

# FRIENDS

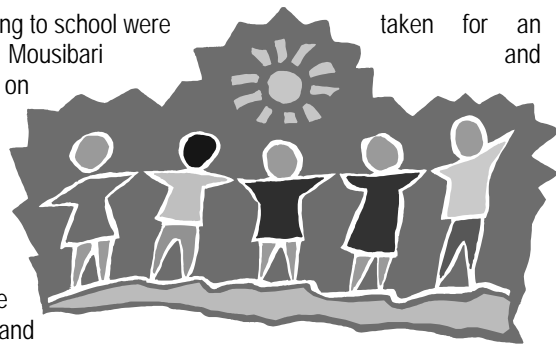
Newsletter of the Ragpickers Education & Development Scheme (REDS) Bangalore, India  
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## ***A time for laughter!!!***

*February and March were very special months for the children at and Staff REDS.*

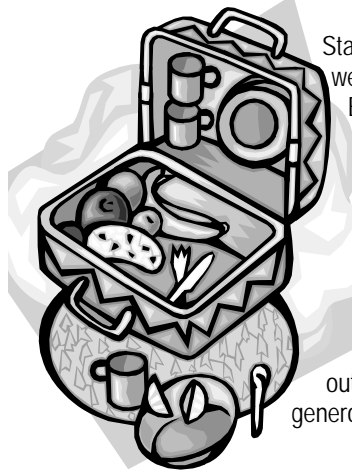
Children from the centers at REDS – Ranchi and those going to school were taken for an exposure trip. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 250 children from Mousibari and Hatia centers went to Ormanghi Zoo and Rukha Dam and on 8<sup>th</sup> February 500 children from Doranda, Pahari, Khadgarha, Toki toil and Prerna center were taken to the same place.

The Zoo is spread over a large area of land and vehicles are not allowed so the children and staff had to walk. It was a 2 ½ - 3 hour walk, but this did not hinder the children's spirit. They enjoyed walking through the jungle and watching the different animals. Some of them could hardly believe that they were seeing these wild animals in such close proximity that they asked the Staff, "are they real animals." The excitement and awe of the children could be seen in their eyes. The Zoo authorities do not permit eatable inside the forest so the children were taken to Rukha Dam where they enjoyed a lip smacking lunch before returning home.



Staff of REDS – Ranchi went on a one day trip to Jubilee Park and Dimna Dam. It was a memorable day for them.

Children from Neelasandra, Shivajinagar and Koramangala, REDS – Bangalore went on a picnic to Sangam, a creek on the outskirts of Bangalore. The picnic was organized by Bro. Albert for children from Shivajinagar. Bro. Joseph and Bro. Jinu jointly organized the picnic for children from Neelasandra and Koramangala Slum. The children swam in the water and enjoyed themselves. The children had such a good time that they requested the area staff that such outings should be held every month.



Staff of REDS – Bangalore had a few moments to 'have a good time' at relax. They went on a picnic on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March to 'Thalakad' about 165 kilometers from Bangalore city. With temples built during the time of the ancient Hoysala Dynasty and a tributary of the River Cuavery flowing close by, it is a place of beauty – a feast for the eyes. With games and good food they enjoyed themselves after a good swim in the water. This day also had its moments of sadness; they bid farewell to the three Marianist Brothers – Joseph Raj, Jinu and Albert, who had worked together with them for the past one year. The staff thanked them for the enthusiasm and commitment with which they worked.

Staff and children from REDS – STC went to Neeladari Amusement Park. This outing was sponsored by Fr. Bob. We take this opportunity to thank him for his generosity and kind gesture. The children and staff had a good time.

## ***Back to School***

A one year program is being initiated involving 35 children between the age group of 8 to 14 yrs with the objective of enrolling children who have dropped out of school to Govt. run formal schools. Survey undertaken indicates 3 main reasons for children to drop out of school;

- \* Disinterested parents
- \* Financial problems
- \* Children having to do household chore and look after younger siblings.

The program will not just focus on enrolling children to school but will also motivate the involvement of the parents and teachers in retaining the child in school. A two point program has been planned, the first phase would involve enrolling children to school and the second phase would concentrate on involving parents of these children to participate in retaining the children in school.

Each of the Area Coordinators was asked to identify children who have dropped out of school and are interested to continue with their education. Children at the REDS – NFE centers were identified and motivated by Bro. Joseph to participate in this camp. Two day programs were held in each of the 5 areas where REDS – Bangalore works for the children identified. On the first day the area coordinators along with Ms. Varija interacted with the children to assess their level of literacy and the grade that they need to be admitted to. On the second day the parents of the identified children were called for a meeting. At these meeting the 15 day residential camp for the children and issues like financial commitment of the parents, taking interest in the child's education, and punctuality to going neat and tidy to school was discussed.

34 children have been identified from the 5 areas and they will be participating in the camp to be held from 16<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2004. Children will not only be helped to refresh what they had learnt at school, they will also be helped to imbibe in themselves a sense of punctuality and awareness on various issues that concern them.

