

# OCEAN STARS TRUST

WWW.OCEANSTARS.ORG.UK



Registered Charity  
1110022

NEWSLETTER 10

2009 DECEMBER



Ocean Stars Trust  
2, Netherhouse Moor,  
Church Crookham  
Fleet  
Hants  
GU51 5TY  
dilane@ntlworld.com

<http://ost09.blogspot.com/>

### Key Highlights:

- OST TEAM 09 complete successful visit to SRI LANKA
- OST TEAM 09 raises £6000 to support projects.
- Teacher Training session for 30 teachers organised by Team 09.
- 30 Teachers being funded by OST.
- Over £120,000 raised so far and currently funding over 25 projects.
- Ocean Stars operates 3 child sponsorship programmes which directly benefit over 90 families.

## AYUBOWANG

## VANAKKAM

## HELLO

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our tenth newsletter. It is almost 5 years since the Ocean Stars Trust was set up as a response to the Boxing Day Tsunami of December 2004.

The work of the Trust has moved on from direct Tsunami related work to sustainable community work with a view to rebuilding lives shattered by the 30 year ethnic conflict, by the scars of the Tsunami and to bring a smile to the faces of children and families who have so little but give so much to all they meet.

I would like to personally thank all the Trustees for their hard work, support and enthusiasm for Ocean Stars. I would also like to thank all of you, our supporters without whom we would not be here 5 years later doing so much to make a difference to people's lives in Sri Lanka.



Our drivers Ranga, Sudha and Janaka told Team 09 " We love every minute we spend with Ocean Stars. The

work you do for the poor children and families of our country stays in our hearts and warms our souls." I would also like to thank our drivers who work 24 hours a day for 11 days with our Teams.

A Big Thank you also to Ranchan our EOST (Eastern Ocean Stars) co-coordinator who devotes all his time to OST work and to all of EOST Team who work tirelessly to make sure all our projects receive the personal touch which all the beneficiaries on the ground really treasure and value.

As peace slowly returns to Sri Lanka, Ocean Stars will continue to rebuild shattered lives and make a difference to the people.

## OST TEAM 09 Reflections from Team Member.....

It's been a week now since our return from Sri Lanka. A week of what constitutes normality for us. For me it has been a time of reflection. I've tried and am still trying to

come to terms with all that I have seen and experienced with OST '09. As I returned to teach in school my thoughts constantly ran to the children in the pre-schools in Battì. As my children here in Fleet played with toys, painted pictures, rode bicycles and read umpteen books I thought about those dusty floors, the plastic chairs, the empty cupboards. As I walked around my own home I remembered the family of six we visited last Thursday who live together in one room the size of my garage and who sleep on a concrete floor. They appear to have so little and yet they have so much. So much warmth, so much kindness and real courage. They humble me completely. I feel truly grateful for the experience they have shared with me. I'm challenged and encouraged to do all I can to support them and to fight the injustice of their situation. In all it has been a privilege. A privilege to have lived and worked with Dilanee and each member of the team and a privilege to have had time with some very special people. The memories live on...



### Current Wish List:

- Sponsors needed for 12 families on our sponsorship schemes. Your money goes directly to the family and helps provide for their basic needs.
- Sponsors required for 25 teachers @ £15 per month.
- 4 Teachers would like to be sponsored on a Teaching Training programme @ £85 per teacher.
- £20 will provide a Parachute for a Playgroup. 12 needed.
- Playgroup Uniform. Cost £3.50 each. 500 needed.



**GIFT CATALOGUE 2009/2010**

Set up by Bron Lambert, the OST Fund Raising Officer, our first ever catalogue was a great success and has enabled Ocean Stars to give over £1000 worth of gifts to the people of Sri Lanka. The gifts of bicycles, school uniforms, tables and chairs, to name a few, have been received with much happiness, and we hope that the new Gift Catalogue will continue to be a way of meeting the needs of the Sri Lankan people that we support.



Children enjoying a swing donated through our Gift Catalogue



**TEACHERS' WAGES**



OST pays the wages of 33 playgroup teachers in Batticaloa and Trincomalee. The local town councils have a limited budget from the government which does not extend to paying the wages of Playgroup teachers. The wages range from £15 a month to £25 a month for more experienced teachers. At the moment these wages are being paid from OST central funds and we are looking for individuals who may like to sponsor the wages of a teacher. Your money will go directly to the teacher who in turn is able to provide for her family. OST had a training day for all teachers on our last day in Batticaloa. The teachers commented on how valued they feel and were in tears when we left. " Thank you OST for helping me feed my family."



Teachers busy on their training

<http://ost09.blogspot.com/>

**TEDDIES FOR CHILDREN**

Each year the OST Team take with them teddies knitted by people all over the UK to give to children in Sri Lanka. Over the last 5 years over 700 teddies have been distributed to children. For a child who has no toys a teddy gives them something to cuddle and hold and possess. If anyone would like to knit teddies for us then please do so and get in touch with us to arrange collection.



