



# *Novi Survat Charitable Organisation*

(New Beginnings – for the destitute of Goa)

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## **Newsletter 067 June 2020.**

We hope that you are all keeping safe during this dreadful Covid19 that is affecting the whole world. It made its presence felt on March 4<sup>th</sup> when a party of twenty students from Braintree & Colchester College flew to Goa for their annual visit to our projects. Sadly one of them was found to have a temperature on arrival at Goa Airport and she and another girl were immediately transferred to an isolation facility at the GMC Hospital. The rest of the party was confined to their hotel rooms. On Saturday afternoon the 7<sup>th</sup> March they were declared free of the virus but the college decided to cancel the remainder of the trip and to have the party return to the UK. This was very sad as the students usually enjoy visiting the projects, interacting with the children and accompanying them on special days out.

India seems to have fared better than most countries probably because they introduced checks on all travellers to India in late February, banned all international & domestic flights, cancelled all railway movements and each state sealed its borders and had a very severe lockdown. This has caused great hardship especially to those daily workers who depend on earning money each day to feed their families. However it seems to have paid off as Goa has not had one death due to the virus and only a handful of confirmed cases all of which have recovered.

### **Educational Sponsorship Scheme.**

The students have been on their summer break following closure of all educational establishments but are due to return to their respective schools and colleges on June 4<sup>th</sup> to start their 1<sup>st</sup> term should the government allow schools to reopen. The Goan education system has two terms per year, the first from 4<sup>th</sup> June to November 7<sup>th</sup> and the second from November 30<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> but they do have breaks for Ganesh Festival, Diwali and Christmas. Jane is able to keep in regular contact with all the sponsored children and has advised me that many of the families are in dire straits without food and basic essentials so we (through Jane) are making sure they are in receipt of enough supplies to ensure their families do not starve or go hungry.

### **Day Care Centre.**

On 14<sup>th</sup> March a speech therapy workshop was due to be held for the children and their parents but unfortunately because of the corona virus the Day Care Centre has been closed since early March. Dr Megha who went to visit family in Belgaum, Karnataka was caught in the lockdown and was unable to return to her home in Goa until recently due to the sealing of the state borders.

### **Starting Point School.**

The school was closed in early March on orders from the government and we await instructions as to when it can reopen.

Sati & Sabuj are two of the children who attend this school. Sati is 3 years old and her brother 5 years old. They live in a very poor area in Saligao. The only food they ever get at home consists of rice and water! Consequently they eat everything given to them at school.

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The children are inseparable but are in different classes and Sati cries uncontrollably if her brother comes downstairs from his classroom a little late for lunch. Their father is a daily wage earner which means he goes out each day looking for any work he can find. As there is no 'social security' if he fails to find work then there is no money for food. Often the family will only be able to eat every three days so if there is food left over at Starting Point Jane sends it home with the children.



Sati & Sabuj



Cooking facilities in the slums.

### **Outreach Project.**

Due to the severe lockdown the team have been unable to visit the slums where life must be extremely hard. Jane saw one lady from the slums who was out begging for food and when told she could be arrested for being out replied that she had a choice of dying from the virus or starvation. Initially the government organised food distribution to the very poor but this has now ceased so we will continue to provide basic needs to as many as we can.

### **Sponsors & Supporters.**

As previously mentioned the trip by the students of Braintree & Colchester College was curtailed due to the coronavirus. This was a great shame especially as the students had worked hard to raise the money to fund the trip and entertain the projects and were later found not to have the virus. We understand that they went through a very traumatic time especially Yvonne the leader of the party who had to cope with looking after the students, handling the calls from the worried parents and liaising with the college and the authorities in India. Many thanks to Dr Mina, Jane & Xavier for their assistance to Yvonne and the students.

A big thank you to those of you who whilst holidaying in Goa have taken the trouble to visit the school and Day Care Centre and where applicable met with the child you sponsor.

A special thank you to 'Gabby' for all her fundraising efforts including the Mind, Body & Spirit Fair and the Clairvoyance evenings which took place prior to the lockdown raising very respectable sums of money, all of which goes to the charity.

Regrettably all of our fundraising events for the coming summer have been cancelled which will leave a very much reduced income this year so a very big thank you to those of you who have sent in extra donations to cover our losses.

A very big thank you to whoever donated £300 via PayPal – unfortunately PayPal do not inform us of who made the donation so if it was you please let me know so that I can thank you properly.

We are sad to announce the passing of Mr Len Bond who has been an educational sponsor since early 2006. Len has not been in the best of health for some time and our thoughts are with his family.

Best wishes to you all & keep safe.

Clive.

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