

The Magazine of **HAND IN HAND**



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SPOTLIGHT

Vol. 1/2007

Residential School Balashram revisited



HEALTH CAMPS

Medics in the class room

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Class sponsorship

**YOUR DONATION
COUNTS!**



INDIA



"If you wish to be involved in voluntary work, fund-raising or public relations for HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS, please contact us at: drost400@planet.nl!"

HAND IN HAND GLOBAL

HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS

By Heiko Müller

At last, on the 20th July, "Stichting Hand in Hand, Organisatie voor Humanitaire Hulp, Afdeling Nederland" – the Dutch branch of HAND IN HAND – was founded. The President Alex van Galen and the Secretary Hanneke Drost signed the required papers in a lawyer's office in Rotterdam. In the evening they celebrated together with some other Board Members.

Only a few weeks before, four members of the future board travelled to Orissa, in India, in order to gather information about the ongoing HAND IN HAND projects. They realized that the four Hariharananda Health Centers were sometimes overcrowded due to the increase in the number of people seeking free medical advice. They also noticed the big rush of sick people, old

and young, at the Health Camps. When they finally visited the Balashram Residential School, they were impressed by the warm atmosphere and the loving attention of the teaching staff towards the children. The advanced construction works in the school grounds made the visitors very happy, although they were aware of the fact that a lot still needs to be done.

The motivation to create a foundation was therefore considerable, and the fact that in Netherlands donations are tax deductible, also played an important role. Still retaining the impressions of the Indian trip, Board Member Petra Helwig and her husband Frans organized the first fund-raising event for HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS. The proceeds of a Hatha Yoga Workshop which was organized by the two yoga teachers, together with the income from a vegetarian dinner organized on that same evening, went straight into the donation box of HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS – € 2,500.–! More activities are planned for which the HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS voluntary Board Members promise a snowball effect.

We are looking forward to a good teamwork with our Dutch friends!



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS IN FRONT OF THE BALASHRAM RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL: from left to right, Petra Helwig, Peter van Breukelen (Consultant), Hanneke Drost (Secretary) and Claudia Cremers*



BENDING FOR CHARITY: this workshop was a success!

*Other Board Members are : Carlos Mutsaers (Treasurer), Petra Helwig and Silvia van Breukelen.

Xandra Cremers is responsible for the public relation work and the website.



DINNER IN ROTTERDAM: the first fundraising event of HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS

Editorial

Dear Friends!

In the last April newsletter we reported on the interruption of the building work at the Balashram school premises due to the construction materials cost explosion. However, a few weeks ago when some HAND IN HAND Board Members and friends visited the school in India they were surprised to find the buildings in construction surrounded by busy workers and craftsmen. There was hammering, drilling, sawing and painting – thanks to your generous financial contributions which we received in response to our last appeal for funds.

On the next pages you will find more information on the present situation of the Residential School and on how to sponsor one of the four classes (pages 4–6). A pharmacist who works at the Health Centers (HCHC), tells us about special Health Camps which are held in schools (page 7). Now it has also happened in my homeland: the Foundation HAND IN HAND NETHERLANDS has been founded and has already organized a successful fundraising event (page 2).

You can see, dear friends, something is moving, or rather, You are moving something. It is for this reason that I would like to express, in the name of the Board of HAND IN HAND, our deepest gratitude. Please continue to help us to create a future worth living for, for the many destitute people. May the happy hammering, sawing and painting at the Residential School never stop!

Even the smallest drop can make a difference...



Peter van Breukelen (President)

PS: This year we hold again the "Austrian Donation Certificate" and therefore your donations reach directly, without detours, the aid projects!



HAND IN HAND NEWS+++HAND IN HAND

+++HAND IN HAND GOES ART: the exhibition "Art for People in Need" was inaugurated in April 2007 at the Melk Abbey in lower Austria with large media coverage. A small delegation of HAND IN HAND together with Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières were invited to introduce themselves to a bigger audience. The proceeds of the sales of the pictures and sculptures were distributed to the participating Organisations for Humanitarian Aid+++

+++INAUGURATION OF THE BALASHRAM LIBRARY: it was a bit cramped when the adult friends of HAND IN HAND squeezed with the Balashram children on the benches during the inauguration of the library in May 2007. It is not known whether the visitors from the West also received marks+++



THE HAND IN HAND DELEGATION with abbot Georg Wiflinger during the vernissage at the Melk Abbey



ADULTS were able to sit on school benches again during the inauguration of the school library

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NEWS from Balashram

Hariharananda Balashram

Revisited

By Marie-Pierre Zerr (project-coordination)

A couple of weeks ago I revisited the Balashram Residential School in India. I was really happy to meet the joyful children and I marvelled at the progress they had made since my last visit. I was particularly moved by the new entrants – 40 boys and girls - who have been attending the preschool class (nursery) since April 2007. Like their older schoolmates these children come from very poor families. Some are semi-orphans, some are orphans, and others were



THE NURSERY CLASS of 2007

living with 8 to 10 family members in straw huts of 3sq.m before joining the Residential School. Visiting the places where the new entrants had come from, I was stunned by the difficult conditions the children had had to live in. I was particularly touched by the fate of 3 year old Swati* who is now in the new preschool class.

