

OCEAN STARS TRUST

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NEWSLETTER 8

2008 DECEMBER



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Key Highlights:

- Over £90,000 has been raised so far
- Currently funding over 25 projects
- Ocean Stars operates 3 child sponsorship programmes which directly benefit over 80 families
- 20 teachers are being funded by OST
- Lunch project for 50 children at Urani Nursery
- A team of nine people from "Team 08" UK visited OST projects in October 2008.

AYUBOWANG VANAKKAM HALLO

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our eighth newsletter. The focus of this newsletter will be reports from the OST Team 08 after their recent trip to Sri Lanka. Ocean Stars is very active on the ground in Sri Lanka. This visit focused on the areas of greatest need in Trincomalee and Batticaloa in the Eastern coast, where the tsunami was most destructive. Hundreds of children are accessing a pre-school education thanks to OST funds. Teachers being paid for by OST feel valued for the work they do under very difficult conditions.

We would like to thank as always our donors and supporters. Without you we could not carry out the work we do. We continually receive positive feedback

from Sri Lanka.

As the ethnic conflict continues and investment in the east is sparse the people we support are truly grateful for our help. Rev Jothini, a superintendent minister, said to us whilst at the Urani lunch project: "I thank you for your kindness to the people of Sri Lanka. Thanks to you the children know that someone cares about them."

Ocean Stars Trip 08

OST Team 08 have recently returned from an emotional and challenging trip to Sri Lanka. If you would like to read an account of the trip in more detail please read their blog on

<http://ostinsrilanka2008.blogspot.com/>

Current Wish List:

- Twelve more sponsors needed for 12 families in Batticaloa a cost of £10 a month.
- Sponsors required for 4 teachers @ £25 per month.
- 5 sponsors needed to set up our second lunch project @ £10 a month per person.
- School uniform for 15 children @ £2.50 per uniform= £37.50
- £40 towards the purchase of a cupboard for storage at a playgroup



Visits to sponsor families

Some members of the team were able to visit the families that they sponsor. "It was an amazing day, one that will be remembered for a very long time. These people touched my heart. There is still so much more to do".

£10.00 a month provides a family with funds for uniform, books, transport and even food for the poorer families.

Another team member wrote "The concrete house was sparsely furnished and their only light consisted of a small oil lamp set up on a shelf. The sponsor money is supposed to go towards the child's education but I expect in this instance the money helps to pay for food for the family. It was an emotional meeting and a reminder that what is such a small amount of money to me is a life changing amount to them. I know that what I give does make a difference and hope that with support the sponsored child can ultimately achieve an education that will help to break the vicious cycle of poverty."





Grace Children's Home Link

Maureen Johnston who is a teacher at Heatherside Infant School in Fleet was part of our Team 2008. Since 2005, children at Heatherside Infant School have raised over £2000 for Grace Children's Home.

The journey to the home was difficult with check points, body frisking and vehicle changes. The only visitors that the children ever see are inspectors or security guards.

Maureen writes of her visit:

"These children have nothing of material value, no place of their own to call home. Everything we did with them or said to them they seemed to value. They gave twice as much to me in their own way as I did to them. As the day went on and they got to know us a little better they relaxed and became more open and even more giving of themselves. There was laugh-

ter and in the end there were tears – my tears. To have a home and family is the essence of our security and we take it so much for granted."



Vincent Girls High School

Ocean Stars has been supporting Vincent Girls High School since January 2005. Mrs David the Deputy Head Teacher died in the Tsunami. A sponsorship scheme was set up with OST to help the education of 10 students from poor families in her memory. Ocean stars provided the school with a



much needed photocopier during their recent visit. Vincent's School have made an appeal to OST to fund the purchase of new instruments for the school band.

"The girls at the Vincent Girls school giggled away as they practiced their English with me. I felt the strength of their friendships with one another and their resilience when they explained to me their personal situations."

*"Thank you to Ocean Stars for all the help they give our students."
 The head teacher of the Vincent Girls High School.*



Ocean Stars Team 2008



A note from Bron, a member of Team 08 on the eve of our departure:

We leave tomorrow morning, at a fairly respectable hour for Heathrow, where we will be meeting up with Jan and Helen. The team will then be together for the first time.

The generosity and support behind the team can be witnessed through the 90ish(!) kilos worth of goodies that is to be included in our luggage; over 100 teddy bears, 200 bean bags, toiletries, and stationery to name but a few."



"So much has touched my heart I don't know where to start..."

