

ASK News Letter March 2009



From Heart of Carole..

Thank you for your support over the past 9 years, yes its 9 years since we opened our first permanent Agape Childrens orphanage, previously we were renting a small room above a cow shed!!, it amazes me daily how many lives we are now reaching and changing. In 1998/1999 we only had dreams but in the year 2009 we are changing the lives of thousands of people either directly or indirectly, so as we experience this recession let's celebrate our past achievements and make 2010 a year of hope for the poorest of the poor in Bangalore City- India.



I do realise that many friends and partners of ASK are feeling the crunch of raising fuel costs, food and all the essential commodities of life so from the bottom of my heart I thank you for standing with us in prayer and sacrificial giving as we continue helping so many people, this makes me feel very humble.

Daily I see many new and old smiling faces as I visit the two Agape Childrens Centres, Community development and Home of Hope it makes me smile and thank God that we are a huge part of *their* lives.

This trip Sue and Vicky re-visited with me for three weeks then later Pastor Jonathan, Martyn and Ben arrived to experience 'life in India, but not the touristy side', the roads are more chaotic, the pot holes much deeper, it was very hot and dusty but all three places shone brightly and the Indian hospitality as usual was wonderful, even Martyn who doesn't eat 'curry' tested, tasted and enjoyed the cuisine then had a turn of driving the jeep(he smelt a bit funny I almost had a heart attack and most of my

food went straight through!!) But to come here and witness all that's been achieved since 1998, spend time with local people and our children of course is just lovely, a truly mind and life changing experience.

Agape Childrens Centres

The Girls orphanage is Pastor Reuben and Floras home and looking very smart with a face lift, new windows and tiled floors for the children to sit, play and do their homework. Outside its painted candyfloss pink, inside it's a popular colour, sort of fluorescent yellow/green and looks the grandest cleanest building in the street, not only grand but a loving home for the girls to return to after a busy day at school, their yearend exams are looming so not much time to play but plenty of home work and lots of extra tuition.

Sneha and Carole Ruby our youngest children are good playmates also sparing partners, both will be starting pre-school in June, it's very handy as the pre-schools just a few doors away, it'll be funny seeing both little tots going off to school in their uniforms with huge school bags, even harder to believe that Carole Ruby will be 3 years old in June. Ruby is very bright and confident a born leader all credit to the love shown by the Reuben family especially Flora, she's head and shoulders taller than Sneha who along with her brother Ronaldo are rescued begging street children. Sneha 3 and Ronaldo is 6yrs have really settled and enjoying life with their new 'brothers and sisters', sadly their mother died and the father a heavy drinker was using the children for begging to feed his alcohol addiction, the children were very malnourished infested with fleas and in rags now they are happy, healthy well fed and settled. Sneha loves all the attention of her 'big sisters'. However there is still occasional trouble from their father arriving fully drunk and causing a fracas outside in the street.



Most girls and boys in both orphanages are doing well at school and many are now teenagers looking forward to a bright future with a good education and equipped with life skills. I was looking at some of the first photo's we took of the children far back in 1999-2000 and it's really great to see them develop as a large extended

family, fully integrated in society and experiencing family life. Pr Reuben and Flora have a huge challenge with a house full of hormonal teenagers but both take it in their stride as part and parcel of family life. They do wonderful work with the children especially those physically and emotionally damaged, only a task to be undertaken by people who truly love these thrown away children. Last year Flora was ill with severe sciatic pain and developed diabetes (very common in India due to diet) but is now fairly well stabilised on insulin and feeling much better, please keep her continually in your thoughts and prayers.

Many of our teenager children have learned English making it much easier for me to communicate but we still have laughs at mixed messages and my very bad pronunciations! Bunaswari and Vinodha are very bright girls topping their classes and winning many prizes, both have grown into lovely young ladies.



Here children can still be children without the saturation of TV making them grow up too quickly and missing out the teenage development years, from my window I hear and see children of all ages playing in the street below, the latest craze is badminton and of course Indian cricket, but volley ball is also very popular or just kicking a stone and playing five stone catch. Many more children can be like these children playing being loved and fed, not begging or sleeping in graveyards, life is tough on the streets! Even after being with us and appearing settled, occasionally the street mentality breaks through and they eat food from the streets, steal or beg on their way home from school, needless to say all the others run home with the big story.....!!!