Little Swati

Her mother Bidyulata was married to Vpitabas who belonged to a higher caste. Even though in India the caste system has not officially existed for the last 50 years, many people still follow the old tradition. Their marriage had been difficult from the start because it was celebrated without the parents' consent. Unfortunately Vpitabas died from malaria and left behind his wife and four children. Her parents-in-law refused to take her in because she belonged to a lower caste while her own parents were too poor to look after her and the children. Without any means she lived with her little ones - including Swati - for a long time under a tree. Can you imagine the courage and the strength of this woman who went begging in order to keep her two girls and two boys alive?

After a tip-off from a villager, the Balashram Selection Committee decided to put the widow's 3 year old daughter Swati into the 2007 class. Shortly afterwards his mother Bidyulata received a small piece of land from the government on which she built, with her own hands, a straw hut and where she lives now with her three children. When I visited her I met the youngest daughter who will also join the Balashram Residential School next year.



SWATI'S MOTHER in front of her straw hut



LITTLE SWATI

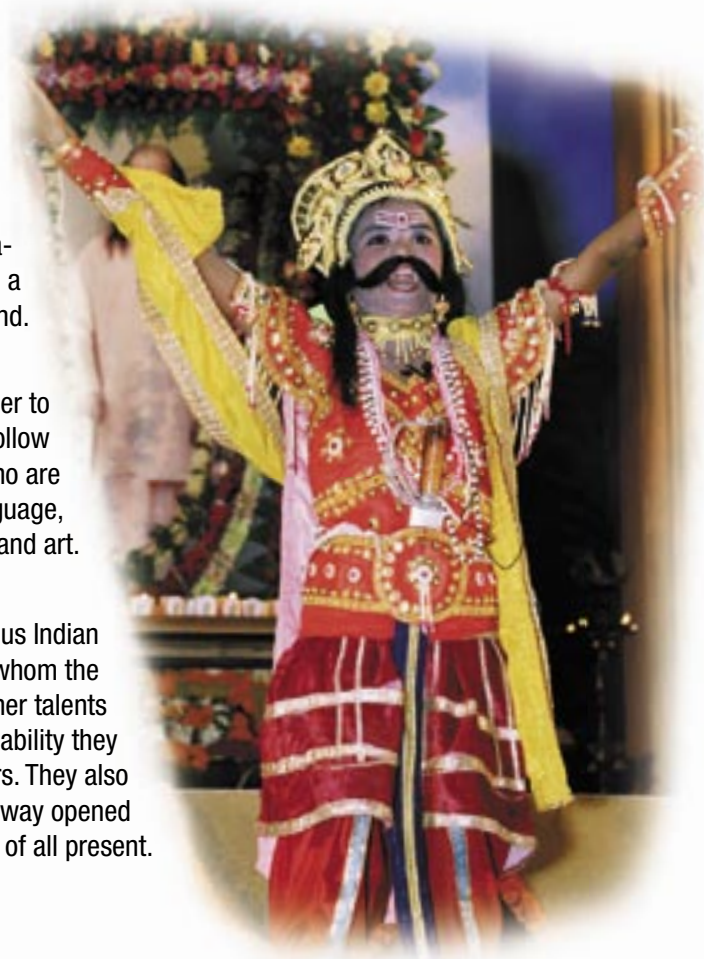
*Name changed by editor

Success

This is what makes the state-approved Balashram Residential School special: the fact that children from the lowest class can receive excellent schooleducation which otherwise would be reserved to children from a wealthy background.

We have now reached a number of 160 pupils who are eager to learn and whose regular tests show how well they are able to follow the teachings. The children in the second class (Standard II) who are aged 7–8, have this year taken 3 exams: in English language, mathematics, Hindi, Oriya, natural sciences and art.

During my visit we celebrated the centenary of the famous Indian philanthropist Paramahansa Hariharananda after whom the Balashram is named. The boys and girls showed many other talents besides the scholarly ones. With great self-confidence and ability they performed a theatre play in front of eight thousand spectators. They also played several instruments, danced and sang, and in that way opened the hearts of all present.



The school library and other innovations

During a walkabout on the Balashram School premises I noticed with joy that the construction work had entered a new phase. The extension of the new school building has progressed: on the ground floor there is now, in addition to the three classrooms, the staff room, the Director's office, the computer room and three toilets, the school library with nine book shelves and tables with benches. During the opening the children launched themselves eagerly into the many books. The library can also be used for movie and video presentations and can accommodate two classes.



By 2008 the extension of the first floor should almost be completed and will include seven classrooms and toilets.

