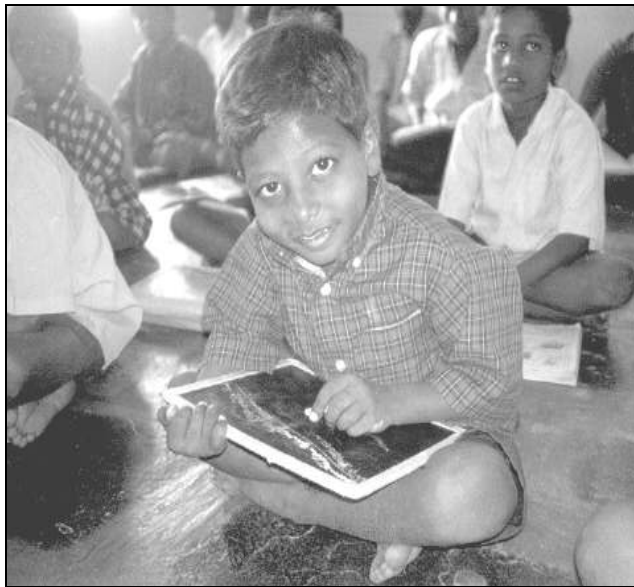


Enable

(Working in India)

NEWS UPDATE No 16 WINTER 2004-2005

Registered Charity No 1053560



Preparing a future for 6-year old Pitchaiah

In this edition:

- * **The past and the future**
- * **Update on construction of new centre**
- * **A personal account of what being a sponsor means**

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Dear Friends,

I was recently interviewed for a newspaper article about *Enable*, and the journalist asked if I was “proud” of everything we had achieved since the charity was started in 1995. I wasn’t quite sure how to answer. Of course, I am immensely proud of all that the children are achieving at the centres, and very satisfied that in the past 9 years we have been able to give hope and a future to an increasing number of disabled children. But I am always aware that there is so much more to be done!

In the next Update—during *Enable*’s 10th anniversary year—we will review some of the achievements for the children in India. I also hope that the milestone will give us greater impetus to look ahead to the next 10 years. For me, the successes of the past and the hopes for the future are not to be found in the impressive buildings we have constructed—

important and necessary though they are—but in the children whose lives we can transform. The success of the past and our hopes for *Enable*’s future work can be measured by the change we can bring to the lives of children like 6-year-old Pitchaiah (above).

Construction of the new centres

The future for children like Pitchaiah, however, depends on having the facilities for them. As described in previous Updates, we had to relocate the disabled boys from the centre at Kanigiri because of the insecurity in that area.

At the beginning of September the foundations were laid for a new *Enable* centre for disabled boys in the town of Ongole—not far from the girls’ centre. Thanks to individual supporters of *Enable*, and the exceptional generosity of some charitable trusts we have been able to make good progress with the construction.

continued on page 4...

What being a sponsor means to me

- by Gwen Gallagher

I learned about *Enable's* work for disabled children in 2001 and wanted to do something to help. My husband, Joe, and I had previously visited India and had lived and worked in the far east. Because of this I was aware that projects like *Enable's* do such immense good for the children being cared for.

Sponsoring 11-year old Subba Reddy

When I wrote for information about sponsoring a child I was struck that Alison Davis and Colin Harte who run *Enable* had so much first-hand knowledge of the children. The child I was asked to sponsor was a boy called Subba Reddy, aged about 11 (the children normally don't know their birthday or exact age). It meant a lot to me that Alison and Colin already knew a lot about Subba Reddy, having met him when they visited the centres, and that they had taken a personal interest in him.

I was also encouraged that all donations went entirely to support the children. With some other charities a large percentage of donations is spent on admin, and I thought it reflected well on *Enable* that its trustees paid for all administration and printing costs, as well as annual visits to India to see how the children and all *Enable's* projects were getting on.

Getting the chance to attend school

In the "bio-data" I received about Subba Reddy, I learned that he was from a very poor family. I discovered that typically the disabled children in the villages were unable to go to school. Sometimes the schools were several miles from the children's homes and for many children who could not walk, or who walked with difficulty, it would not be possible to attend school. Subba Reddy lived during term time at the *Enable* Centre from which he was taken daily to the local school.

I was particularly pleased that my sponsorship of Subba Reddy gave him the opportunity to attend school. A good education is the



Gwen with Subba Reddy (left) and Venkateswarulu

passport to a brighter future, and I was pleased that Subba Reddy not only had the chance to go to school but that he was getting extra tuition at the *Enable* Centre. I wrote letters to him (which were translated into his language, Telugu), and in his replies he told me he was getting good marks at school.

An unexpected visit to the centres

Although Joe and I had been to India before, I did not think that I would ever be able to return or that I would ever visit Subba Reddy. An unexpected opportunity arose, however, and last year (2003) I was off to India to meet Subba Reddy and to see for myself the wonderful work being done for the physically disabled and blind children cared for by *Enable* at its centres in Kanigiri and Ongole.

There were so many memorable events that it is hard to know where to start. There were the concerts, where the love of singing and dancing of both boys and girls abounded. The children, who could not stand 'danced' sitting,

using their upper bodies and hands. Their enthusiasm for life was infectious.

I'd already heard from Subba Reddy that he and the other children especially enjoyed the cinema, and I was pleased to go first with a group of girls, then with all the boys. The children—including those who were blind—so obviously enjoyed this special treat. Then there were the hair-raising rides in the specially made hand-propelled cycles with the boys at Kanigiri—with the boy who was driving making reassuring comments like “Good driver, Auntie!” When I saw a large lorry or bus approaching on the single track road, I was relieved that he was right. These hand-propelled cycles give mobility to those who cannot walk or who cannot walk far.

