

NEWS-CHIT SEP 2007

18 Woolley Drive, Bradford on Avon BA15 1AU
info@chitonline.co.uk Telephone 01225 863124

Building Futures for Children

The splendid support of charitable trusts and a dozen benefactors enabled us to authorize a building programme which would have been beyond our wildest dreams two years ago, when closure looked so near. In August last year we gave our Indian friends the go-ahead, but of course the rains were due, and building did not start until after we had laid the foundation stone of the boys' toilet block last January.



The boys get their loos and washrooms at last.

The first, and most difficult stage, was digging a large septic tank in the sandy soil. As you can see, the boys' toilet block is elevated. When that was finished, they moved on to create airy sickbays, with toilets attached, converting shabby rooms used as offices and the old sickroom, also making a dispensary/treatment room, and quarters for the newly-appointed nurse. Our Health & Safety obligations have been met.

The final stage, now nearing completion, is open-plan administrative offices. Building these upstairs saved the considerable expense of having to dig 12ft deep footings for new sickbays at ground level. We are expecting an official opening on our next visit. They love formal ceremonies. The great news is that all the building costs are covered, in spite of the big increase that took place in the prices of building materials, due to a large government construction programme.



Some equipment remains to be purchased for the offices (£500) and dispensary (£700) **Help Please.**



Education The results achieved by our children are tremendously encouraging. It is fast becoming the norm for our children to pass their 10th standard and qualify for the VIth Form College they call "Intermediate". We now have 87 boys and girls over the age of 16 who are still in full-time education. 27 of the girls were in nursing training where there are three courses from which to choose 1, 2 or 3 years long. More are awaiting places.



School Photo – the new children without uniforms.

That very disadvantaged children should be making such excellent use of their opportunities to learn, is something of which we can be very proud. Ten years ago there might not have been jobs for them, but there are now. Their prospects will be even better when we achieve an improvement in their spoken English.



They are happy but need George to make them smile!

Yearning for Learning: The remarkable thing about the children at Bapatla is the enthusiasm they seem to have for academic work. Visiting teachers from the UK felt they would like to stay! It was doubtless one of the reasons the teachers, shown above, stayed with us even when they were on half-pay. The full pay, which they now receive, is c. £500 a year. There are 13 of them, all graduates, with four ancillary staff. They are very pleased with the support of CHIT. Three of them have sponsors. It would be great if more of you could do this. **Cost: £35 a month Gift-Aided.**

New Hours at School: They have decided to adopt the routine of a boarding school and start work at 7am, stopping at 1pm for lunch, with only a short break at 10.30am. From 2-5pm there is supervised study. 7pm is supper-time, followed by prayers. The under 10's go to bed at 8pm. The older children carry on doing their homework from 8-10pm.

As a trial, classes 1-3 will be following the English-Medium syllabus. They share our ambition to get all the children speaking English, and have said that help from the UK would be very welcome. Any reader interested should ring George 01225 863124

Staff at our two Homes: Life has been quite a struggle for the staff in our homes because, during the last three years, staff that left or died were not replaced. Most of these gaps have now been filled. **Samma**, the lady warden at Nidamaru who had double kidney failure but appeared to be improving after her homeopathic treatment, was in great form when we visited in January, but sadly died in July, a terrible blow for the children. She was only 40 and was warden when the home was first opened in 1995.

The number of staff in our two homes totals twentyone. Six of them are new. Four positions remain to be filled, including a replacement for Samma.

Especially bright children: Bala Krishna came to our Nidamaru Home when he was 10. His father had deserted the family. From the beginning he was a keen student. In 10th class he got a distinction. He worked hard with the ambition to become a doctor. In the Medical College Entrance Exam he achieved



Bala Krishna with his Mum

marks of 93%. Fantastic! What a disappointment to find that it was not good enough to get a place. They accepted 2,000 students, but the number taking the exam was 160,000! A kind lady from Bath is supporting Bala Krishna at a crammer for 6 months so that he can have another go at the exam.



Chittiah, a hard-working lad, has scored top marks in his 10th class exams, and has been selected as the "student of the year". This boy lost the sight of one eye when he was very young. Soon after that his father died, and his mother brought him to us.

There is only one problem about the educational success of so many of our children: There are fees and food to be paid for! It is not possible for the students to support themselves through college. The competition is intense. Girls who are registered as low-caste qualify for grants if they study to be nurses. These are available to most of our girls, but we still have to pay £144 a year for their subsistence.

What about our drop-outs? The Indian education system does not permit children to go up a class unless they have passed their end-of-year exam. In the CHIT homes, children who fail their exams are given one more chance and do the year's work again – IF the parents agree that it is sensible to do so.

About 4 children each year do fail, often through ill health. When this happens, there is a meeting with the parent or grandparent. They usually prefer the child to leave. Sometimes the child does not want to stay anyway. Girls leaving usually get married. At least we know that they are well-mannered and literate, and will be able to teach their own children how to read and write. One of our girls wanted to stay, but not to attend school, and she now has a job in the kitchen.

Finance. We have set an annual running-expenses Budget of **£56,000**. This includes £6,000 for the help given to 87 students. It is the price of success. It will increase. They deserve a hand. Consider the cost of sending a student to university over here! The capital budget will be much reduced at £2,000. Our secure income has increased to **£25,000** a year.

You may wonder how on earth are we going to manage. Answer: heaven knows. Without faith in God's providing we would never have started CHIT.

After 60 years of independence, and about 20 years of economic development, 49% of Indian children under 6 are malnourished. As soon as they can earn 20p/day many children are taken away from school.

We would dearly love to fill the 30 spare places in our home. Please try and find us more sponsors or take on another one yourself. Many thanks to the five of you who have done just that. God Bless