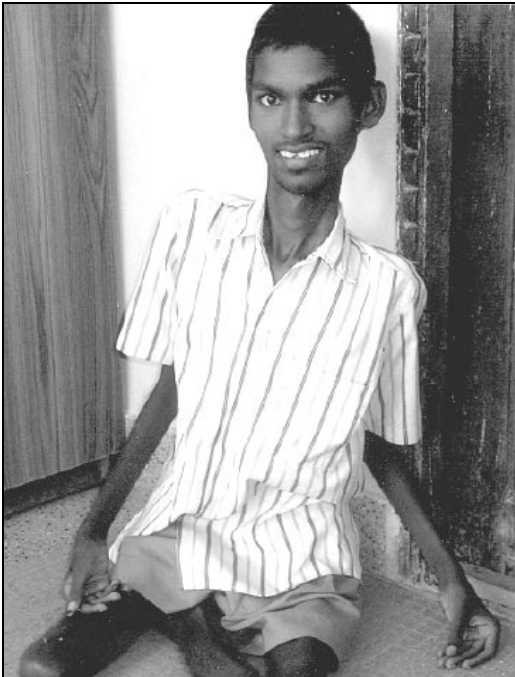


Enable

(Working in India)

NEWS UPDATE No 18 WINTER 2005-2006

Registered Charity No 1053560



Vederaj is being supported at the New Life Centre

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THE NEW LIFE CENTRE

Dear Friends,

Longstanding supporters of *Enable* will know that our work started in Andhra Pradesh state, in south India, and that it has grown considerably within that area. In the last Update I mentioned that I would write about *Enable's* more recent role at a project near Chennai (the city formerly called Madras).

Visits to monitor our projects have always begun with a flight to Chennai, which is about 200 miles south of our centres in Ongole. A few years ago Colin Harte and I were invited to visit a new project on the outskirts of Chennai, called the New Life Centre.

It was originally conceived as a centre for about 30 orphaned and destitute children,

amongst whom were a few disabled children. The director of the New Life Centre knew of the work being done by *Enable* in Ongole, and was eager to know how best to care for the disabled children.

Caring for Vederaj

On our first visit to the New Life Centre in 2001 I met Vederaj, who was then about 12 or 13. His father had died and his mother asked if he could be cared for at the centre because she was unable to do so. Vederaj had polio as a young child. Although he could walk when he was very young, he grew increasingly disabled and now he is almost totally paralysed from the neck down. He cannot stand or walk, and can move his hands and arms only very slightly—not even enough to feed himself.

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THE NEW LIFE CENTRE

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In fact, Vederaj was as severely disabled as any of the children we have been caring for in Ongole. His needs were particularly great and we wanted to do what we could to help.

As with many projects in India, the New Life Centre had a very small budget. Although we were aware that *Enable's* budget for our existing projects was limited, we felt it was right to see what we could do for Vederaj and the other disabled children. We also discovered that the New Life Centre had capacity to accommodate more disabled children, but lacked the funds to care for them. We realized that, as with our own projects in Ongole, arranging sponsors for the disabled children would assist them.

A bean bag for Vederaj

When a friend who was already sponsoring a girl at Ongole asked to sponsor another child, I suggested that she and her family sponsor Vederaj. As a result, we have been able to provide more aids for Vederaj, such as a specially made bean bag to sit in. Because Vederaj cannot support himself, and is very thin and frail, the bean bag is much better than an ordinary chair. It is, however, quite expensive by Indian standards.

The staff at the New Life Centre are very attentive to all the children in their care. Being so immobile, Vederaj is very dependent on others for support. I have been struck by the staffs' concern to help him participate fully in events.

Taking part in concert performances

One of my most treasured moments was seeing Vederaj take part in the concert performance of some of the most disabled children. They all played instruments of various sorts (some borrowed from the Centre's kitchen!). It had been discovered that Vederaj was able to shake a small set of bells and he really enjoyed being able to join in with the others.

Vederaj's future is uncertain. However, the staff at the New Life Centre work hard to enable him to enjoy life as much as possible. He is treated with much love and respect, and I am pleased that *Enable* has been able to help him.



Vederaj has more comfort with his bean bag

Supporting more disabled children

Because we found sponsors for Vederaj and the other disabled children at the New Life Centre, not only have we been able to assist them better, but the increased funding has led to an increase in the intake of disabled children at the Centre; there are currently 15. Other disabled children are being supported in their home villages, with the New Life Centre as a resource that they can turn to.

The New Life Centre operates in a similar way to our centres in Ongole. As in Ongole, *Enable's* role is one of resourcing and developing locally initiated projects which are run by a very caring and committed staff. *Enable* is hard pressed to fund its existing projects in Ongole, but our trustees believe it is right to encourage and support other projects in order that disabled children over a wider area receive the support they need.

