

Rotarians against Child Slavery

(A Newsletter for the proposed Rotarian Action Group - See website www.racsrag.org)

Issue No 5

"Rotarians should
a) defend the rule of law & order to preserve liberty of the individual
b) uphold the principle of justice for humankind realising that these are fundamental & must be worldwide"
(RI Manual of Procedures)



Child bonded labourer in Pakistan – Courtesy of Anti-Slavery International

A kick start by the Action Group

Rotarians in the Action Group are taking their first action this Autumn to help a child-slave rehabilitation center take more action.

Staff at Bal Vikas Ashram (BVA) near Allahabad, India, where boys rescued from slavery receive medical & psychological help and schooling, will soon become owners of a new motorbike. The motorbike will allow the ashram's coordinator to check on the progress of boys who have undergone the first steps of recovery

and education at the rehabilitation center and returned to their home villages, according to "Rajneesh" who runs raids & rescues, as well as keeping numerous operations running smoothly at BVA. The bike will provide quick & economical transportation for frequent field visits.

Partnering Rotary Clubs of Norwich St Edmund (England) & West Chester Downtown (PA, USA) are joining forces & funds to purchase a Pulsar 150

motorbike, helmet, bike accessories, registration & insurance. They are contributing funds through Free the Slaves, a non-profit organization based in Washington DC, which works to eradicate slavery & which helps to support Bal Vikas Ashram.

Thanks to Rtn Carol Metzker, IPP of the Rotary Club of West Chester Downtown (PA, USA) who has taken the lead on this worthwhile initiative.

Further projects planned

Carol Metzker is also heavily involved with another proposed project at Bal Vikas Ashram, ie the purchase of a motor vehicle. Brief details of this project and other

planned projects, which require funding help from Rotary Clubs are included on the second page of this Newsletter.

These projects will be implemented with the help

of Free the Slaves (an anti-slavery organisation based in Washington DC) and other NGOs in India.

Please will you ask your club to help with one of these projects.

Campaign Victory

Thanks also to those of you in the UK who took part in the recent action initiated by Anti-Slavery International, to lobby the Justice Secretary, Jack Straw to criminalize forced labour and servitude. A few days ago, the Government announced plans to introduce these two new criminal offences ahead of a Parliamentary vote. Until recently the Government had argued that existing legislation was sufficient. Anti-Slavery International has been lobbying for the new legislation since June.

RI Convention, Montreal

I am in the process of completing an application form for a booth at the RI Convention in Montreal. As you will probably know the Convention Dates are from Saturday 19th June 2010 until Wednesday 23 June 2010. If my application is successful, I will need help in setting up the stand on Friday 18th June and staffing it for the next five days. Any volunteers ?

An opportunity to help eradicate child slavery



Today, we Rotarians have a choice on the issue of child slavery. We can despair that exploitation is an age old problem, that human nature never changes, that in any case slavery is a problem for government and **then do nothing**. Or we can remind ourselves of the 4-Way Test, RI's Code of Policies in relation to the rights of children & our responsibilities as set out in RI's Manual of Procedures and **then do our utmost to help eradicate**

this evil practice.

The projects listed below will provide an opportunity for clubs to help in the process of eradicating child slavery.

Proposed projects on combating child slavery

A trafficking survivor's Ashram, Bihar, India

Free the Slaves has been working with the Diocesan Development & Welfare Society and two other Indian NGOs to develop a trafficking survivor's Ashram near Purmea, Bihar. Construction of the new facility is nearing completion.

Trafficking in the lives of girls and young women is a major problem in Bihar which is the poorest state in India. When rescue raids are initiated by the police, they invariably place the girls and young women in custody until they are released in to the hands of relatives who have arrived to claim them. Many of these "relatives" are likely to be brothel owners who will return them to the sex trade.

The new Ashram is scheduled to provide shelter accommodation for 20 girls under 18 and up to 20 women over 18. It is anticipated that most residents will stay at the Ashram for 6 months, extended when necessary. This will ensure that families can be identified and prepared for reuniting with the survivors when appropriate. It will also allow time for the first steps towards healing and physical recovery, as well as achieving progress in literacy and relevant skills.

Additional facilities required

	US\$
a) A basic library for new readers	1487
b) Rainwater harvesting system to help make maximum use of rainfall	4250
c) Solar water heating system	6163
d) Solar street lamp to make premises more comfortable & useable in the evenings	573
e) Biogas system for cooking to save costs	531

Equipment for documenting human rights abuses

Documentation of human rights abuses and of communities' attempts to uproot slavery are vital in order to generate public understanding and engagement. However, field staff are rarely equipped to capture images and footage at the moment of action and voices of those coming out of slavery.

Additional needs	US\$
a) 16 cheap digital (stills) cameras	2042
b) 4 small palm-held video cameras	2977
c) 1 high quality digital camera which takes photos in dark conditions	1063

Vehicle for Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre

Bal Vikas Ashram, a Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre near Allahabad urgently requires a vehicle with a seating capacity of approximately 12 persons. It will be used for transporting children for health check ups, restoration, court cases and raids to release child slaves. The cost of a suitable vehicle (already identified) is \$US18,500.

Invite to help. Members are invited to ask their clubs to consider funding one or more of the above projects, with the exception of the Biogas system for cooking. This has just been earmarked for assistance by the West Chester Downtown Rotary Club (Pennsylvania). Until we are successful in establishing a link with one of the relevant local Rotary clubs in India, we will initially need to channel all funds through to the Rotary Club of West Chester Downtown for onward transmission to "Free the Slaves" in Washington DC, USA.

If you wish to be involved with any of the above projects, please email me at my address which is mark.little@btinternet.com.

Rotarians' humanitarian responsibilities

After a recent Rotary meeting on Child Slavery, I was asked to spell out the basis of some of the humanitarian responsibilities of Rotarians. These are reproduced below:-

Rotary International's Code of Policies.....Article 42,020.3 - Rights of Children

Rotary International recognizing that children because of their vulnerability, need special care and attention.....& should be able to grow into adulthood in an environment of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom and equality, endorses and supports the rights of children to food, shelter, health care, education and freedom from abuse, violence and slavery. Rotary clubs around the world are committed to protecting these rights for all children, regardless of race, creed or nationality.

RI Manual of Procedures...International Service – Responsibilities of the individual Rotarian

Rotarians should

- defend the rule of law and order to preserve liberty of the individual so that all may enjoy freedom of thought, speech and assembly; freedom from all persecution and aggression; and freedom from want and fear.
- uphold the principles of justice for humankind, realizing that these are fundamental and must be worldwide.

Part Two of the Object of Rotary

To encourage, foster and promote high ethical standards in business and professions.

The 4-Way Test

Of the things we think, say or do

- 1) Is it the TRUTH
- 2) Is it FAIR to all concerned.
- 3) Will it build GOODWILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS
- 4) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned.

Mankind's humanitarian responsibilities

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Article 1: All human beings are borne free and equal in dignity and rights

Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slavery trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 13 (1) Everyone has the right of freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

ILO Convention 29 1930 – Article 25 stipulates that the illegal exaction of forced or compulsory labor shall be punishable as a penal offence, and it shall be an obligation on any Member ratifying this Convention to ensure that penalties imposed by law are really adequate and are strictly enforced.