The picture above shows the "Fleet Crew" holding some of these items at the last meeting!



Playground Appeal

OST have been asked to help Kalkudah Playgroup build a playground for the children. The total cost is £300 but any small donation towards this project will be gratefully received.

Thuraineelavanai

Playgroup

A little hut in the middle of nowhere is home to 16 children at the



Thuraineelavanai playgroup. OST have been asked to fund a lunch project for these children as well as a small shelter for the children

to play away from the tropical sun. Uniforms are also needed at a cost of £2.50 per uniform.



A member of Team 2008 reflects...

The work of OST is so vital, and for us back home there is the opportunity to change lives for what we would consider pocket money. To sponsor a child and thereby make a difference not only to their life but to their family's as well only costs £10 a month. Even to fund a lunch project or pay a teacher's salary for a month is less than it costs us to have a newspaper every day.



OST Manager Ranjini, two teachers sponsored by OST, and Bron.

Gift Aid

If you are a new donor please contact us about receiving a Gift Aid form, and, if you are a taxpayer, we are able to claim tax back on your donation.

Gift aid is an extremely important form of finance to OST. It should be noted that if you are a higher rate tax payer, you may be able to obtain further relief on your gift aid donation in your tax return.

"Last year Ocean Stars received over £5000 in gift aid"

Ocean Stars Web-shop

www.buy.at/Oceanstars Web shop

We would like to remind you to shop at www.buy.at/Oceanstars. All you have to do is log on to our web shop at www.buy.at/Oceanstars and select the retailer that you would like to shop from. You will then be directed to the normal on-line web shop of your choice. Any purchases you make from the retailers will generate commission for Ocean Stars - at no additional cost to yourself. Many of the big name on-line retailers feature on the web shop e.g. Amazon, Marks & Spencer, John Lewis etc and many have **free postage**. The commission they pay Ocean Stars is our reward for promoting their retailer.

Coconut Sambal A delicious accompaniment to any curry

Ingredients

- 2 cups scraped, fresh coconut or desiccated coconut (add 1/4 cup of warm water and mix well to moisten the desiccated coconut)
- 2 small onions or shallots, sliced.
- 1 small green chilli, sliced.
- 1 clove garlic, sliced.
- 1-2 tsp Hot red chilli powder.
- 1 tsp Salt.
- 1 medium lime.

METHOD:

- Grind or chop all ingredients except coconut, in a grinder or chopper (a mortar & pestle can also be used).
- Once the ingredients are crushed and mixed thoroughly, add the coconut.
- Continue to mix until the coconut turns evenly red and all ingredients are well mixed
- Squeeze half a lime. Mix well.
- Taste and adjust salt & lime.
- Serve with rice and curries.

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Images from Projects:

Blog: ostinsrilanka2008.blogspot.com



Vellaimanal children hugging their teddies

Vellaimanal Visit

The opening of a Health Centre for the Vellaimanal Community is a new project that OST have been asked to fund. Helen, a member of Team 08, and her friends recently participated in the Stirling 10k and raised funds which will get the project started. The health education programme will support pre-natal mothers and allow regular health checks for the children .



Helen with her sponsor child, Sithy.



Kalkudah playgroup children chasing bubbles



Mothers selling their sewing products to the team. OST fund this sewing project which gives the mothers an opportunity to make an income while their children are at playgroup. The products include clothes, wall hangings and tablecloths.



At each playgroup that we visited a fresh flower garland was given to us by each child as a greeting. Each garland is intricately made by hand, making our welcome even more touching.

Sinai Urani Lunch Project

"We saw the children prepare for lunch by washing their hands and saying grace before tucking into a meal of rice, a hard boiled egg and a prawn. For these desperately poor children, this is their only meal of the day. Before we were treated to lunch, the children left clutching the shakers that they had all made earlier."



Mandoor playgroup children playing with streamers made by an OST supporter

Funding for two more lunch projects at £35 a month has been requested. This guarantees one hot meal for children who otherwise may not have a cooked meal everyday.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope you continue to support our work in making a difference to the lives of the people of Sri Lanka. Donations made payable to "Ocean Stars Trust" can be sent to us at the above address. We will continue to keep you updated with our work.

May God Bless you. Budhu Saranay.

Dilanee Bunter
Founder

Shona Holroyd
Treasurer

Janaki Jayasuriya
Trustee

Jo Barton
Secretary

John Bunter
Chairperson

Trustees of the Ocean Stars Trust, Registered Charity 1110022