



Registered UK Charity No. 1122876

Newsletter Winter 2017

The Awake Mercy Home was founded in 2002 to provide family-style care and support for a small number of children in need. The home now houses 52 children and is run by a husband and wife team (Krishnamoorthi and Elsie), with the support of a local committee of trustees. HAPSI has supplied funds to this registered Indian charity since 2008.

## HAPSI Chairman's Visit to Awake

Glenn Sharp visited Awake in the summer and spent some very valuable time in discussion of the running of the home, health and education of the children and long-term plans. During a small break in his busy schedule he practised his Kolam skills.



## Health

Once a year, everyone, all children and all staff, have a medical checkup which includes eye tests (as well as an additional 'Eye camp'), skin tests for leprosy and blood tests.

The eye-tests check for short or long sightedness and vitamin deficiency. In addition eight children, who had been identified with potential problems, were chosen to take part in a more detailed 'Eye camp' in Trichy.

A local health inspector and his team from the local Government hospital visit regularly. The inspector comes once or twice a month; his team visit once or twice a week. They check the kitchens and water tank regularly and give advice. They give the home free de-worming tablets and iron tablets for the older girls, in addition to multivitamin tablets and some paracetamol tablets. Elsie and Krishna find this extremely helpful.

The local Health Nurse visits once a month and checks up on the children, educating them in health awareness, as well as giving support in times of fever.

Blood tests of HB (Haemoglobin) take place for all children twice a year.



Contents

Page 2 The Chairman's Visit to Awake

Page 3 ....continued

Pages 4&5 Collage

Page 6 Education and Welfare

Page 7 Plans for the Site

Page 8 Local Sponsorship



A very good local doctor from a small private hospital nearby gives the children consultations for 20 rupees each child when needed – this is a very good rate.

With respect to dental care, only the children who have joined most recently have had check-ups. The plan is for more to participate and there will be a 'Dental Camp' in future. Check-ups are cheap but treatment is expensive. Calcium deficiency is common in tribal children.

No children have asthma at present.

It is very rare that children have fractures and other breakages (when this does occur, which Elsie only remembers twice, costs for treatment are very high).

There are specific medical needs: Vairamani (the Kolam expert) for example – she is in good spirits and feeling very positive over the last year after having suffered with depression at times in the past due to her disability. Her last wheelchair was bought for her by a kind UK donor in 2011, and as it is very badly damaged due to wear and tear a new one was recently



Then .....

.... and now



## Education and Welfare

The District Children's Protection Officer & Children's Welfare Probation Officer hold meetings together usually three or four times a year. Elsie and Krishna returned from a recent meeting very depressed after much pressure had been placed upon them concerning the welfare of the children. Despite this, Elsie and Krishna reported that the Education Department & Social Welfare Department are both working closely together and approve of Awake Home because of their involvement in the 'RSTC' scheme. Three years ago there were 106 homes in Dindigul district and now there are only 60. The Welfare Office has closed the homes and has provided less satisfactory hostels.

Now, after three years of involvement in the scheme, Elsie and Krishna are very familiar with RSTC. Both the home and school are running much more smoothly and the Welfare Office is very pleased. RSTC doesn't bring in a great deal of money, but the respect, recognition and support Elsie and Krishna and the home have been given have proved to be very beneficial.

However it is as yet unknown whether RSTC will continue until 2020 as policies tend to change fairly regularly.

It is difficult for Krishna and Elsie to plan long term because of budget restraints and inflation of prices. Without prior knowledge of available UK funding and confidence that the RSTC funding will rise with inflation, they have to think in terms of months rather than years.

Elsie and Krishna say that if a '5 year plan' were possible, they would like to see the grown up boys and girls become Awake Trustees. This group includes a number of former Awake children who have left but have regular contact and visit whenever they have free time. John Peter who has been with Awake since it was founded is being trained in every area. Others have started helping to keep the accounts and there is a group which is fund-raising to help with basic needs of the home.



## Plans for the Site

Approximately 8 lakh rupees (around £10,000) are needed to complete the second building, with the addition of a second floor. However, because of the District Welfare Office's requirements, Krishna's current thinking is that a separate dining hall building is needed, for around the same cost.

Krishna aims to save for this over the next couple of years from the funds sent for this specifically from UK HAPSI supporters, but will only begin the construction when he has the full amount.

The home's site is very dry and there has been little rain, as usual. The Chairman had spent a month on the other side of Dindigul, near to Natham, where he had experienced a fair few downpours. It was clear that the Awake site is unfortunate to have had very little rain even when other nearby areas have had the deluges. The two bore wells have supplied just about enough water this year and the local piped supply now feeds a



The cost of completing a boundary wall is estimated to be £4000 in today's money. This would be a large proportion of the budget and so in the meantime the erection of a very good quality and strong fence around the site was completed in March this year at a cost of £1000.

The fence is sufficient for the time being. The block-built solid compound wall must be completed within 4-5 years for security reasons, according to the requirements of the District Child Protection Unit and the Social Welfare Officers Department.

## Local Sponsorship

There are several local sponsors of the home, usually restaurants, and 90% of what is given is food - rice, vegetables, already cooked items like samba and dabbadoms.



Krishna and Elsie keep well in touch with their sponsors by sending them hand-written, sincere thanks and reminding them of the needs of the children, sometimes almost a year after their last gift. This often prompts another similar donation. Unfortunately there are very few donations during the long summer break when the staff's wages still have to be paid and there is no income from the RSTC school project.



### **HAPSI has no administration costs.**

All funds received are used to help needy children in south India. Remember that if you pay tax HAPSI can claim Gift Aid. Please ask for a form to

*giftaid it*

Send donations, cheques to HAPSI, to the  
Treasurer, HAPSI, 23 Onslow Gardens, Wimborne BH21 2QG  
or visit the website at [www.hapsi.co.uk](http://www.hapsi.co.uk)

You can also give online through [JustGiving.com/hapsi](http://JustGiving.com/hapsi)  
or you can text a £10 (or more) donation though JustGiving by typing  
HAPI32 £10 to 70070. You will be asked if you wish to use giftaid.

The names of individual children have been changed to protect them.