As the New Life Centre is quite close to the airport in Chennai, our annual trips to India now begin and end with a visit there. The children's infectious enthusiasm for life mirrors that of the children in Ongole. Having struggled with the language Telugu spoken by the children at Ongole, my current challenge is to learn Tamil to speak with the New Life Centre children. It's quite a challenge, but to be able to communicate with the children makes it all worthwhile!

With sincere thanks for all your support,
Alison Davis

Developments in Ongole

In his letter on page 4, Fr Arulraj remarks that it has been a busy year in Ongole. Being familiar with all that has been going on during the past year, I know that is something of an understatement. The achievements of the past year have been quite remarkable.

As was reported last year (see Update 16), we had an ambitious building project, which began in September 2004. We had bought land on which we aimed to build first a centre for disabled boys, and then a residential home/school for blind children. When Alison and I visited Ongole in January 2005, we were pleased to see the progress that had already been made on the boys' centre. We were, however, concerned that huge rises in construction materials meant that the costs were more than doubling.

A centre for disabled and blind children

Together with Fr Arulraj and his colleagues in Ongole, we discussed how we should deal with the rise in costs. It was decided to amend our original plans, so that instead of having two separate buildings (one for disabled boys and another for the blind children), we should combine them in one. The construction was still at a stage which enabled us to do this.

The centre has been built so that some things – such as dining and recreational facilities – can be shared by all children. However, in view of the distinct needs of the children, one wing (on the left, below) is for the blind children, and the other wing for disabled children. The children moved into the new centre in September, but the official opening will be in January 2006 when Alison and I, with other trustees and supporters, visit Ongole.



The new centre for disabled and blind children in Ongole



15 year old Eswamma after recent surgery

Focusing on the needs of individuals

The success of *Enable's* work is not, however, just seen in the necessary construction of buildings, but in the benefits that come to individual children. During the year, our main priority has been the ongoing task of looking after the daily needs of the disabled and blind children living in our residential centres or cared for in their villages.

Children continue to have life-transforming operations. When we first met Eswamma (above) three years ago she was crawling, unable to stand. We recently received a photo of her standing with crutches and calipers, after having had surgery. We look forward to seeing her progress when we visit in January.

Gratitude to our supporters

Generous donations from *Enable's* supporters and some charitable trusts have helped us to construct the new centre. A further £50,000 has been borrowed from the bank and we hope to be able to repay it as soon as possible. We have had to "tighten our belts" –e.g., not buy a necessary jeep—because we really cannot afford it at the moment. We are always immensely grateful for the generosity of *Enable's* supporters, knowing that it transforms the lives of children in our care.

Colin Harte

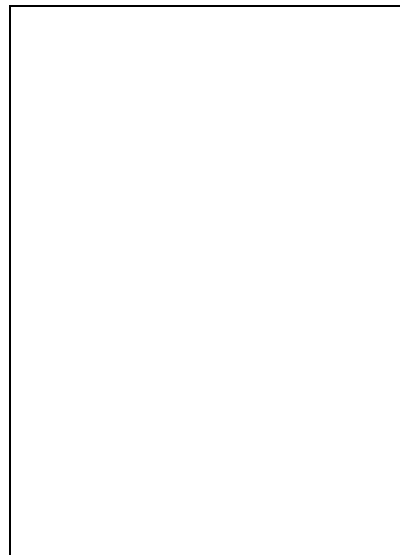
Loving greetings to you from Fr Gali Arulraj, writing from Ongole, Andhra Pradesh state.

I am very happy to have the opportunity to express my very sincere and heartfelt thanks for all you are doing to help us in our work for the betterment of disabled children.

2005 has been a very busy year for us in Ongole. In addition to our usual work of continuing to care for the disabled and blind children we have had the task of overseeing the construction of our new centre. We now have a beautiful centre which will be used for many years by disabled and blind children.

While the new centre was being constructed I was conscious daily that we were able to build it only because of the generosity of our supporters outside India. I sincerely thank you for this and for all your loving kindness for our disabled and blind children.

In January, Alison Davis and Colin Harte will join us for the formal opening of the new centre. I am very happy when they visit us every year, and when other trustees and supporters of our charity visit us. Visitors always experience the children's love and affection for them, and this reflects their feelings for all of our supporters.



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Our charity was formed in the UK in 1995 after Alison and Colin visited Andhra Pradesh. Many of the small children they met then are now at university or working. Some are married. Thanks to our supporters our children now have a bright future. Without them, in most cases they would not even be able to go to school.

At this juncture, I thank you sincerely for all your ongoing loving support. Although you are many miles away you are close to our hearts.

With loving wishes for Christmas and 2006,
Fr Gali Arulraj

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

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+ " 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. 5 \$ 6 7 ,8