

February Issue 2009
 Volume 3, Issue 1

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Coming Full Circle

Special correspondent Sister Monica who is now in her 80's sends us this wonderful success story from India.



Thulasi is a tribal girl. Her parents are Sundaram Kani and Padmavathy. They belong to the Kanikaran tribe. She joined Assisi Farm Children's Home in 1984 as a 5-year-old child and completed her high school studies at the village school. Thulasi's last two years of high school was in our school at Chellamkonam staying in our Children's home there. She passed the examination in General Nursing and Midwifery in 2002 in Andra Pradesh. All these years her study expenses and maintenance were looked after by income generated on Assisi Farm.



Sr Agnet with the current crop of hopeful students seeking to follow Thulasi.

She started working in a hospital in Chennai. After two years she joined a hospital in Goa with a salary of 7000 rupees (\$233 a month). In June 2008 she was able to get employment in Yemen, one of the gulf countries, with a monthly salary of 25,000 rupees (\$833).

Thulasi is a loving and grateful girl. She has transferred an amount of 21,000 rupees (\$700) from her first salary to our bank account as a gift. This is the first time we have received a gift from a beneficiary of our help for study though many are educated by us and are holding good jobs.



Even in the open air, school is well organised.

Sewing Solutions

Embroidery is a popular activity for many of the self-help groups that Assisi supports. It provides benefits beyond being a great excuse to gather together and swap stories, information and ideas. Sales of embroidered products provide income. Training opportunities grow into careers. "Workshop gatherings" become "Training Institutes". The sharing of skills brings cultures and religions together.

Ladies sitting in an open-air courtyard work in groups embroidering clothing on large frames. Today's topic of conversation is how the group will find a way to source an overlocker to give their handiwork a professional finish and a real sales edge.



David Hayes Takes the Wheel



David Hayes, a longstanding committee member, is Assisi's newly elected President. David meets the locals and sends the following, his first trip report.

From time to time you probably ask yourself: Is Assisi a worthwhile charity? Does my donation directly benefit the poor and disadvantaged people of India? How much of my donation is spent on administration? Does Assisi do a good job or should I give to another charity?

Together with Assisi's CEO Chris Halpin, I recently spent two weeks

travelling through Tamil Nadu, which is about the size of Victoria but with a population of 65 million. Accompanied by Sister Piusha and our Indian consultants George Samuel and Suresh, we visited many of the villages that receive direct help from Assisi.

I can assure you we can trace your donations directly to beneficiaries in our projects. Their lives, self-esteem and standard of living are definitely improving as a result of your generous support. Many villagers I met expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the work we are doing.

There are many volunteers involved in Assisi and as a result, we have been able to keep overheads low.

I would like to take this opportunity from all at Assisi to wish you a happy and rewarding new year and encourage you to continue to support our efforts to improve the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves in parts of the Third World.

Assisi's New Partner

Assisi has joined forces with Melbourne based overseas development agency Live and Learn Environmental Education who now provide administrative services to our organisation. Assisi's activities will not change and continue to be the support of projects managed by Assisi Farm and Training Centre in India. Christopher Halpin continues as Assisi's CEO and our Committee of Management remains in place too. Christian Nielsen and John James from Live and Learn have joined the Committee and we welcome the experience and enthusiasm they bring with them.

The transition of administrative arrangements marks yet another phase of Assisi's amazing 34-year history. Most importantly, Assisi is strengthened in an environment where, these days, you need to get bigger or get out. The team at Live and Learn are refreshingly like-minded. Our partnership is an excellent fit and will open up exciting possibilities for both organisations.

Live and Learn delivers development programs with an emphasis on water, sanitation and environmental sustainability in several countries including Maldives, Cambodia, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu PNG and Vietnam. They also work with indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory.

EVERY DAY IS OPEN DAY

We invite you to visit Assisi and its new headquarters in Ross House in Flinders Lane. Rather than nominate just one day, we would like to make every day an Open Day. So next time you are visiting Melbourne, call us on 03 9650 1291 and arrange a time to drop in and say hello.