This residential camp will be held at the REDS – Skill training Center, Bangalore. We take this opportunity to thank the Marianist Province Grand Commission for their financial support in making this program possible.

## ***Staff Development***

Staff Development Program was held at REDS – STC for staff from REDS – Bangalore and STC. Bro. Basant, Mr. Ramesh and Ms. Gulab of REDS – Ranch too participated in this program.

The program started with a prayer service led by Fr. Bob. This was followed by a presentation by Fr. Jack McGrath on the life history of the Fr. Chaminade and the events that lead to the establishment of the Marianist Society. He also spoke about Fr. Chaminade's idea of involving the community to reach out to more people in distress.

The afternoon session began with a reflective activity facilitated by Bro. Tom Oldenski. The staffs were divided into groups and were asked to discuss four questions on each of their contribution to the program, their level of satisfaction and the changes that need to be made in the structure of the program in order to realize the objective of REDS. Bro. tom also spoke to Staff on the Marianist way of teaching, where by older children are motivated to take responsibility and teach the younger ones. He presented simple teaching techniques which could be used by the area coordinators when they take NFE classes for the children.

The staff felt that this was a good opportunity not only to learn but also to an opportunity for self reflection on their work and contribution to the vision of REDS. They felt that more such programs were necessary to keep themselves abreast with issues in the developmental field. They said that such programs helped build staff relationships.

## ***News in Brief***

### **REDS – BANGALORE**

Bro. Joseph, Bro. Albert and Bro. Jinu have completed their one year service with REDS – Bangalore. On 30<sup>th</sup> March the staff came together to thank them for the hard work and outstanding contribution they have made to the program. We wish them all the best for their future endeavors.

#### **...Street Presence**

4 ragpicking children living in Jaynagar 4<sup>th</sup> Block had given up ragpicking and are going to a near by factory to work. Ragpicking children in Neelasandra area are learning to cook. After they come back from their rounds in the after noon, a few of them pool money together – buy the necessary provisions and cook lunch for themselves and other ragpicking children in the area.

2 children from Shivajinagar area attended the de-addiction camp organized by SATHI – an organization from Raichur working with children living on the platforms of Raichur Railway Station. Nagesh and the other boy who had been to this month long camp have returned. Nagesh is a new person now; he is no longer a substance abuser. He is still involved in ragpicking as he has debts to repay. He is now working to clear his loan and go to the STC for training. The area coordinator Mr. Thiru also mentioned that there are about 30 boys at the Cant Railway Station working as potters. He said that he meets with the boys regularly and speak to them; discussions are on to see if these children too could be involved in the program at the Shivajinagar center.

Work has been revived in one of the area where REDS used to work – Madiwala.

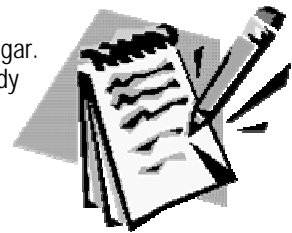
#### **...Play School**

4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> January the Play School teachers participated in the Pulse Polio Campaign. They went to every house in the Koramangala slum to identify children below the age of 5 yrs and administer the polio drops.

In the month of March the Play School coordinator Bro. Joseph along with the Play School teachers organized meetings with the parents of the children to discuss and decide on the Government and Private Schools to which the children could be admitted. Ms. Varija who is in charge of placements will be overseeing admission in the month of May.

#### **...Non - Formal Education**

15 children are regularly attending the NFE classes at the new center at Rajendranagar. Bro. Joseph had met with the parents of those children attending NFE classes and ready to be readmitted to school, and discussed with them about sending their children to either regular schools or residential hostels.



#### **... Formal Education & placement s**

Ms. Varija – Formal Education & placements in charge, met with the heads of various residential schools and training centers to enquire if children can be admitted for the next academic year.

3 children from Koramangala slum have been sent to the REDS – STC for training. 10 children from the same area have been sent to Nele – a residential school. Of the 10, 6 are ragpicking children, 3 children are from the street and one boy is an orphan. 2 of these children had difficulties adjusting so they came back.

### ...Solid Waste Management

Bro. Showri the SWM – coordinator and Ms. Prema Manthesh met with the residents of the houses and apartment where REDS provides door-to-door waste collection services to discuss increase in the service charges that are collected. Rates have been increased from the month of March 2004.

### ...Self Help Group

53 members and staff participated in the awareness rally on HIV-AIDS that was organized. Developmental programs were organized for the members. On 8<sup>th</sup> March 'Women's Day' members participated in a discussion with Ms. Gowamma of Vimochana on Problems faced by women and legal help that could be sought.

Total Number Groups – 74

Total Number of members – 891

Total Savings – Rs. 7, 80,539/-

Total Loan taken - Rs. 21, 15,000/-

Total repaid- Rs. 8, 94,943/-

## REDS – SKILL TRAINING CENTRE

36 boys are undergoing training at the STC and 13 boys are going to formal school. 4 boys were referred to the STC in the month of March by REDS – Bangalore.

