



**PLATFORM
KIDS**

August 2009
Newsletter

Platform Kids Fund Inc

PO Box 501, Mt Lawley WA 6929 / 0422 445 661
www.platformkids.org.au / enquiries@platformkids.org.au

John's Visit to India

February to April 2009

I was delighted and very moved to find Platform Children Society (PCS) thriving when I arrived there. The children presented me with 'Welcome' drawings. I was almost overcome by tears when I saw how much they had grown and how healthy and beautiful they were.



Health

The children are sparkling, energetic and enthusiastic. Laughter fills the air! Apart from a few seasonal 'sniffles' they are all in fine health. One only has to observe them at play to realise they are far fitter than their counterparts in Australia! Another difference is that acts of aggression by our children are extremely rare and short-lived. Obesity is non-existent.

Diet

Visitors from western countries often become alarmed when they see an Indian child's plate of food. To them it seems overly high in rice with undersized portions of vegetables. What is not understood is that the vegetables are highly concentrated 'power-packs of nutrition'. They are added sparingly to the rice along with tamarind juice and dhal. The vegetables are either home grown or fresh from the local markets - one of the many advantages of living in a rural area. Our children enjoy chicken, eggs and fish at least once a week. Perigu (curd) is cultured in our own kitchen and served daily. We have our own Papaya (paw-paw) and banana trees on the property which provide a steady supply of nutritious fruit, supplemented by the local market. I was delighted with the way our gardens have flourished because of the willing children who tend them.

Buildings

Philemon, our Pastor, has found us a suitable piece of land near the railway station upon which we can build a **Shelter**. It will cost about A\$16,000. This means we will no longer have to rent and will have the flexibility to use the land for other purposes in the future, like training or business. I recommended that we go ahead with the purchase as land is getting scarce and expensive in Kothavalasa. The PKF Committee agreed and we are now seeking further donations to supplement donations already put aside for this purpose. Donors will be named in our newsletter and on a plaque on the building, if they agree to being recognised publicly in this way.

The new **Kitchen/Dining Hall** is a fine building. It blends beautifully with our famous mango tree and the overall campus environment. It serves us well for undercover dining and becomes a sleeping dormitory at night.

Girl's Home

In a relatively short time the new Girl's Home is running very smoothly. There are four girls living there under the loving and watchful eye of Enid, the housemother. The girls are all attending the PCS school and eating with the other PCS children. Enid looks after their hygiene and grooming. PCS provides their clothing and toiletries. The house is substantial, immaculately clean, capable of accommodating 15 girls and is perfectly located to integrate with the PCS campus. Santosh, one of PCS senior boys, stays on the premises at night.

We recently took a little four year old girl, **Divaya**, into our care. Her story is horrendous. After 20 years experience of India I wept when I heard what she'd been through. Divaya requires intensive and specialized care by Jyothi and our cooking lady, Gunnama. For the first few days she was held constantly by them, never left alone and slept with them every night. She is slowly settling down. The nature of PCS is of family, not institution, so all our children nurture Divaya with love. In perhaps 12 months she should be ready to join the Girl's Home.

Story Continues on Page 2

Annual General Meeting

2009 Annual General Meeting
Saturday 29 August, 2.00pm

St Barnabas Anglican Church Hall
104 Woolwich St, West Leederville

Followed by afternoon tea

Please return your response form via fax, post or email by 1st August

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Education

I spent considerable time making important contacts in India to support Jyothi and Appala Raju in matters such as finding well educated people to improve the quality of education in our school. I realised that we would never get an Australian teacher prepared to stay long enough to implement changing the teaching medium in our school from Telegu to English – an impossible task for a short-term teacher who doesn't speak Telegu. Through a new contact at Ashreya Charitable Society, I met a young couple who spoke good English, are fond of children and prepared to take on these challenges. I was very impressed with their resumes and unassuming manners. Rajkumar and his wife Vijaya have moved to Kothavalasa to be near our campus. Along with strategic/ coordination tasks for the school, they are teaching conversational (spoken) English to all children and staff, as well as computer operation.