Introducing Live and Learn

Live and Learn is not a household name and here's why: - Live and Learn has not relied on funding from the Australian public at all to run its operation. It seeks grants from the likes of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations' UNESCO and UNICEF, the European Union and the New Zealand Government just to name a few. Live and Learn has been around since 1992 and their projects are many times bigger than Assisi's.

Find out more: www.livelearn.org

Here's a sample of the kind of project designed and enabled by Live and Learn to give the poor a permanent step up in their quality of life in Cambodia.

RURAL LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Donor: United Nations Development Program

Amount: \$300,000.00 USD

Implementation Period: March 2008 - December 2010

The action aims to make a sustainable impact on agricultural and livelihood development in targeted communities in the 3 provinces in Cambodia. The expected results of the action:

1. Farmers and communities adopting improved and sustainable farming and agricultural land management systems;
2. Improved services delivered to the poor in a participatory and demand-driven manner; and
3. Capacity increased for policy analysis and pro-poor policy formulation for the agricultural sector and for mainstreaming gender within the sector.



Time Off for Good Behaviour



According to Mary Sweeney, there is only one way to move – and that is forward. Mary has announced her retirement and we thank her for all her effort over the past five years.

Mary views the partnership with Live and Learn as a very positive move. Nathalie Michel, our new Community Support Manager, will take over Assisi's administrative reins. In particular, Mary is pleased that Nathalie will have the support

of Live and Learn's strong team of six around her every day in the Melbourne office.

Mary has enjoyed her interaction with Assisi supporters gathering your remarkable individual stories, some of which have featured in recent "Capturing the Spirit" newsletter articles. She sends you all her warm regards and wants you to know, "You Assisi supporters really are an amazing bunch!"

Welcome to Ross House Flinders Lane Melbourne

Ross House is a quirky five-storey building offering affordable tenancy to a diverse range of small community groups. It provides a stable environment and cheap resources reducing the financial pressures that often hamper the activities of small organisations like Assisi. We are now in very good company surrounded by 50 other community groups working collaboratively towards a just and environmentally sustainable society.

Find out more: www.rosshouse.org.au



Special General Meeting
Sunday 19 April 2009 10.30am
Catholic Education Office
120 Hargreaves Street Bendigo Vic 3550
Phone on the day 0409 802 051

A Special General Meeting of Assisi Aid Projects Inc. will be held to vote upon the following three amendments to the Statement of Rules and Purposes (Constitution) regarding proceedings at general meetings.

10.1 Quorum

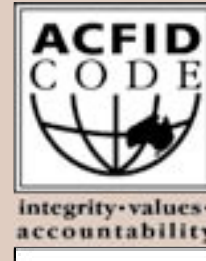
(b) Four members personally present (being entitled under the rules to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the conduct of the business of a general meeting.

10.4 Conducting general meetings

(b) Except for a meeting at which a secret ballot is held, the contemporaneous linking together by telephone or other electronic means of a sufficient number of the members in person, to constitute a quorum constitutes a meeting of the members, provided each member has a reasonable opportunity to participate at the meeting.

(d) A member who takes part in a meeting by telephone or other electronic means is taken to be present in person at the meeting except for the purpose of determining whether a quorum is present.

You can contact the Assisi office for a full copy of our Statement of Rules and Purposes to be sent to you and please let us know if you would like to attend.



Assisi is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct which defines minimum standards of governance, management and accountability for non-government development organisations. Our voluntary adherence to the Code of Conduct demonstrates our commitment to ethical practice and public accountability.

Assisi Aid Projects
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POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

I would like to help by:

Making a once off donation for development work

\$ _____

Making regular donations towards development projects

\$ _____ per month.

Please direct my donations:

- Specifically to India; or
- To any developing country where there is need (including India)

Enclosed is my cheque/please debit my credit card:

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Card Expiry Date: _____ / _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

- I would like to receive updates on progress by mail/email

- I wish to become a member of **ASSISI AID PROJECTS** and receive an Annual Report.
- Please send me information about including Assisi in my Will.

Your Name: _____
(for us to send you a receipt)

Address: _____



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Assisi Aid Projects is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is an AusAID accredited Non Government Organisation (NGO).