*Thank you Ocean Stars. The children are happy they have a special teddy that they can cuddle when they are sad.*

**TEDDY PATTERN**

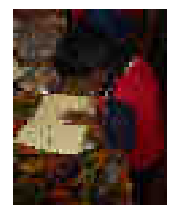
[WWW.TEDDIESFORTRAGEDIES.COM](http://WWW.TEDDIESFORTRAGEDIES.COM)

**GRACE CHILDREN'S HOME**

Situated in Vavuniya the gateway to the north and centre for Camps for displaced people, Grace Children's Home offers a very special experience in love and compassion. Mrs Nadarajah cares for 25 boys on her own. The changes that have taken place over the last 5 years whilst Ocean Stars and Heatherside Infant School in Fleet have been involved has been a very humbling experience. The children have mattresses on their beds, they have desks and chairs, cupboards to put their clothes in, a keyboard to play their music, a hi fi system to listen to music, raincoats and shoes to wear to school.



Mrs Nadarajah does not get a monthly grant from the government to care for these children. Ocean Stars is looking for 10 people to donate £10 a month so that the children's needs can be met on a monthly basis rather than once a year when the Team visits. It was with heavy hearts that the Team boarded the bus to get back to Dambulla after " a day that none of us would have missed."





## ERUVIL PLAYGROUP



This is a new Playgroup that Ocean Stars has begun to support. Maureen, Ruth, Matt and Dilanee went and spent a morning at this Playgroup on their recent trip. The playgroup has 60 children and three teachers. At the moment two of the teachers are being sponsored by OST. Some of the money raised by Team 09 will go towards paying for the third teachers wages. The 60 children all look very smart in their bright red uniforms. They welcomed us warmly and sang songs for us. We arrived during a tropical storm and the children were all sitting on chairs in a small side extension to the main church building. The roof was made of Tarpaulin. The playgroup is not always able to use the church building as there are services going on at times. The OST TEAM were lucky enough to have this extra space and do craft activities, games and singing with the children. The floor had to be mopped frequently due to the leaking roof during the thunder storm. The playgroup had no toys or resources. The team visited some of the children's homes after playgroup. It was then we realised how far some of the children have to travel and also

how poor these children are. One family we visited had 6 people sleeping on a small floor with no bedding. OST hope to



Perhaps my most abiding memory will be the people who live in such poverty and yet have the ability to give and share their all with strangers .

People are so impressed with the personal touch Ocean Stars maintains with each project and each individual.

Yasmin who attends this playgroup outside her home with her family.

It goes without saying that this charity is making a difference to these folk.

A member of Team 09

## Ocean Stars Web-shop

[www.buy.at/Oceanstars](http://www.buy.at/Oceanstars) Web shop

## GIFT AID

If you are a new donor please contact us about receiving a Gift Aid form. 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.

We would like to remind you to shop at [www.buy.at/Oceanstars](http://www.buy.at/Oceanstars). All you have to do is log on to our web shop at [www.buy.at/Oceanstars](http://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 SAMBOL INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups desiccated coconut
- 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 grind until the coconut turns evenly red and all ingredients are well mixed. (This can also be done with fingers).
- Squeeze half a lime. Mix well.
- Taste and adjust salt & lime.
- Serve with rice and curries.



*"Last year Ocean Stars received over £5000 in Gift Aid"*

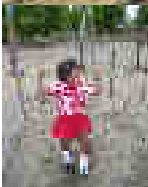


## Images from Projects:

<http://ost09.blogspot.com/>

### A FEW WORDS FROM TEAM MEMBER HELENA

Travelling across the island involved hours of buffeting in minibuses over roads being reconstructed and bridges being rebuilt in order to arrive at the Projects supported by the Ocean Stars Trust. All of which was made worthwhile by the greetings we received and the obvious joy the children and teachers experienced as a result of our visits to their nursery schools. The knowledge that they are not forgotten by the outside world gave great reassurance, to those running children's homes and nurseries, that support would continue for these children from really poor families. Many of the large NGOs have withdrawn their support from these regions and it falls to small charities such as Ocean Stars to attempt to offer whatever support they can.



A visit from OST handyman Danny meant that children at Kalkudah play-

group have got swings they can use.



Kalladay Sponsorship Scheme: OST Team member Kate meets up with her sponsor family



Children from Mandoor Playgroup enjoy lunch provided by Ocean Stars.



**Ranjini OST Field Worker:** OST Field Worker Ranjini visits all EOST projects once a month. She monitors the lunch projects, visits the 12 playgroups we work with and the teachers are able to send messages to OST UK via Ranjini. Each of the 28 Kalladay Sponsor families are also visited monthly by Ranjini. We are looking for a sponsor for Ranjini's wage is £20 a month.



### Batticaloa Hospital Therapy Project

OST funds a Therapy project that provides art craft materials to patients with mental health problems. This photo shows some of the art work done by a patient. He sold several paintings at a recent exhibition.

**An entry from OST BLOG:** Wednesday evening we set off for Dinner and a meeting with the Organisation for Deaf and Dumb Families which is yet another project supported by Ocean Stars. These families are often outsiders in the communities and have difficulty finding work and communicating with those of us who taking hearing and speaking for granted. Over twenty families were gathered together and translation became ever more complicated...English, Singhalese, Tamil, Sign...but it was all carried out with the best of humour everyone managing to get across their views, their thanks and their requests. Many had travelled for miles but benefited from being together and finding support from each other. It costs £10 to sponsor a family. Please contact us if you wish to be part of this scheme.

A family from the Kalladay sponsorship scheme.



***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.

From left to right

Janaki Jayasuriya  
Trustee

Shona Holroyd  
Treasurer

Dilaneer Bunter  
Founder

Jo Barton  
Secretary

John Bunter  
Chairperson

Bron Lambert  
Trustee