Community Development

Here we see many success stories as the Jevanhalli slum community are given the chance to improve their lives, health and community through education and health care. Chitra is the director and woman behind this work and Yesodha her full time

right hand woman. They have a committed group of paid staff, all married woman, the woman work half days due to family commitments and are devoted to their work, most of the staff have been trained in the comprehensive syllabus taught in 'Community College' and are eager to teach others. It's really great seeing these women who had very little self esteem blossom into teachers giving hope to other woman in the community. Daily 40 young women, many married, attend Community College they are taught by trained teachers and follow a government recognised syllabus ending with a coveted certificate of education. Needless to say all home study projects are fully completed and handed in on time as the woman treasure this last chance of education. Community College is held daily in a rented class room (very high rent) in a catholic school.

Daily in two other rented buildings at different locations (more high rent) approximately 120 children attend morning pre-school, in the afternoon and evening computer classes are held, also homework help clubs. All pre-school children are health screened and receive a high protein diet supplement mid morning this prepares both body and mind for formal learning. Research has shown that many children deprived of essential nutrients at an early age have learning difficulties later on; we see this learning disability in many of our Agape Childrens school performances, they're bright in all ways but school learning.

Community college sports day was fun with innovative tasks like carrying water in your hands and filling a bottle 30 meters away, it was a fun day with loads of laughs and high jinks also some cheating by the winning team!!!!



This Community development has all the man power resources and are doing wonderful work, but need their own building for further development expansion, security and cost effectiveness.

HOME OF HOPE

Home of Hope was started and is run by Auto Raja and his lovely wife Devi, Its situated way out in semi-rural but a rapidly developing area of 'outer Bangalore'. Part of the route to the home is on well maintained roads but it takes stamina and good 'off road' driving skills to eventually reach Home of Hope. A large section is pitted with deep craters not un-like the after effects of heavy artillery bombardment!! We pass fine architecturally built theology college campuses and beautifully designed large new houses....then we eventually reach Home of Hope compound where the casualties of human society in various stages of life reside.



Anyone who visits is immediately shocked by the condition of many people who are recently rescued, those who are old, those who are young, even babies are brought by the police or rescued by Raja's staff. There are many success stories of people recovering and returning to society and most of the salaried staff are rescued people who have regained their dignity and been trained to look after new arrivals or those mentally unstable who need constant supervision preventing harm to themselves or others.

The place is very overcrowded with 300 people in a small building with an open outside compound, especially more so when they are all inside at night filling beds and all floors, when the rainy season arrives it's an unimaginable quagmire. Auto Raja is constructing a new building and garden on land nearby, the bore well is drilled giving regular water; even since my visit last year trees planted along the boundary walls are over 10ft tall providing future shade, hopefully this will ease the overcrowding as people assessed by their need will be placed in the correct Home.

Thrice each week I spend time there teaching medical care, nursing skills by hands on example, then improvisation with equipment and lotions and potions that are affordable and available. It's truly amazing how many chronic wounds heal in such a dirty, fly infested environment. I believe the healing is a result of the love, respect and care shown by all staff that previously arrived in the same condition. I love going there seeing the calm dignity of safety on the faces of so many people, when I look

into the faces of abandoned old people who smile back at me I know.... there but for the grace of God go I, or you, or anyone reading these words. My feelings are humble but also filled with love and joy when I see the staff, children, young woman, old people, myself, all united as Gods children. Just recently I received a wonderful mail from Raja telling me 6 couples were married on May 14th, all were recovered residents of Home of Hope and will continue to work there.

These are the three main areas ASK supports, Agape Childrens Orphanages entirely, Community Development and Home of Hope partially as they have other support, although last year we donated funds for the building of a new Home of Hope and a bore well to ease the overcrowding of the present building.

In addition to the three places supported, ASK has responded to individual cases when and where it was necessary to improve or change someone's life. Our desire is to give hope and enable people through shelter, education, and health care to fulfil their dreams, but most of all show them love, compassion and respect.

One special case was that of Kieran, a little boy of 7 yrs who lost both legs when he was pushed off a moving train, we have been able to supply him with state of the art prosthetic legs, he is attending school and you should see him running!!



Pastor Reuben and Flora (Agape Childrens Centres), Chitra (community development) Auto Raja (Home of Hope), Satya (webmaster) and his family who support many

local families.....Carole and ASK team, we are Gods eyes and hands, but none of this is possible without your prayers and support

Thank You, thank you..

With much love from all the team here in Bangalore and Action Saves Kids on Isle of Man.

God Bless you

Carole Auntie or Granny as a new generation is born.