

Namaste, India Calling

September 2010

15 New Children!

Can you imagine if 15 children showed up on your doorstep in the space of a couple of weeks?

How would you feed them? Clothe them? Where would they sleep? How would you integrate them into the family? Make sure everyone felt loved and welcome?

These are just some of the challenges being faced by Vatsalya as, in the last month, 15 new children have come into Udayan, the children's village for orphaned, abandoned and economically deprived children. Vatsalya sees this as an opportunity—an opportunity to ensure these children have a safe and loving place to grow up.

Working quickly and purposefully, Vatsalya has arranged the living quar-

ters to welcome the new children. Each has been paired with a child already living at Udayan to help them feel at home and begin building that sense of family.

15 new children are an exciting addition to Udayan but they also bring increased financial pressure. We urge you to go to our website (www.NICFund.org) and sign up to become a Friend of Vatsalya. The requested donation is \$100. This relatively small amount helps Vatsalya accomplish its vision and continue reaching out to children in need. Please help. You can make a difference.

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

Edward Everett Hale



Sampriti—Ohana Service Learning Exchange

We started at the beginning of the year. A group of eager students in from Udayan named themselves "Sampriti" which means heartfelt friendliness in Hindi. A group of Colorado students named themselves Ohana, the Hawaiian word for family. The goals were simple—try to build a connection across the world, learn about each other and have some fun along the way.

Jointly modules were created that included sharing about their lives,

their holidays, sports, food, clothing and traditions. We had many more ideas than we had time :)

We shared chai, samosas and chutneys with the American kids. We wanted to share a typical American snack with the Indian kids with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and chips coming quickly to mind. This led to a great experience learning how to make peanut butter when we couldn't find it in the village. None of the Indian children had ever tasted peanut butter. What fun!

We hope to continue this project next year and take advantage of technologies like Skype to enhance the exchange. Ultimately, our dream is to have an exchange similar to the Scotland/India exchange you'll read about below and take the kids from Colorado to India and vice versa. Imagine how life changing that would be for all involved!

"This exchange made things more real than news, TV, documentaries. Doing things makes it better." An Ohana Student



Scotland Comes to India

What would it be like to take five Scottish teenagers around the world to India and have them live for three weeks with the children of Udayan?

This is exactly what is going to happen in October. Five teenagers, who all live in residential care facilities throughout Scotland, along with five staff members and two children's rights workers from Who Cares? Scotland will be making this extraordinary and life-changing journey.

This exchange program was the brain-child of Maureen Anderson from the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) and Vatsalya. Funding has been raised through private fund-raising efforts by all

the participants. SIRCC has also awarded its annual Travel Award to the five staff who are taking part for their contribution in promoting the involvement of residential child care staff in international learning opportunities.

The program for the Scottish children will be full. They will have a chance to sightsee and experience the Hindu festival of Diwali. Most importantly they will get to experience, share and "exchange" cultures. They will also have talks about their rights and how they are protected while they are under care, again, comparing this with India. Scotland and India have exactly the same legal requirements regarding child rights as both are signers of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This trip will not only be impactful for the children, but also for the staff. Workshops have been planned where the Indian and Scottish staff will be able to share the challenges and joys of working in residential care while learning about techniques and methodologies used in both countries.

The expectation of this program culminates with children from Udayan going to Scotland, with accompanying staff, sometime in June 2011. What an adventure that will be for these children, some of whom have only recently gained legal recognition by the government, thanks to Vatsalya's tireless efforts.

NICF looks forward to sharing pictures, stories and what are sure to be remarkable results from this program!!

Vatsalya – Udayan is on Facebook

Thanks to the efforts of a generous Australian volunteer, Caroline Poiner, Vatsalya-Udayan now has a Facebook page and is connecting people all around the world with the extraordinary work being done by Vatsalya and the continuing need of the 18-20 million children living on the streets of India.

After just a few short months, the

Vatsalya-Udayan Facebook page has over 750 friends.

There are frequent posts discussing conditions in India, child rights, and also, now, posts from some of Vatsalya's children. Carefully supervised, it has been exciting to open up this world to children, that perhaps a few months or years ago, were living in culverts or on concrete floors at the

railway stations.

Check it out, You'll be able to read and see firsthand the amazing work that is being done by Vatsalya. Become a friend of Vatsalya-Udayan and encourage all of your friends to do the same. You won't regret it!

*Be the change
you wish the
world to be*

Gandhi

NICF Launches on Facebook



Following the successful launch of Vatsalya-Udayan's Facebook page, NICF approached Caroline Poiner about building a page for NICF.

At the end August we launched NICF's

Facebook page and we are just beginning to fully understand how to use this powerful and popular tool. You can find us by searching under NICF.

We'll post pictures of Vatsalya-Udayan, information about the conditions of children living on the streets, explain the opportunities to volunteer and make a difference, and provide uplifting reports on the outstanding

results being achieved by Vatsalya in their never-ending quest to help orphaned, abandoned and economically deprived children in India.

Facebook have proven to be an effective and quick means of communicating with people, all over the world. Please find us and "like" us and tell all of your friends and colleagues to do the same.

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**Help us give these children
back the childhood they
deserve**