

Towards Nirvana

for Children, for the Community, for the Environment



NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2015

Thank you for your continued support and our very best wishes for 2015. Your donations make a real difference. For every £1 you give 97p is spent on the schools programme in Alwar which enables these vulnerable children and their communities to have a brighter future. Please help us spread the word about "Towards Nirvana" and 'The Nirvanavan Foundation' to allow this charity to grow.

► To find out more visit towardsnirvana.org



The main school at Advaita Garden, with over 120 children enrolled is going from strength to strength. Read Swami Satvikanda's report on the following page to find out more.

Twelve boys are now living at Advaita Garden School. This is the site of the proposed children's village. Pictured right is Nirvana, the founder and Director of the Foundation, with the children at supper time.



Different ways we can raise money for Towards Nirvana



Collection

Put those empty jam jars to good use and turn small change into a big collection. Save all your pennies – you'll be surprised how much you'll collect over the year.

Chocolate ban

Give up chocolate for a day, a week or a month and give the cash you saved to Towards Nirvana.

Film night

Create your own cinema and hold a film night for family and friends. Sell popcorn and drinks and charge an entry fee. Theme the night on your favourite type of film!

Do a twist on the classic baby photo game by collecting some baby photos of famous celebrities and charging your friends to guess who they are.

Give it up!

Get sponsored to go without something. Give up speaking for a day or computer games for a week.

Get active

If you know someone that likes to run, cycle, walk, swim etc, you could ask your family and friends to see if they would consider raising money for Towards Nirvana.

Social occasions

Host a dinner party with friends and ask them to make a donation is another way of raising money. Or perhaps afternoon tea or even a morning coffee.

Good luck and please share with us any fundraising news and ideas.



How your donations make a real difference

In December my husband and I again visited The Nirvanavan Foundation in Alwar. As the majority of you are aware this is the organisation that 'Towards Nirvana' – fund raises for. We, over here, are the major fund-raiser and without our help this charity would not be able to exist as it does. It really relies on our UK funding and we cannot thank enough all those who donate and who help to make a difference to these children's lives.

Krishnadhyam (Richard Roberts), who many of you know, travelled with us from Delhi to Alwar too. This time we were able to visit six of the schools that we look after. The flagship school – Advaita Garden. Advaita Garden has eight classes and a different teacher for each class.

The children are happy and healthy and enthusiastic. When the children go home each day there are several boys who stay on and live in one of the classrooms. They are well cared for there and these are the children, and those like them, which we're wanting to build a children's home for. Eventually we want to provide a safe haven there, for both boys and girls with house mothers to look after them. Sadly due to financial restraints, this looks very much a future venture at the moment rather than something that is imminent.

I also visited five other schools, Dhobi Ghatta, Gajukki, Hatundi, Teen ki Rudi and Pipalgarh. One of these schools is in the slum areas and four in the prostitute districts. These schools consist of one class mostly with only one teacher but sometimes with two. The age of the children ranges from five years old up to about fourteen and the classes are mixed boys and girls.

I was very privileged to be able to work with these children. They really enjoy learning the English names for different animals and getting me to make the various growls, barks, meows and neighs that go with them!! They are very enthusiastic and very willing to learn.

Creativity

All these children are also particularly good at art and making things. It is a real joy to see what they can make with such little material. They improvise and show such skill and fully use their imagination.

The dedicated team at the Nirvanavan Foundation work tirelessly for the good of these children. Nirvana himself oversees a good team of loyal staff who work ceaselessly, not for the money because we can't afford to pay them much, but because they care. Care about these young and vulnerable youngsters and their lives. Giving them hope for a better future.

Childline

We also found time to visit Alwar Childline which we help to fund. Childline gets funded by the Indian Government but they don't receive enough funding to keep going for twenty four hours a day.