The highlight of the visit

Meeting Subba Reddy was the highlight of the visit for me and a great joy. He is a lovely boy and was very shy at first. He enjoys singing and his friends often asked him to sing. Like many of our children he has had polio, and has some difficulty walking. He works hard and told me he hopes to be a teacher.

I had the privilege of visiting Subba Reddy's village with *Enable's* Director in India, Fr Gali Arulraj. We met Subba Reddy's mother and many of the neighbours. The generosity and dignity of these very poor people was very humbling. While we were there, some of the villagers brought their disabled children to ask Fr Arulraj to help them. There are so many disabled children in these very poor villages and it is wonderful that *Enable* now has an “Outreach” programme to support disabled children in their villages.

A growing family

Although he is far away in India, I have always thought of Subba Reddy as being a special addition to our family. My youngest son and his wife decided to sponsor a child—a friend of Subba Reddy's, Venkateswarulu (pictured on p. 2). My daughter sponsors Sreenu, one of the blind boys. My husband's cousin and her husband sponsor two children and my sister and her husband are just beginning to sponsor a child. I am so pleased that they are also playing a part in *Enable's* excellent work, especially as I now know their sponsored children too from having visited the centres.

After my first visit Joe and I decided to sponsor another child. We now sponsor Koteswari, one

of the “Outreach” girls, who is supported by *Enable*, though she continues to live with her parents in her village. She is absolutely delightful and very pretty. She has a rare genetic condition known as Morquio's Syndrome. I met her for the first time this year (2004). Yes, having visited the children once I had to visit again!



Gwen with Koteswari and her father

Educating the whole child

As a teacher I have been particularly interested in the children's education, and I was eager to visit the primary school and High School. The classrooms were small and by Western standards they had few resources and teaching aids. The children were eager to learn and to show us their work. Education, however, is more than formal schooling, important though that is for the children's future. *Enable* is educating the whole child—intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Given love, care and acceptance it is wonderful to see how even the very timid and shy children grow in confidence. The ways in which they help each other and empathise with each other often shows a maturity beyond their years.

Enable helps to transform the lives of the disabled children in its care, but as a sponsor I feel it is I who am enriched for having the opportunity to know that the little I do makes such a difference for Subba Reddy, Koteswari and the other children. Being a sponsor means everything to me.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

...continued from page 1

I am happy to report the latest news from India is that construction is on schedule and the new centre for disabled boys should be completed and opened by next June. I look forward to seeing Pitchaiah and children like Narayana (pictured with *Enable*'s General Secretary, Colin Harte) making full use of all its facilities.

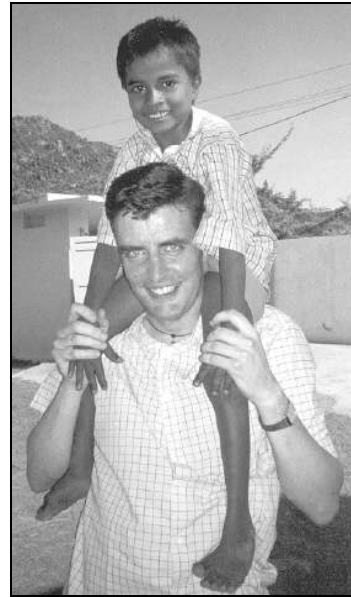
A centre and school for blind children

The second phase of our construction work will be a residential centre and school for the blind children. Currently we are caring for 30 blind children in temporary accommodation, and the new purpose-built centre will provide facilities for 80 children. When construction can begin depends entirely on our financial situation. I hope we can at least start construction during our 10th anniversary year.

Donations by standing order

Regular supporters will know that we do not send intrusive letters requesting donations for *Enable*. Our twice-yearly Update gives details of what we are trying to achieve for the disabled children in India, and supporters contribute as and when they can. We have always appreciated this and have been reluctant to ask more directly for donations.

We have also never requested that sponsors donate a particular amount in sponsorship, and therefore have not asked sponsors to increase their donations in line with inflation. In 1995 it cost £10 to look after a child at the centres for a month; it now costs more than £15. Recently, a sponsor increased the monthly standing order she had set at £10 several years ago. She mentioned that it would be helpful for her—and possibly other sponsors as well—to be encouraged to increase the standing order donations from



Colin Harte with Narayana

time to time. We are reluctant to make specific requests to increase donations as we know that sponsors (and others) are already donating generously and may not be able to afford any increase. However, for those to whom it applies, standing orders can be easily amended by contacting your bank. You shouldn't need a new standing order form, but if you do, just let us know

With grateful thanks for your support

Enable is now caring for 352 disabled children at our residential centres and in villages through our outreach project. We are also providing scholarships for 17 college and university students. Our commitments for an increasing number of children is possible thanks to the generosity of all our supporters. Thank you so much for your generosity.

With all best wishes for Christmas and 2005,

Alison Davis

Enable (Working in India)

Chair: Alison Davis Vice-Chair: Penny Goater General Secretary: Colin Harte Treasurer: David Theobalds

35 Stileham Bank, Milborne St Andrew, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0LE. Tel: (01258) 837546

Web-site: www.enable-india.org.uk

E-mail: mail@enable-india.org.uk

Enable (Working in India) is a registered charity (no. 1053560) set up in 1995. It supports centres for disabled children in Andhra Pradesh State, South India. All donations are sent in their entirety to India. Administration, publicity and general expenses are funded by the charity's trustees or from donations made specifically for these purposes. **Please make cheques payable to "Enable."**