



FRIENDS

Newsletter of the Ragpickers Education & Development Scheme (REDS) Bangalore, India
Volume 3 - Issue 1 March 2005

Extending Boundaries and Creating Space

REDS is expanding to reach out to more and more people in need. At Bangalore we now started to work in two new areas, Tannery Road and Bagalur Layout.

At Tannery road children between the age group of 3 to 16 years are involved in the program. Most of these children are from families where the men are employed in the local slaughter house close by. The unhygienic condition of the slaughter house has lead to rise in Tuberculosis in the area and many of the men have been lost to this deadly disease. With women having to work there in on one at home to care for the children. Many of the children have dropped out of school and taken to either ragpicking or begging. A center has been established in the area with a Play School in the morning hours for younger children and a Bridge school program for School Drop outs in the afternoon hours and was inaugurated on the 11th of February.

The other area where we felt that our presence was required is Bagalur Layout, one of the larger slums in Bangalore. Majority of the families here have migrated from Tamil Nadu in search of daily wage work. With both parents working there is no one to care for the younger children. Our work here will concentrate on enrolling children back to school and working with older children who have taken to ragpicking.

We have also begun to work at Hosur, an area which is located on the border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Parvathi Nagar an area in Hosur has been identified and Ms. Prema Charles along with Bro. Tony Nesan now work in the area.

Space - physical and emotional is a must for the children we work with. This space provides them with respite from the environment the work in - time to reflect on their present situation and above all freedom to express their feelings and emotions. Paucity of such space in some of the areas that we work in made things difficult for the children and the staff working in the area. With much determination



to resolve this situation rooms have been identified to start Play Schools and Day - Care Centers in the area. At Bagalur Layout a Play School has been started. To overcome the draw backs of Play Schools functioning from the residence of the



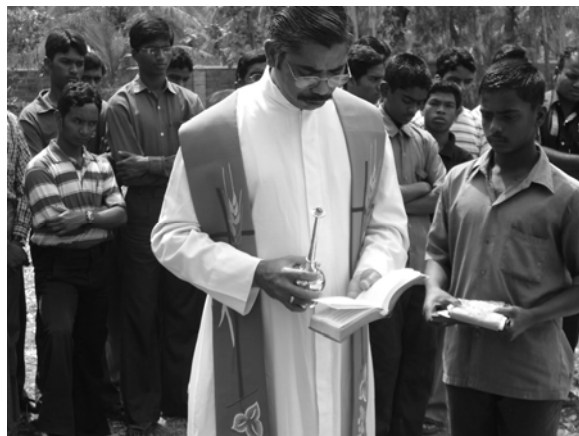
teacher, efforts have been made to find new buildings in which the existing Play schools can be shifted to. Two such buildings have been identified and now Mrs. Mangala and Mr. Lourdummy have more space and fewer disturbances. Day Care Centers have been started at Neelasandra – which was inaugurated by Fr. Pragasam on 14th February. The other area which was in need of such a Center – Tannery Road, has one such center. At L.R. Nagar too we have identified space for a Center and will be starting one shortly. Children from the area visit these centers which offer a verity of service from simply a place to rest to place where the children can identify with.

Creating Opportunities

The need to create more opportunities to help children break away from their present environment is imperative. Working with older children who have little or no literacy it has been challenging to create those opportunities which will not only suit their level of learning but will also help them get worthwhile jobs.

To facilitate such opportunities for girls; a Tailoring Unit was inaugurated on the 2nd of March at L.R. Nagar. The objective of this new project is to provide vocational training opportunities to adolescent girls and young women from Koramangala Slum, for their economically self sufficiency, social empowerment and holistic development. 20 girls between the ages of 14 yrs – 22 yrs will be trained each year. Study of the situation of girls in the other areas that we work in has helped us understand the demand for such opportunities. To help the girls with alternative other than domestic work we have identified space for 2 more ‘Tailoring Units’ have been started. The Tailoring Unit at Bagalur Layout was inaugurated on 16th March 2005. The Ex-councilor of the locality did the honors with Fr. Pragasam. The Unit at Parvathi Nagar – Hosur was inaugurated on 19th March 2005. Bro. Michale Murphy, SM did the honors. The local Councilor, Fr. Pragasam and the Augustinian Sisters were present at this auspicious occasion.