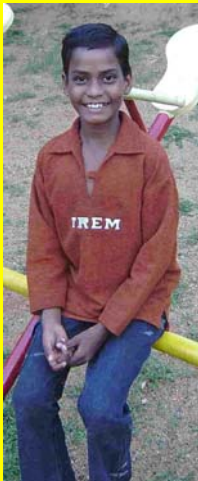
During my visit I appraised all aspects of PCS thoroughly, thoughtfully and prayerfully. I was delighted with the children and complimented Appala Raju and Jyothi on the fine job they had done during my long absence. The love there is palpable. I realised (with a

great deal of emotion) that my dream of creating a family rather than an institution was being realised.

John McCulloch Founder and Overseas Coordinator.



CHILDREN SEEKING SPONSORS



Shatesh

Biodata:

Full name: Rama Reddy Shatesh
Male, 11 years old
Birthdate: unknown
Joined PCS: March 2009
2nd class in school

Shatesh's story:

"My family was very poor. We were living near the railway station. Sometimes me and my two sisters were going to beg on platform. My father asked one friend for help. He showed us PCS. Now I am studying in 2nd class, I am happy."



Divaya

Biodata:

Full name: Kandypeli Divaya
Female, 4 years old
Birthdate: 26 March 2005
Joined PCS: July 2008
Both parents deceased

Divaya's story:

After her mother and father died, her grandmother was trying to take care of her by begging on railway platform. Grandmother became very tired and she was not capable of keeping Divaya.

If you would like to sponsor Shatesh or Divaya (\$30/month) please contact John:
platformkids@hotmail.com or 0400 577 820 (text message only)

THANKS A BUNCH

The Wagin Uniting Church recently presented John with a cheque for \$2,607 and The Wagin Lions Club also donated \$500.

A group of generous folk took on the cleaning contract for the Wagin Woolarama.

Their motto was: "We're giving platform kids in India a future".

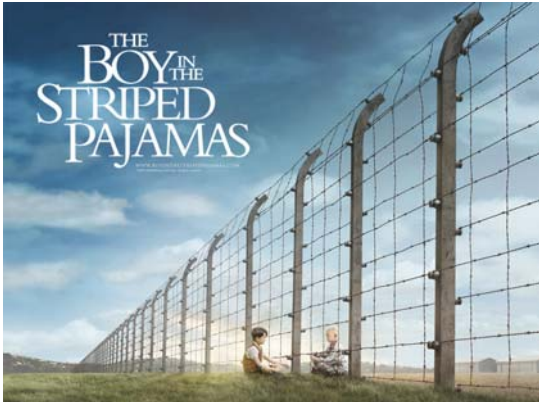
These cheerful country folk worked a total of 105 hours between them!

Thank you so much!!



Movie Night Success

Platform Kids Fund held a fundraising film night on Sunday 3rd May at the Cygnet Theatre in Como. We sold 150 tickets and raised \$1,500.



Based on the best-selling fiction novel by John Boyne, the film gave a unique perspective on how prejudice, hatred and violence affect innocent people, like children, during wartime. Through the lens of an eight-year-old boy

largely shielded from the reality of World War II, we witnessed a forbidden friendship formed between the son of a Nazi officer and a Jewish boy held captive in a concentration camp. Without spoiling it for those who haven't seen it yet, let's just say it wasn't a joyful ending!

A big thank you to all who gave donations, sold tickets, or came along to make it a very successful event.

PASSING OF AN OLD FRIEND

Appala Raju, Jyothi, children and staff at Kantakapalli are mourning the loss of a dear friend and fellow social worker. Venkat Rao had a booming voice and a heart of gold. He was a railway employee who hated to see the plight of "platform children". He took an interest in their wellbeing and was instrumental in bringing children to Kantakapalli over the years. Venkat Rao fed and transported begging children out of his own pocket.



CAN YOU HELP US?

Platform Kids are seeking new members, sponsors and Committee.

On behalf of our youngest little girl, Divaya please consider:

Encouraging friends, family or workmates to join PKF

Direct them to our website or request a brochure/registration form.

Sponsoring a child

See the profiles in this newsletter and contact John.

Joining the Committee

The positions of Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Secretary are now vacant.

Contact Naomi or John to find out what is involved.

Contacts:

Finance - David Lane

ph: 9527 6785

email: dla94930@bigpond.net.au

post: 5 Fawdon St, Safety Bay 6169

Sponsorship - John McCulloch

email: platformkids@hotmail.com

mobile (text msg only): 0400 577 820

Membership/Other - Naomi Fulton

ph: 9328 9643

email: enquiries@platformkids.org.au

post: PO Box 501 Mt Lawley 6929

