

THE EAST·WEST OVERSEAS AID FOUNDATION

News Letter

Issue 4. December 2007

www.tewoaf.org.au

Welcome to the fourth edition of the East West Overseas Aid Foundation newsletter. This year has been particularly exciting. In the New Year, on **Tuesday 22nd January 2008**, we invite you all to India to attend **the opening of the e-Education Centre** as well as the celebration of **the 10th Anniversary of the Uluru Health Care Centre**. In this newsletter we have included the Trustees' Report and a look back at our achievements and success stories. In this festive season we thank you, our generous supporters without whom the Foundation would not have flourished and could not continue to grow into the future and wish you and your near and dear the very best in the New Year.



TRUSTEES' REPORT

The 2006-7 year has been an important year in the life and growth of The East West Overseas Aid Foundation. During this period two new dormitories have been built and opened at the Uluru Children's Home, and building work has commenced on the electronic Education Centre thanks to generous donations from Vicki Standish of the 12345 Foundation and Skar Foundation, Jack and Robert Smorgon Families Foundation and the Helen and Bori Liberman Family. The Uluru Health Care Centre has continued delivering quality free health care to the local community of 15,000 people, and has been closely involved with educating the local population in preventive medicine measures as they move into their new post tsunami housing.

The Post Tsunami Health Care and Research Project covering five villages affected by the Tsunami has made a positive difference to the wellbeing and the psychosocial health of the people there. Its excellent work was recognized by the Central Government of India and was invited to present its work at the first Disaster Management Conference at New Delhi in November 2006.

The Foundation has been working hard to improve the level of education in the region and has chosen to give special

focus to raising the quality of education in the Alamparai Primary School and the general community in the coming years.

Community development activities in the region, viz. women's groups, youth groups, microfinance initiatives, play theatre etc. continue to be an integral part of the work of the Foundation. It was especially satisfying signing the MOU with Pitchandikulam Forests, Auroville to develop a coastal eco-educational centre on Foundation land, and contribute to the continuing acquisition, dissemination of knowledge and preservation of the fragile coastal eco-systems to the local and surrounding communities.

Of particular significance has been the flow on from the first workshop held in 2006 that resulted in three committees being formed addressing 1. Children and Community issues



2. Staffing and Communication issues and 3. Finance and Governance issues.

In addition, a Fundraising Committee is also being established. They have been very involved and active and have addressed in great detail issues relating to all aspects of the working of the Foundation especially the development of a Business Plan and relevant policies in all areas. The Family Fellowship programme continues to grow and the inter generational involvement of families continues to enliven, nourish and nurture the growth of the Foundation.

The Day Sponsorship programme where individuals or families donate a day's cost of running UCH and UHCC is also being supported well.

The lifeblood of the Foundation continues to be its many volunteers and supporters from Australia and around the world. The Foundation is particularly grateful to them, the members of all the committees, Trustees and Patrons for their invaluable contribution over the past year.

Dr. Natteri V Chandran

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Post Tsunami Health Care and Research Project (PTHCRP) covering five villages affected by the Tsunami has made a positive difference to the wellbeing and the psychosocial health of the people there. Its excellent work was recognized by the Central Government of India and was invited to present its work at the first Disaster Management Conference at New Delhi in November 2006.

SUCCESS STORIES

A combined PTHCRP, UCH and UHCC success story:

"Five years ago, Lalitha lost her husband to alcohol related violence shortly after the birth of their second child. Since that time she has struggled independently to feed, clothe, educate and care for her children; eventually entering into a relationship with a second man who she hoped would support her. In June 2007, she lost her third child during a complicated Caesarean section, which led to her partner abandoning her and her children. Left alone, depressed and recovering from poorly executed surgery, with a seven and a twelve year old child to care for, Lalitha did what she could to ensure the survival of her two children. When TEWFI social workers met Lalitha just two months ago, she was bedridden and in terrible pain as her sutures had opened, leaving her wound open and infected. Her children were dirty and barely clothed, and were no longer attending school, walking the streets begging for food instead. Faced with her own physical and mental condition, Lalitha was organising to have her children sent to a children's home in Chennai.

TEWFI organized for Lalitha to attend UHCC for daily treatment and dressing for her grossly infected wound. Her children were re-enrolled in school and provided with additional nutrition before and after school at the Uluru Children's Home. TEWFI staff regularly met Lalitha and talked with her about her life and encouraged her. Within just six weeks, things changed dramatically for this small family. Almost fully recovered, Lalitha now works at a local restaurant, making enough money to provide her children with the food, clothes and love that they need. The children have settled back into school and are doing well. They have gone from being dirty and uncared for, to showing up every day with clean clothes, neatly combed hair, new jewellery and snacks for school - the surest sign that their mother has a newfound pride and hope out of life..."



Women's Self-Help Group in Action
Photo by Megan Nutbean

An UCH Success Story:

"Indira was found abandoned by her family when she was three-years-old. She arrived at Uluru Children's Home a frightened, confused and very vulnerable child. She cried constantly and could not bear to be alone for more than a second. Four years later, Indira is a different child altogether. Thriving in the loving and nurturing environment created by the family-like atmosphere at Uluru, Indira has developed into an amazingly well adjusted child. She smiles and laughs constantly, and cares for the newer children as they settle in to the Home. Last year she achieved the highest marks of any child at the local school. But perhaps most inspiring of all is the way she conducts herself, with a self-confidence and

contentedness that, given the trauma experienced by her abandonment as a young child, is nothing short of miraculous..."

