Aid-Sinangpad Partnership Agreement.



### Keep in Touch

 [www.partnersinaid.org.au](http://www.partnersinaid.org.au)

 [@PartnersinAid](https://twitter.com/PartnersinAid)

 [Partners in Aid](https://www.facebook.com/PartnersinAid)

 [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au)

*Pozible*

Low Carbon Farming India

In September, Partners in Aid launched a crowdfunding project for the Low Carbon Farming initiative at SEDS. Whilst we didn't reach our target, we did reach a wider audience and are hopeful that next time we will be successful!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to find out about future fundraising initiatives for Partners in Aid. We hope to not only raise funds for the incredible Low Carbon Farming project, but also to let more people know about the work we do.



Membership is only \$25 a year, and goes a long way in our administrative costs, ensuring donated funds go to the projects not postage stamps!!

Membership also entitles you to vote at our AGM, or nominate a proxy.

Membership is due on June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Please contact us if you're interested in taking on a membership.

*Please help us spread the word about Partners in Aid by passing this newsletter on to family, friends and colleagues once you have read it.*

*Thank you.*



## Bangladesh News

Graham Moore - Project Director

Our partner in Bangladesh, Symbiosis reports quarterly on the progress of the implementation of their agreed plan for improving the wellbeing of the communities they work with. In each report, any particularly problematic issues that face the projects are mentioned. One item that is raised often is that of childhood marriage.

The following explanation is taken from UNICEF, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund:

### *Early Marriage*

The eradication of child marriage is slowly occurring however; the rates are still high with 66 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18. Over one third of girls are married before the age of 15. Legally, the minimum age of marriage is 21 for boys and 18 for girls.

### *Dowry*

Although illegal, the practice of dowry – requiring a bride's family to pay significant sums to the groom – encourages the marriage of the youngest adolescent girls because younger brides typically require smaller dowries. Dowry demands can continue after the wedding and sometimes result in violence against the bride when families are unable to pay.

### *School and work*

Early marriage causes girls to drop out of education and limits their opportunities for

## Partners in Aid

social interaction. Only 45 per cent of adolescent girls are enrolled in secondary school and even fewer attend regularly. New brides are expected to work in their husbands' households and are subject to the same hazards as child domestic workers.

### *Health risks*

Early marriage leads to early pregnancy. One third of teenage girls aged 15 to 19 are mothers or are already pregnant. Adolescent mothers are more likely to suffer from birthing complications than adult woman.

The response of Partners in Aid is to give strong support to women's education and community support groups. Evidently, the law makes little difference, so by increasing awareness among families and supporting girls to learn of their rights, hopefully this practice will diminish with time.

You could help this work by finding a friend, colleague, or family member who is willing to sponsor one of our women's self-help groups in the Jamuna River Project. Contact me for more details: Graham Moore,  
admin@partnersinaid.org.au

# *The Alpine Woman of Merit Award*

The Alpine Women's Group were delighted to present Mrs. Joy Handley with their inaugural Woman of Merit Award last Thursday night at their Christmas dinner meeting held at Riverdeck Cafe.

The award has been created for an outstanding community volunteer with long term community engagement and who has volunteered in a variety of ways in Not for Profit, non-Government Charity work at a local or international level.

Joy has worked tirelessly for many years with Partners in Aid and in particular formed a very close relationship with the All Bengal Women's Union in Kolkata. Her main fund raising in Bright has been carried out with the generosity of Patti Simone in the form of an annual lunch. This year marked the 17th such lunch at which the sum of \$5000.00 was raised for her beloved girls.

Joy is an inspiration to us all and a very deserving recipient of this award.



Photo: Congratulations Joy with President Jenny McNaught.

**Congratulations to Joy from everyone at Partners in Aid – we are all in awe of everything you do.**

 **Alpine Women's Group**  
**ALPINE WOMAN OF MERIT**  
**2016**  
**Awarded To**

**Joy Handley**

For her outstanding contribution  
as a volunteer  
with a variety of community groups  
which has enhanced the wellbeing of the  
local and international community

  
Jenny McNaught - President



## ACFID Code of Conduct

The ACFID Code of Conduct is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing transparency and accountability of signatory organisations. Partners in Aid is committed to the Code, of which we are a signatory and have been for many years.

If you feel Partners in Aid has breached the ACFID Code of conduct you can visit <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints> to make a complaint directly to ACFID.



## Complaints Policy

All complaints should be addressed to the Board Chair and will be treated seriously, acknowledged promptly and resolved within 2 months.

## 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.

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

## Membership

Annual Membership is only \$25 a year, and goes a long way in our administrative costs ensuring donated funds go to the projects not accounting and insurance costs!

Membership also entitles you to vote at our AGM, or nominate a proxy.

# Partners in Aid Donation Form



## Partners in Aid

### Donations

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/self-defense training support)

SEDS (stationery/health check-up/bee hives/fruit trees/fish fingerlings)

Symbiosis Bangladesh (stationery/garden/sewing machine/women's group support)

Sinangpad Healthy Village Project (toilets, vegetable patches, community health)

### Child Sponsorship

I would like to begin/continue (please circle) to sponsor a child at ABWU/SEDS (Cost is \$240 per child per year)

### Membership

I would like to begin/continue (please circle) to be a member of Partners in Aid

**Total amount enclosed**

**(donations and child sponsorship)**

If paying by EFT please email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto: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***