From autumn 2007 the first floor of the girls' quarters will be ready for occupancy. At last, work on the boys' quarters has begun. By September this year the structural work of the 9,500 sq.m. ground floor will be completed.



When I left the Balashram after some intensive days, I looked back, nostalgically, from the main gate and saw some school children joyfully waving good-bye.

Become a class sponsor!



Starting from the 1st October 2007, there is the possibility for you or a group of HAND IN HAND, to sponsor an entire class at the Balshram Residential School. As **SPONSOR OR CO-SPONSOR** you will support an entire class of 40 students and you will decide the amount of your donation and the duration of your contribution. By (co-) sponsoring an entire class no child will be privileged or penalized as it sometimes happens with individual sponsoring. All children will have the same chance of development and thanks to your support they will be educated and guided in the safe environment of Balashram.

We will send you twice a year class photos and information about the class you are sponsoring. That way you participate at the children's exciting development and in whose future you are investing in.

- ✕ with € 35.– you support one child in a class for one month
- ✕ with € 420.– you support one child in a class for one year
- ✕ with € 1,400.– you support an entire class of 40 pupils for one month
- ✕ with € 16,800.– you support an entire class of 40 pupils for one year

YOUR MONTHLY OR YEARLY CONTRIBUTION WILL BE UTILIZED AS FOLLOWS:

1. PURCHASE OF SCHOOL MATERIAL AND CLOTHING
2. ADEQUATE AND WELL BALANCED NUTRITION
3. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
4. SALARIES FOR TEACHING STAFF
5. EXPENSES FOR VISITS BY PARENTS AND RELATIVES

Should you be interested in (co-)sponsoring a class, please contact the Balashram Project Manager Marie-Pierre Zerr.
E-mail: mpzerr@t-online.de or
Telephone: + 49 (0)160 86 49 680 (if required).

Your Team of HAND IN HAND

PS: Dear donor, if you are already sponsoring a child with € 35,– monthly, then this will be assigned to a class shortly. As co-sponsor you will receive twice a year a class photo and information about the class from which the supported child comes from!

HEALTH CARE PROJECTS



NEWS FROM THE HEALTH PROJECTS

By Dr Stefan Korsatko (project-coordination)

The work done by the **Health Camps** in supplying medical aid in under-served villages and schools of Orissa is in high demand. Doctors and helpers recently started up new camps in schools in particularly poor districts. (See next report by a pharmacist)

The four Health Centers (HCHC) treated 11,627 people between April and June.

Because of the high number of patients needing treatment, doctors and assistants of the partner organization **Prajnana Mission** came to help.

The medical service performed by the Health Centers is much appreciated and therefore a delegation of HCHC held a Health Camp at the world famous Jagannath Car Festival in the pilgrimage city of

Puri. Exhausted and sick visitors received medical aid, and drinking water. From the HCHC Dr. Debadatta Mishra, Pharmacist Shri Samir Kumar Parida, Laboratory Technician Shri Goutam Bark successfully completed the camp.

In the near future HCHC in Balighai will also have a dental clinic. However, planning is still at the initial stage.

HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

By **Rasmi Ranjan Mishra** (Pharmacist and Health Assistant in HCHC, Jagatpur and MMDU)

On the principle of "keep your own health healthy", our Prajnana Mission is trying its level-best to create health awareness amongst the students of lower and upper primary schools in the state of Orissa. We are able to do this by organizing different health camps in schools through **Mobile Medical and Dental Units (MMDU)**, and the **Hariharananda Charitable Health Centers (HCHC)**.

With the financial support of HAND IN HAND the Prajnana Mission has taken up a project in Pattamundai Block of Kendrapara district of Orissa. It is, in fact, a under-privileged block where the medical facility is very poor. Initially, we have selected all lower and upper primary schools as our target. In the first phase, I myself and the doctor visit 2 or 3 schools and conduct a School Health Screening Camp where we first of all thoroughly examine each student physically and produce a health card. If illness is detected in anyone the doctor of our team treats them accordingly, and I distribute medicine with advice on how to take it together with some general health awareness hints. Then we separate out



those students with dental problems.

Finally, with the help of local people, teachers and parents, we conduct a health awareness program giving the students and their parents advice on

- how to brush teeth
- how to take care of gums
- how to maintain cleanliness in toilet matters
- how to take care of nails, eyes, hair, ears, nose, skin and so on

We also explain to the parents that taking a little care of a child's health in its early years will help to prevent serious diseases in the future. Bringing some understanding of healthcare to the children can also help them to lead a disease-free life.

After 2-3 screening camps we organize a dental camp where we carry out dental treatment and operate a dental awareness program, along similar lines.



If you wish to be involved in voluntary work, fund-raising or public relations in Austria or in your own country, please contact us at info@handinhand.at



Two Girls from Balashram Kindergarten



Austrian Donation Certificate: Since 2003 HAND IN HAND carries the Austrian Donation Certificate, which approves the lawful, legitimate and appropriate use of donations!

THANKS!



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