>> continued overleaf



"Nirvana himself oversees a good team of loyal staff who work tirelessly, not for the money but because they care"





“We care passionately about these children and their future”

>> Often the Government money is late in arriving and the staff remain unpaid. Our funds allow Childline to keep going and it means that there are always two members of staff on call day or night to be on hand to help the most vulnerable and frightened children.

So I can personally assure you that every penny of the funding which we raise is being well spent. Nothing ever goes astray or on administration costs.

We, team ‘Towards Nirvana’ also do this because we care passionately about these children and their future.

This is Benjamin. He is a retired teacher who now lives at the school looking after the resident boys. Formerly living on his own after his wife’s death, he is happy to be playing a useful role at the Foundation. He teaches an English every morning.

We will continue to work tirelessly for this cause and ensure that every penny is well spent and that every donation will get to the right place and to where it is intended to go.

Your money does make a difference and you are all welcome to visit Alwar to see.

Do you have some spare time? Would you like to get involved?



We have about a hundred donors who give varying amounts each month. We would like to increase this number as regular giving is our main source of income. It is reliable and a regular income enables the Foundation in India to use their income more efficiently.

On Thursday 26th March an organisation called Company Solutions is running two half day fund-raising courses, “covering a range of techniques to develop and retain new donors for your cause.”

These courses will take place near Old Street tube station in London N1. If you have some free time and would like to learn some new skills then you might be interested in attending. The course fee is £49 (plus vat) and we are willing to pay this fee for someone who feels that they have the time and willingness to join our fund-raising team.

KD (Richard) has attended courses with this organisation before and recommends them highly. Please contact him at **towardsnirvana@gmail.co.uk** if you are interested.

The only qualifications needed are an interest in Nirvanavan Foundation, a willingness to help and some enthusiasm!

Helping hands

There are many ways you can help and get involved:

- Become a regular donor
- Get involved with fundraising
- Share your ideas and join our committee

Please email towardsnirvana@gmail.co.uk

Trustee news

I am about to return to Rajasthan to visit the Towards Nirvana team in situ. This will be my fifth visit and I know I will see a great change in the two years since I was last there.

I am one of the trustees and have been following the progress of this small but magnificent team make a difference in this very rural and poor part of India.

When I was last there in January 2012 they were building and fencing off from the animals and children, a large vegetable garden and this time I am taking with me in my suitcase several good quality gardening gloves, some secateurs and a few other "light to carry" gardening paraphernalia.

I am hoping that my two fellow travelling companions will be pleased with what the team are doing and that we will be taken to see some of the other schools that have been started for the Nat and Kanjer villages.

Last time we visited a school quite a drive away and I was very moved by the dedication of the people who looked after about 50 abandoned children whose parents had left them for work elsewhere expecting the village to take care of them.

Towards Nirvana found a building and the children sleep on mattresses under cover and have regular meals cooked over an open fire. The children ranging from 3 to 12 roughly were orderly and washed up their metal thali plates after lunch and hands before lunch.

I watched a lady churning yoghurt like they probably did in medieval times. We played games with them on the roof and there was a very positive happy feeling. They had lessons and were proud of the few words they spoke in English!

I am looking forward to my visit and getting values sorted out a bit as it is easy living in the UK to remain removed from how the less advantaged struggle to survive.

Joanna MacDonald, Trustee

 Read more in the next issue of our newsletter

An update from KD

Bad and good news regarding the hostel which Joanna mentioned. This project was being funded by the Indian government, who last year withdrew their (financial) support. (Thus support can be very unreliable and depends a lot on which political party is in control and what is more likely to win votes – not unlike any democracy anywhere really!) The hostel had to close last summer because the Foundation could not afford to run it.

However, the good news is that with support from some individuals from Delhi, the hostel was able to re-open recently. I will be visiting in April and will give an update in our next newsletter.



 If you have any ideas or comments to contribute please contact Natasha Stoner at natasha737@btinternet.com



Please check out our **Towards Nirvana** facebook page for current news or refer to our website for further information.

www.towardsnirvana.org