

CHILDLINE

Recently the Childline team organised a cricket tournament in the slum area of Alwar (Indians are fanatical about cricket so the children needed little encouragement). It was a great success – the winning team won a trophy and all the participants were rewarded, becoming honorary ambassadors for Childline in the process. It was a neat way of spreading the word about this invaluable service. In the same area a survey is being conducted by the Team to find people with cataracts. A local donor in Alwar has offered an amount of money to provide the necessary medical treatment.

HALIM INA: PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

Halim Ina is a photographer from USA who visits the Foundation each year. He has established a relationship with the villagers which has resulted in some stunning portraits. He has also made a short video of the Foundation which can be seen at: < www.vimeo.com/4982893,> along with three other videos from his time in India last year.

Halim sells his work in aid of the Foundation. Some of his portraits can be seen on our website and are displayed on his website (www.halimina.org) in addition to his work with others. Halim has been instrumental in establishing a relationship with One World Children's Fund, a charitable organisation based in America. It would be great to organize an exhibition of his work in U.K. He is quite interested and is in the process of submitting his work to a dozen or so galleries around the world. His portion of the sale of these portraits will go directly to Nirvanavan Foundation, making it quite a selling point to the galleries. He will do what is necessary once truly interested contacts in galleries are established. Do you have/know of any useful contacts?



photos: Halim Ina

The Nirvanavan Foundation Trust

Registered charity No. 1124427



photo: KD

“jai ho”

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JAI HO!

When the film Slumdog Millionaire came out recently it caused quite a stir in India, not least at the Foundation. We have recently opened a school in the slum area of Alwar city, so it felt like there was an immediate connection. Vinod, a 16year old slum dweller says: “We are very happy as the film shows that even the poor can achieve anything.” There is a scene in the film which is set in the red light area of Mumbai, when the two boys are searching for their childhood friend, Latika. A few days after seeing the film I was visiting one of the schools in the Alternative Education Project and I was quite moved to realise that most of these happy and lively children will spend their working lives in just such an environment as was portrayed in this scene. Many of the prostitutes working in the big cities in India and the Middle East come from the Nat and Kanjar villages in Rajasthan. The Nirvanan Foundation is the only organisation which is providing an education in these villages, hopefully offering some of these children alternatives as they grow up.

ADVAITA GARDEN

Purchase of part of the land is now complete. This has involved complex negotiations with the Government, Local Authorities and the local villagers. This is an important step forward in realising the vision of an eco-friendly Children’s Village providing a home eventually for up to forty children, housed in five homes of eight children in each. A search is on for an architect to help in designing the whole site so that work can begin slowly with the first home.

The main school here now boasts four new classrooms providing decent accommodation at last for the 140 children enrolled. The cows too have been busy – the eight residents of the gaushala (cowshed) have between them given birth to three new calves over the winter. Quite an experience for the visiting city dweller (me) but a normal occurrence for the children who all have cows, buffaloes or goats at their homes.

Recent donations of books have seen the launch of a library at the school. This project continues with the aim of providing each school with their own library.

U.K.

We are very happy to have been accepted by the Parent/Teacher Association of Wimbledon Park Junior School in London as one of the recipients of their fund-raising activities. Children at the school have been corresponding with the Advaita Garden children for over a year now and the Parent Teacher Association decided earlier this year to include the Foundation as a beneficiary for their fund-raising activities – resulting in a £750 donation from the proceeds of their annual charity walk. Many thanks to Sophia, Abigail and Amelia from Class 5 for their part in establishing the relationship with their school.

HELP NEEDED

NIRVANAVAN WEB SITE

Many thanks to Nick who completely redesigned the website last year (www.nirvanavan.org.uk) - an invaluable facility giving information about the Foundation. Nick has moved on (we are missing him!) and we are looking for another ‘champion’ to maintain the site (and also someone to fix our PayPal account, which is not working.)