"Sophie, one of the UCH volunteers has studied community development and has volunteered at two other children's homes in India. She is constantly amazed at how confident, secure and independent the UCH kids are".

An UHCC success story:

"A fifty year-old villager known to be hypertensive and who was irregular with his treatment visited the Uluru Health Care Centre complaining of chest pain. An ECG taken showed signs of Myocardial Ischemia. Immediately he was stabilized and transported to Pondicherry Government General Hospital where he was hospitalized and treated. At present he is well, taking his drugs regularly and attends UHCC for follow up."

A PTHCRP success story:

"After attending the Self Help Group meeting for women conducted by social workers of TEWFI (PTHCRP), one of the members started a small snacks shop at Kadapakkam village. She says that she gets Rs.50 (\$1.50) per day as profit. She adds that she was initially very reluctant, but after attending the SHG meeting she became confident and started the snack shop."

ADVISORY COMMITTEES & REPORTS

The idea of advisory committees providing specialist advice and support to the Trustees in various areas of operation was mooted at the April 2006 workshop. This came out of the recognition that as the organisation has grown considerably in size, the Trustees needed additional support to continue to ensure its good management.

Three committees were set up during 2006, namely:

- Finance and Governance
- Children and Community
- Staffing and Communications

A fourth committee for fundraising is being established. These are advisory committees only, though Trustees also sit in on the committee meetings and take part in the discussions.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

The aim of Finance & Governance Committee (F&GC) is to provide advice to the Trustees on business planning, financial (annual) reporting, governance issues, organisation structure, fund raising, long term viability of the Foundation, etc.

Its work has resulted in the development of a first Business Plan which provides a comprehensive view of the Foundation's aims, future plans and actions. This Business Plan is seen as a working document for the Trustees and management, rather than a communication document for wide dissemination. It will be reviewed annually taking into account actual performance against plans.

Other work-in-progress actions include the preparation of this Annual Report and the development of an organisation structure and governance mechanisms. The F&GC also has strongly recommended the establishment of a Corpus Fund that would provide some certainty of cash flows to sustain current operations well into the future.



Gujji Muthuswamy

STAFFING & COMMUNICATION

Staffing and Communication Committee is an advisory body, and as such makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Membership consists of Trustees of both TEWFI and TEWOAF, and members with vast management expertise. Our primary role is to provide direction and oversight of TEWF's staffing, communication, volunteers and visitors programmes.

We have developed policy guidelines in the following areas i.e. recruitment and selection, personal leave covering 6 day work week, sick leave, public holiday leave, recreation leave, grading of staff into three levels, job description and a daily work schedule for staff at level two, training and development programs. We are currently working on salary structures, annual increments, performance bonus, fringe benefits, and an orientation and training program for all new employees. It is our vision that every staff member be recognized as a valued team player and that TEWFI will continue to provide a healthy and safe environment.

Our visitors and volunteer programmes have been a tremendous success. We now have a substantial increase of volunteer applicants. Unfortunately we have to turn many away because of lack of accommodation at UCH. The team is looking at renting or leasing private properties in the vicinity, as an alternative measure to overcome this problem. Volunteers and field work students do make significant contributions to our organization. One worth mentioning is our Children's Karate Class, started and funded by a volunteer and progressing very well for over the last ten months. Another is the contribution made by the two Austrian Social Work Students who beside making a significant financial contribution, designed and together with our children painted murals, donated books to our library and taught our children the value of using the library facilities.

Thamby Naidu

CHILDREN & COMMUNITY

Our main group consists of 7 people from diverse backgrounds all of whom have visited UCH. We have another group within our committee which works solely on Education policies and initiatives. This consists of people with experience and expertise in the field of Education. Our main focus includes the health and safety of the children of UCH, community health, education of the UCH children and the community and child related administration issues. We are also focussing on community engagement and development.



We are currently working on forming many new policies and reviewing existing policies. We are aiming to produce a format that will be uniform in layout and be reviewed on an annual basis. We are also creating a document that will include all policies in an easy to use format for use in Australia and in India. The staff of UCH/UHCC are being consulted on most issues in an effort to empower them in the decision making process.

Our major achievement to date has been the action plan to improve the education and structural improvements at Alamparai Village School together with the employment of teachers to tutor the UCH children under our care. A member of our committee is currently residing at UCH for 6-12 months and is actively working on these initiatives with the assistance and input of the local staff, community members and interested experts from around the world.

The other major issue we have been evaluating is the current volunteer/visitor management and the effect it is having on the children of UCH and the surrounding community. Volunteers currently staying at UCH have commenced daily conversational English classes for local youths who did not complete their schooling. This group will also soon receive tuition in reading and writing Tamil as they are illiterate.

The work we are doing is at an early stage and hopefully will continue indefinitely with regular revision and modification of policies, initiatives and outcome monitoring.

Judy Nutbean

CALENDARS & GREETING CARDS

The East West Overseas Aid Foundation 2007 Calendars and Greeting Cards are now available:
 A4 size wall calendar: \$20.00 each
 New 2007 Christmas card designs: \$10.00 for a pack of 10 – Blank or “Seasons Greetings”
 Call or email to order these items.

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“Seasons Greetings & A Happy New Year”



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