



BefriendBrief

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■ **BEFRIEND FOUNDATION WINS PHOTO CONTEST 'WILDE GANZEN' (Wild Geese) with best actionshot**



Winning photo

On the occasion of its 50-year anniversary Wilde Ganzen organised a photo contest for which the project organisations could enter their most interesting project photos and action photos. The best twenty were put on display at De Bijenkorf department store, starting in Amsterdam, followed by Rotterdam and The Hague. During the opening on October 12th Maartje van Weegen announced the winners in both categories, and presented two travellers cheques of Euro 1500. And sure enough! The jury considered the above photo of the successful Christmas envelopes campaign at the Jan Hekman school the best action shot because this campaign was "brought" to India, and Indian children are looking at the envelopes.

The photo was taken by Peggy van Holst Pellekaan (board member of the Befriend Foundation and teacher at the Jan Hekmanschool) who was in India for New Year 2007. We and the pupils of the Jan Hekman school are proud as peacocks. The prize was just what we needed for we think it is very important and useful that the Soorya Udayam project is visited every year. Up to know these trips have been financed at our own expense because the Befriend Foundation does not have a budget for this kind of expenditure.

■ **SUBSIDY REQUEST GRANTED BY NCDO**



This summer Soorya Udayan Illam received a visit from the Wild Geese consultant in connection with our subsidy request to expand the childcare project so it can also function as a learning centre. That was a tense moment. The consultant wrote a positive report - as expected - on the expansion. On the basis of this, the NCDO (National Committee for

International Cooperation and Lasting Development) has granted a subsidy of Euro 25,000. A new classroom will be built on the roof of the existing building, extra sanitary facilities will be added, and the central hall - used at the moment for tuition to "drop outs" - will be enlarged by 2 meters.

■ ALL HANDS ON DECK IN PONDICHERRY (written by Sheela van der Borgt)

"It is in Pondicherry" Helmi said to me when she told me about Soorya Udayam. That meant a lot to me for my heart is in Tamil Nadu where I was born and raised. I immediately became very interested and wanted to know everything about this Home.

We met by coincidence. We were sitting next to each other in the Tropenmuseum watching a video about India. It was the last day of the exhibition "Tempting the Gods". Now that we'd met, we promised to keep in touch. One day, out of the blue, I got an e-mail from Helmi asking me if I would be willing to translate something for the Foundation. Yes, of course I was enthusiastic. I had been looking for a good cause which appealed to me for a long time and now I had found it. Anyway, I translated some text for the newsletter and shortly afterwards I was asked if I could translate some videotapes with interviews. Yes, of course I could do that.

I watched videos of the children, made by Srikanth and Rany, and I became very emotional. I was so touched by the stories of these children. Parents/relatives of some kids had been killed by the Tsunami. I wanted to help them straight away. But how I did not know at that time.



This year we went to India during the summer holidays. We at once planned to go to Pondicherry to bring them clothing and to see for ourselves what was happening there. I went there with my daughter, my mother, my sisters and their families. There were ten of us. A large group but nevertheless Srikanth and Rany organised everything for us and we were able to have lunch with the children. My seven year old daughter was moved to such an extent (she had partly watched Helmi's videos) that she decided to part with some of her own special things. She distributed those little things herself and this made her very happy. My sisters and their families promised to come back next year to help with the "summer camp".

I noticed how happy the children were here. Srikanth and Rany work very hard to make the children independent. The rooms are tidy, and all the children in the Home understand their duties. That Soorya Udayam Illam tries to be self sufficient shows in they way they grow vegetables and herbs, and keep cows.

"All hands on deck" is Soorya Udayam Illam's motto.

■ IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The sisters Kaleeswari and Mariammal (8 and 5 years old).



Toen de vader van Kaleeswari en Mariammal - transportfietser van beroep - vier jaar geleden aan tbc overleed, raakte de moeder snel in grote financiële problemen. Ze had geen naaste familie, geen recht op uitkering, en dus geen enkel sociaal vangnet. Binnen een jaar stond het gezin - behalve de 2 zusjes was er ook nog een klein broertje - op straat omdat de huur niet meer kon worden betaald. Ze vonden met z'n viertjes onderdak in een provisorische hut op de oever van een rivier. De moeder ging met het jongste kind op de rug, lange dagen uit bedelen. De zusjes bleven achter onder de hoede van een oude oma en scharrelden wat langs de rivier of gingen mee bedelen. Ze waren ondervoed en ernstig verwaarloosd toen ze in het Huis kwamen wonen. De moeder was ook welkom als 'huismoeder', samen met haar zoontje, maar ze wilde liever met hem bij de rivier blijven wonen. Ze is heel blij dat haar dochters In Soorya Udayam zijn, en komt hen elke maand opzoeken.

■ **BENEFIT CONCERT ENGLAND**



On a rainy July evening in Chippenham near Cambridge, a brilliant performance was given especially for the Soorya Udayam project. A number of musicians who were friends had formed a band for this special occasion. The evening was a great success with fantastic music and a magnificent end result of Euro 1500. The Befriend Foundation was also present with an information stall, which showed, among other things, a video. The initiators and organisers of this night were Leigh Tebbett and Paul Mangell (bandleader).



All this was the result of a meeting on New Year's Eve 2006, when we shared a taxi with Leigh, who was on his way to Pondicherry. On arrival, however, all hotels were fully booked. For Leigh there was no room at the inn. After a phone call to Srikanth and Rany, who said he was very welcome, we took the stranded tourist to the Home, situated just outside the town. Staying at the Home and celebrating the New Year made such an impression on Leigh that he promised to do something in return to support the Home.



In a moving speech he told the audience about his stay at the Home and his deep admiration for Srikanth and Rany who put their heart and soul into this project. He called it "one of his most impressive experiences ever". Helmi spoke on behalf of Befriend, Srikanth and Rany, and thanked Leigh for "sticking to his promise". The organisers and musicians also received thanks for their involvement and contribution. After that things that things really got going, and the crowd partied deep into the night.

■ **IN CONCLUSION**

There was so much good and current news for this newsletter that the interview with Srikanth and Rany by the Empowerment Foundation, announced in the previous newsletter, had to be postponed until the next newsletter.

Rany and Srikanth have sent word that the children are doing very well. At the moment they house 16 girls and 9 boys. When accepting children priority is still given to girls. However, in practice it was not realistic or desirable to keep it strictly a girls only Home. Now brothers and sisters do not need to be separated, and a boy who is in urgent need of a place to stay, will not be left to his fate. De new DVD will be ready in November and will be sent to you.



PLEASE KEEP SUPPORTING US: IT'S A GIFT TO BEFRIEND!

ABNAMRO Bank Account number: 54 91 62 933, Stichting Befriend, Amsterdam:
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(see also: www.befriend.nl)