



Novi Survat Charitable Organisation

(New Beginnings – for the destitute of Goa)

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Although Pat & I only returned from Goa on February 5th it seems as if it was months ago! We had a wonderful time and it was good to see the children and so many of our supporters. Thank you to all who made our stay so special.

Damedem.

We had the pleasure of meeting a new girl, Pooja (meaning prayer) who is eight years old. She suffers from HIV, TB of the lungs and TB meningitis. When she arrived she weighed just 10 kgs but after just two weeks of being given proper food and medicine she put on an incredible 4 kgs. The children are all fine, except for the odd cough or cold and enjoyed a wonderful outing, being picked up by coach, taken to Panjim for an evening river cruise followed by dinner at the Taste of India in Calangute before returning to Damedem by coach. The children also enjoyed an afternoon's visit by the students from Braintree College & Colchester Institute.

Starting Point.

January saw an invasion of termite ants which required the intervention of the pest control people followed by some repainting.

The children currently attending school were treated to a day out on the beach. They were entertained by the students of Braintree College & Colchester Institute and then had a scrumptious meal in a beach shack. The students also spent a lot of time and effort painting murals in the classrooms which will be a reminder of their visit for a long time to come.

Those of you who have visited the school will know that the children are transported to and from school by Tuk Tuk which has never been ideal. Thanks to the fundraising of Roger & Julia Worth and the students of Braintree & Colchester colleges we are now the proud owners of a minibus which will be used for all our transport needs including visiting the children at home and visits to the children who attend the formal schools.

Day Care Centre.

This project continues to run smoothly thanks to Dr Mina who has overall control and the doctors who attend to the children. Each time I go to Goa I see improvements in the children that I would not have thought possible. Dr Mina is currently looking out for larger premises as we have outgrown the present place and still have new children waiting to attend.

Educational Sponsorships.

It is rewarding to meet the children who have graduated from Starting Point but alarming to see how they have grown from the tiny children we knew to young men and women. The older ones are now 13 & 14 years old and will have only two years before they are due to finish school and

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seek employment, unless of course they do well enough in their final exams to qualify to go on to higher education.

It is hoped that a further nine children will be eligible to graduate from Starting Point and go to one of the formal schools increasing the total being sponsored to fifty three, all of which will without doubt find worthwhile employment or go on to college.

Thirty eight of the forty four children covered by the Educational Sponsorship scheme enjoyed a picnic at Starting Point before joining the children from Damedem on the evening River Cruise from Panjim.

If anyone is interested we still have a number of children requiring sponsors.

Volunteers.

Stephanie who I mentioned in the last newsletter had just joined us is proving to be a real gem. She has put so much effort into being a volunteer, teaching, organising the Christmas Party and integrating with the staff that she will be greatly missed when it is her time to leave. I know she is dreading the day and I am sure the children will also be very sad.

Sponsors / Fundraising.

Thanks go to Coleen Longwell and all at the Meadows Circle for raising funds, to Mrs Vanstone for providing a Christmas Hamper for us to raffle, to Laura Catley who held an outdoor market stall during the snows, Paul & Jean for buying all those items needed by Starting Point, Michelle and staff for organising the Braintree / Colchester college visits, to those of you (to many to mention individually) who sent money so that we could take the children out, Pat & John, Roger & Julia, and Michelle for taking & bringing goods to & from Goa for us, and to all of you who continue to support us in so many ways. Without your help and support we could not function.

Visa Applications.

For those of you who are not aware, since the middle of November all application for Indian Tourist Visas must be made on line. You can no longer submit UK size passport photographs (obtainable from photo booths) as they must now be sized 2" x 2". The rule that you need to be out of India for two months before re-entry still applies.

Typical of India.

A few weeks ago there was a fire in Mapusa Market. Unfortunately of the two fire engines stationed at Mapusa one was attending a fire in Calangute. When the appliance arrived they found two shops alight and proceeded to connect to the fire hydrants that had been installed some months earlier. However the fire-fighters soon found out the hydrants had never been connected to the water mains with the result that the fire engine had to use the water in its tank, drive back to the fire station to take on water and continue to do this until the fire was extinguished. As a result a total of sixteen shops were destroyed!

Caroline has been trying to register the new minibus and has made no less than eight visits to the transport registration office. Each time you go they ask for a different document but will never tell you in advance what they require. Firstly they wanted proof of her identity, next time proof of premises. As the school is rented she took the lease agreement. This expires in April so they asked for a copy of next years lease. When this was submitted they asked for proof of identity of the landlord, next proof of the landlord's occupancy and so it goes on. To try and settle the matter Caroline contacted a solicitor who drew up an affidavit containing all these details. The affidavit was declined on the ground that although details of the vehicle were included the chassis number was not! Each visit to the registration office takes about three hours! I am still waiting to here that the vehicle has been successfully registered.

Best wishes, Clive.