Feat of St. Joseph the Patron Saint of Carpenters was celebrated on March 19<sup>th</sup>. In a special prayer service lead by Fr. Tony the children and the staff thanked Fr. Boob and other who have generously contribute to the program. They also prayed for the boy's appearing for the 10<sup>th</sup> std exams. The day ended with a cultural program and a special meal for the children.

## REDS – RANCHI

All centers remained closed and reopened on 5<sup>th</sup> January due to the excessive cold of the winter. In the month of March with heavy heart REDS – Ranchi bid farewell to Bro. Earbin and Mr. Ajay, we wish them all the best in the future endeavors.

... Toki Toli Center

On 10<sup>th</sup> January all the staff visited the center. On 21<sup>st</sup> January children from the center were invited by Nirmala School for the Annual Sports Day. Children seeking admission for the next academic year to Carmel, Nirmala and St. Joseph School have written their entrance exam. 19 children have been selected for Formal School This year. Results of the Annual Exam were announced, except for 2 children the other 83 have been promoted to the next class.

... Doranda Center

6 new children were admitted to the center in the month of January. Saraswathi puja was celebrated. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March entrance exam was held in JMJ School.

... Mousibari Center

25 children from the center will be enrolled to formal school in the coming academic year. Admissions will be done in the month of April. Pulse Polio camp was organized for children between the age group of 0 – 5 yrs.

... Khadgarah Center

Children who come to dirty to the NFE classes are given a bath at the center. Oil for the hair and cream for the face to look neat and tidy, the center staffs insist on the cleanliness of all children. 15 children from the center

have been selected for formal education. The entrance tests to the respective schools were held on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

Results of the Annual Exams have been announced. Both boys and girls have performed well and scored good marks. 2 boys stood first in their respective classes. Every Saturday brothers from Nirmal Deep come to the center. On the first Saturday of every month they go for home visits and on the second Saturday they teach children how to draw and songs.

... Hatia Center

19 children from the center have been selected to be admitted to school in the next academic year. Parents of these children have saved Rs. 500/- each towards the child's admission fee. The remaining expenses will be borne by REDS – Ranchi. 12 new children have been enrolled to the center for NFE classes.

... Pahari Center

23 children from the center have been selected to be enrolled to formal school in the next academic year; forms have been filled and submitted to the respective schools. On 28<sup>th</sup> January the children visits Aqua World.

... Prerna

7 girls are regular for knitting classes; they have learnt to make caps, socks, scarves, mufflers and half sweater. Most of the girls at the knitting classes are domestic servants and as such do not know counting and multiplication. Theory classes are held every day for half an hour before practical training.

There are 20 girls in the Tailoring Section. Some of the girls are undergoing training in Tailoring; the others who have completed their training are stitching uniform for the children who will be admitted to Formal School this year. There are 16 girls in Embroidery Section. 5 have completed their training and work on the orders taken; the other 11 are undergoing training.

## ***Calendar of Events***

...January '04

14<sup>th</sup> Jan A Cricket match was held at the REDS – Ranchi, Mousibari Center. Children from Hatia, Doranda and Mousibari centers participated. After a tough competition children of Mousibari won the match. Bro. Basant, who was guest of honour for the occasion, gave the winners a new cricket bat and a ball.

26<sup>th</sup> Jan Republic Day was celebrated at REDS – Ranchi. Bro. Basant Khujur hoisted the National flag. Children from the centers, parents, members of the youth club and villagers were present on this occasion. Bro. Basant addressed those who had gathered emphasising on the importance of every one working together for the betterment of the society especially those living below poverty line.

...February '04

7<sup>th</sup> Feb. A Cricket Match was organized at REDS – STC. Children from Shivajinagar tried their might in a game of cricket against the boys from REDS – STC. The STC boys won the match, but the children had a good time.

18<sup>th</sup> Feb. A Legal Clinic was organized by SICHREM at the Koramangala Slum. Free legal advice was given to those who came to the clinic on issues varying from marital problems to property disputes.

... March '04

- 8<sup>th</sup> March 'Women's Day' was observed at RES Bangalore. The SHG members interacted with Ms. Gowamma of Vimochana on issues like; dowry demands, harassment from husband and in-laws, etc.
- 10<sup>th</sup> March Staff Development Program was held at REDS – STC for staff from REDS – Bangalore and STC. Bro. Basant, Mr. Ramesh and Ms. Gulab of REDS – Ranchi too participated in this program. Fr. Jack McGrath addressed the staff on the history of the Fr. Chaminade and the Marianist Society. In the afternoon Bro. Tom Oldenski spoke to Staff on the Marianist way of teaching and simple teaching techniques.
- 18<sup>th</sup> March Mr. Samule with two volunteers from Italy visited REDS – Ranchi. They were taken to the 7 centers and given an orientation to the program. The children at the center put up cultural program to welcome the visitors.
- 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March Bro. Darwin, SM – Executive Director, REDS visited Ranchi. He visited the centers and interacted with the staff and children.