FUND-RAISING EYES

Occasionally there are articles in the media which give news and information about charitable giving. When I was in London in February I saved four such articles (from the Guardian, the Observer, and the Independent) and between them these gave information about fifteen possible sources of money which we are following up. Please will you act as ‘eyes’ for the Foundation and let me know of any useful information which you see. Much has been achieved since the Foundation was registered as a Non-Government Organisation in 2001, but much more remains to be done and we need more money. For instance, the teachers in the schools receive a salary of 2,000 rupees a month (less than £30). This compares to a government teacher’s salary of about 16,000 rupees. Such a big difference obviously makes it very difficult to find – and to keep – good teachers. Quite simply, they (and the children) deserve more.

Now that we are a charity in the UK we can claim tax credit on all donations, which will increase our income by about a third. Being a Registered Charity also makes us more ‘attractive’ to possible donors. We are happy to welcome Joanne McDonald as a new Trustee. Joanne spent two weeks at the Foundation in January.

RAHUL

The Rahul Cancer Appeal has raised about a hundred thousand rupees for his cancer treatment. I am happy to say he is responding to treatment very well – he has finished his sessions of radiotherapy and the doctor has decided that he does not need chemotherapy. Any excess money will be used for children in similar circumstances whose families are unable to pay for treatment. Thankyou to everyone who contributed.

SEWING CIRCLE

I have a selection of cushion covers, napkins, handkerchiefs, etc made and embroidered by the women in the villages. I am looking for an outlet in the UK which might be interested in stocking such items. Can you help?

HAVE A NIRVANAVAN BIRTHDAY (written by Satvikananda)

In November I was sixty and decided to have a party to celebrate. I knew many people would bring presents even if I put 'no presents' on the invitation but what do any of us want with more things? We are always trying to really practice non attachment and have less things! So what to do? Then I had a brainwave. What about asking all my friends and family to bring donations for Nirvanavan Foundation, a charity I truly support and know where the money is going and I also know that none of it is wasted in administration costs. So this is what I did. Most people entered into the spirit of the idea. A few close friends and family still gave me a present, which actually was quite nice too! But most brought donations and we managed to raise £950.00 which was wonderful. It was much better than getting loads of things that I wouldn't know where to put, and it was good for my guests as well because I know they would have found it hard to turn up with nothing. This way we were all winners. Including the Nirvanavan Foundation.

I have written this piece, at KD's request, not to impress people with how much was raised but to inspire people to think again when the next 'big' birthday bash comes along for them. People are very willing to donate in this way and their/our money really does make a difference, even in small amounts. And it is a glorious feeling to know that this money will be of use to the Nirvanavan Foundation NOW. So thank you, friends and family all, for making my sixtieth birthday such a successful one.

FINALLY.....

Never-ending thanks to all the regular standing order contributors and occasional donors. This enables us to send £1000 each month to India, and to save towards the costs of the proposed children's home. (see the website.) The schools which were closed have been re-opened and there are now ten schools again in the Alternative Education Project. One thousand pounds sounds like a lot of money – it IS a lot of money – but when it is divided between all the schools and the other work of the Foundation it doesn't last very long – about a month!

Without you, quite frankly the Foundation would find it much more difficult to flourish. In March the local newspaper headlined an article about my presence in Alwar with the words "The Strings of Love Pulling Across Seven Oceans". Your contributions enable this love to flourish. Thank you.

Krishnadhyanam/Richard Roberts

YES I'd like to pledge my support with ____ a month.

Please complete the details on this form and return it today to:
Nirvanavan Foundation, 70 Thurleigh Road, London SW12 8UD

My Name: My HOME telephone number is:
Address:
..... My MOBILE telephone number is:
.....
..... My e-mail address:
..... Postcode:

I want to start making a regular contribution ofa month until further notice, starting on (Please allow at least three weeks between signing the form and the date of the first payment).

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)
Bank or Building Society Account No. Sort Code:..... - -
Name and full address of Bank or Building Society:
.....
.....
.....

Signed: date.....

Instructions to your bank or Building Society: Please pay The Nirvanavan Foundation (at the Co-operative Bank) the stated amount by standing order from my/our account

Branch Title : Direct Plus Account Name: Nirvanavan Foundation Trust

FOR OFFICE USE: Account Number: Sort Code:
(if you would like to set up your own arrangement with your bank, contact me for these details.)

GIFT AID - (N.B. you must have paid tax equivalent to your donation in the previous financial year)

I am willing for my donation to be treated as Gift Aid.

(sign if appropriate)

