

JAN TO MARCH- 2011

# Francis & Alison News



Dear supporters and prayer partners,

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for standing with us through your prayer and support in 2010. As we are now well into 2011, we are aware that each year brings with it fresh blessings and challenges.

The Lord continues to open doors that are far beyond our thoughts or imagination. We are encouraged when we hear from the people who have benefited from our skills training programs, the Day Care Centre and the Computer Training Course.

We recently took the tailoring girls for a beach picnic and after playing games and eating together we needed a place to sit in the shade to have our meeting. Francis approached a man who runs a restaurant near the beach and asked if we could sit under the shade of a big tree in his grounds. He asked who we were and wanted to know what we were doing.

Francis told him that we run a charity in a slum called Birla and to his surprise the man immediately asked *"Is it 'Tender Heart?'"* The man went on to say, *"You're doing a great work, I've heard a lot about you. Please use my place and all the facilities here for free."* We are very much encouraged that people know who we are and what we are doing, and are recognising the impact we are having.

The challenge of balancing our time and resources is sometimes overwhelming and so we ask for your continued prayers and support in this as we prepare to meet the challenge of transforming the lives of the underprivileged children and people of India.

*In this update you will read about some new initiatives and projects. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of writing to you.*

Francis, Alison and Abigail

## GOSPEL MEETING

On the 7th and 8th of January we had two gospel meetings. It was great to have Alan Scotland and Ewen Robertson from the UK with us to share the word of God. After the meeting it was a great blessing to see people accepting Jesus and coming forward for prayer. During those meetings God did amazing things, people were healed and came to church the following week to share what God had done for them.

In all, 11 people gave their hearts to Jesus and since then we have met with them and told them more about Jesus and how to grow in the Lord. As a result of this meeting and follow up we are now having a Bible study for them every Friday afternoon.



## WATER FILTER

The people we are working with come from the slum area where it is difficult to find clean water. AMEN charity has been providing us with water filters from the UK and Alan and Ewen helped to distribute filters and buckets during their visit. So far we have distributed more than 20. This is a huge blessing to the people as drinking dirty water is one of the main ways they contract sickness.

## **Day Care Centre: Empowering the Dalit Children through Education**

At present we have 35 children on the register for the Day care centre. All the children are doing well learning to read and write. When we think of the background of the children's families and how little they knew when they first joined us they have come a long way.

### **SPORTS AND PARENTS DAY**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of February we had our first sports day. We organised various relay games for them and coloring and singing competitions. Students who won were awarded prizes at the next parents meeting.

### **PARENTS MEETING**

In the first week of March we held a parents meeting (we do this once every two months). In this meeting we ask the children to present what they have learnt. The parents were really pleased to see their children learning to read and write.

We are planning to send some of the older children into mainstream school this June (the start of the school year in India) with the promise to the parents that we will sponsor their child's uniform, books and school bag.



## **Tailoring Centre: An Initiative to Change the Lifestyle of Women**

### **TAILORING CENTERS**

At present a total of 35 girls are enrolled on our 6 months tailoring training course.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February we were able to take the girls from our Tailoring Centre and Computer Training School on an outing to a local beach for a picnic. We see them most days during their training but find taking them out is a good way to get to know them in a more personal way. Most of the girls are from broken families and are usually busy with their work, so it was great to be able to spend quality time with them and get to know them in a less formal way.

Alison organised games for them and John Ridliy, Elvina, Dug and Kath (our friends from the UK) added more fun to the games. Before leaving we took time to pray together. There was a great response from the girls and they have since asked that we do the same every three months. We are more than willing to do this as it is one of the most natural and simple ways to show the love of God.



### **GRADUATION**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March we had the graduation of the 17 girls who completed their 6 months course in tailoring and embroidery in Goa. This Training Centre is in Birla, the biggest slum in Goa where all 17 girls live.

We had Chris Chatfield with us from the UK who is a trustee of the AMEN Charity. Chris shared the word of God and presented the certificates to the girls. Many of the girls testified of how the training has given them new hope in life. Already most of them are earning a living.



On the same day we had a graduation for the 9 young people who completed their 3 months computer training course. This training will help them to find employment and earn money for their families. They never imagined they would have the opportunity to learn how to use a computer as they thought computers were only for rich people.

# New

## Initiative and Projects

### TENNIS TRAINING

From 8<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> of February we organised tennis training for the teenagers in the slum. John Ridley from the UK who has been playing tennis over 30 years came to teach them.

The teenagers from the slum had never seen or played tennis before, but as they started leaning they made good progress and just got better and better. By the end of the training they enjoyed it so much that they now want to play tennis more than cricket!



During the training, with Johns help, we were able to take the teenagers to the circus and to the beach; they had never been to the circus before. After the circus they all had dinner and then went to the beach the next day, they had an amazing time.

After spending every afternoon with these boys for over 11 days, they shared with us how much they had enjoyed it. They told us that nobody had ever spent so much time with them or loved them or shown so much kindness to them.



### CANDLE WORKSHOP

We have been running a workshop on candle making since the beginning of March which will run to the end of April. 12 women from two slums have been attending each week. The purpose of this workshop is to teach them a skill which will help them to earn a living and at the end of the workshop they will put into action what they have learned. We will provide the necessary finance to help them start their own candle business. We will let you on how this goes in our next news letter.

### LITERACY CLASS

From the beginning of January we have been running literacy classes for the women in the slums. Most of the women who live in the slums don't have any education and so cannot read or write.

This skill alone will improve their daily life. We take reading road signs or instructions for granted and don't think twice about filling in a form, but for these ladies it is a huge disability. If they can read it will improve their quality of life and it will help them to teach their children. At present we have 5 women attending in just one slum although we want to extend it to other slums to benefit more women. We have had some people interested in teaching voluntarily; please pray that it will come to fruition.



We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and support for our work among the broken people of India. We are only able to help these people because of your faithful giving and standing with us through your prayers.

Francis, Alison and Abigail

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