Two other such projects are being developed. One at REDS – Skill Training Center and the other at REDS – Ranchi. The foundation stone for the new ‘Multipurpose building’ was blessed and laid on by Fr. Ignase Arulappen – Regional Superior of the Marainist Province of India Bro. Mark Ormand and Bro. Vijay Ming. Fr. Pragasam – Executive Director of REDS, staff and children of REDS – STC were also present at this auspicious moment. This new building will house three more training units which are need based and will cater to boys above the age of 14yrs.



The comprehensive training unit at Ranchi will provide training and employment opportunities for those girls who are employed as domestic servants, coaching for children from the REDS centers at Ranchi going to school, study facility with a library for the school and college students, and space to expand the already existing skill training program for girls

Health Check up

On 26th February 2005 a general medical check up was arranged for all the trainees, school going children at REDS - STC. Doctor Usha Raju and staff from Sree Chakar Hospital - Chandapura spent the whole day assessing health status of the children at the Training Center. The height, weight, growth and health status of the 65 children at the STC were checked. The staff and brothers at the Center too participated in the Health Camp.



We take this opportunity to thank Rev. Fr. Robert Bouffier. S.M. who has been sponsoring this event for the last four years. He has not only been supporting the one day program but also expenses towards follow up medication and hospitalization when necessary.

Thank you Fr. Bob, we sincerely appreciate your generosity!

Community Participation

As informed in our previous newsletter, REDS - Ranchi was having problems at the centers at Mousibari and Hattia. The building at Mousibari collapsed and the center at Hattia was too small and it was difficult to manage classes and cook for the children in the same place. The parents of the children who attend classes at these centers looking at the situation came forward to help.

The community at Maousibari donated land on which to build the new center and came forward with material need for the construction too. We are happy to say that the buildings have been completed and we know have a new center at Mousibari and a separate kitchen for the center at Hattia.

We take this opportunity to thank the community at Mousibari and Hattia for their concern and support in helping with the construction of the new center. We also take this opportunity to appalled the work of the staff in the area for the efforts they



have put in to build rapport with the community and mobilize their participation in this effort.

Fare well!!

We take this opportunity to thank Nataila. She had come all the way from Spain for an experience in working with children in India. We are much privileged that she decided to work at REDS. Although she did not know the language her smile communicated much to the children who enjoyed her company.



We wish her all the best in her future endeavours!!!

News in Brief

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| 3 rd Jan | Programs at REDS – Ranchi reopened after Christmas and New Year Holidays. Centers remain closed due to the cold weather. |
| 10 th Jan - 31 st Jan | REDS – Ranchi organized a month long intensive training for the girls in machine embroidery. Ms. Banergee from Kantatoli was kind enough to teach the girls who participated with great enthusiasim. |
| 12 th Jan | Staff at REDS – Bangalore participated in the day long ‘Planning Workshop’ to evaluate work done in the year 2004 and plan for the year 2005 |
| 17 th Jan | A meeting with workers involved in the Solid Waste Management program at REDS was held to reflect on the work they do and how they intend to use the opportunity given to them. |
| 21 st Jan | Children from Madiwala went on a picnic to Mekedattu – a much needed break from their daily routine. They had a wonderful time and enjoyed themselves. |
| 23 rd Jan | Children from the areas participated in the annual children’s fest ‘Bala Mela’ organized by ECHO |
| 31 st Jan | Children from REDS – Bangalore and STC displayed their talents at the Inter Agency Cultural Meet organized by BOSCO – Bangalore |
| 6 th Feb | Children attending tuition classes at Bangalore were taken on picnic to Mekedattu which they thoroughly enjoyed. |
| 6 th – 26 th | Aspirants of Marianist Society came to REDS-Bangalore for a ‘Community Outreach’ Experience, both the children and the brother |



enjoyed their stay.

- 9th Feb Bro. Alex Toppo guided the staff at Bangalore through a much needed and informative development program.
- 25th Feb An awareness program for held for the members of the issue of alcoholism. The MSW student doing filed work shared about this issue through Street Play.
- 26th Feb Medical camp was organized for the children at REDS - Skill Training Center.

