

NewDawn India Trustees' update

This has been another difficult year in terms of fund-raising but we are blessed with loyal supporters who have really risen to the challenge.

Emma Bowyer, one of our trustees, completed a cycle challenge from the "comfort" of her home, visiting all the postcodes of the children's sponsors. Messages were read out to all the sponsored children, once they were allowed to meet again, and it was a delight to see their response to Emma on video.



In spite of Covid restrictions we were able to hold a very successful lunch and curry evening all on the same day. It was a busy but enjoyable day and it was good to hear the update from Jim on all that had been going on in Madurai during the lockdowns. Jim's video is still available on our website www.newdawnindia.org in the News section.

Many people enjoyed the opportunity to make Christmas wreaths and have asked for this event to be repeated in 2022. Some people found creativity that they didn't know they had, thanks to the tuition of the volunteer instructors.



Future events

Cake and plant sale with coffee morning
10am-12 noon on May 28th at Capel St Mary Methodist Church.

Details of summer lunch and curry evening to follow.

News from Madurai

This year has seen several marriages of the Vidiyal alumni. Jim and Sharmila have enjoyed the opportunity to meet up with many "old boys" and "old girls" when they have attended the weddings. On each occasion they have welcomed the married couple into their home for a meal and a celebratory evening.



There have also been several babies born into the extended Vidiyal family, which has been great cause for more celebration.

It has been a joy for those of us who remember meeting these young people on earlier visits, to see them now with their own homes and families.



Madurai had a really heavy monsoon this year which brought about the frightening collapse of the wall of a house in Ambethkar Nagar. This was the home of two of our Vidiyal children and their mother. Luckily the children were not at home at the time and mother escaped with only slight injuries.



Jim and the Vidiyal team were alerted and were able to provide for the immediate needs of the family, who were found a temporary place to stay.



An SOS was sent to NewDawn India and we were able to step in and help with the funds needed to build a new home for the family. It was constructed with amazing speed and the family is delighted with the new home.



House warming ceremony



Schools in Madurai have remained closed for most of the two years of the Covid epidemic. Now schooling has recommenced for 6 days a week and longer hours, so the children are finding it really hard. Some children have left school and left Vidiyal because they have found menial work while the schools were shut and are now reluctant to give up that income and return to their studies. We find this very sad but, as an organisation working with poor families in India, we have to be understanding of the needs within the slum communities.

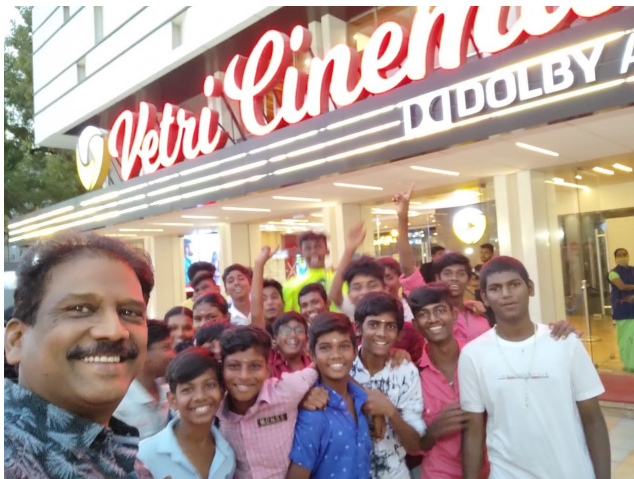
While the schools were closed, Jim and the team endeavoured to supply useful learning activities to the children within the communities, making full use of the volunteers living within the individual slums.



Once the Vidiyal centres were allowed to reopen, activities began again in earnest, including a Christmas celebration on Christmas Eve.



The film club was able to recommence with a trip to the local cinema, a real treat for the Vidiyal children involved.



An event was also organised to thank the staff and volunteers for all their contributions throughout the year. The evening began with some fun activities and then moved on to a local restaurant for a meal. This was a much appreciated gesture for all those taking part.



A new computer room has been set up in the Muthupatti centre and the children are having lessons in multi-media presentations, an area of real growth in Madurai. Vidiyal is lucky to have a very talented tutor in a former Vidiyal lad who has returned to join the staff team.



It was great to hear of one of the lads completing his degree and obtaining a prestigious junior reporter role with a media house. What progress a little 3 year old lad from the slums has made with the help of Vidiyal and NewDawn India! His parents visited Jim to express their thanks for all the support that their son has received.



Some of the children stay with Vidiyal for years and make a very successful future for themselves. Others may only stay a short time. However, all of them receive huge benefit from the education and opportunities that they are given, which will have an impact on them and their families in the future. Thank you for the way you have contributed to this success and please continue with your much-valued support.

April news direct from Jim

Yesterday we organized the **Mother's meeting** after two years. It was so encouraging that 117 mothers participated. Since this was the first meeting after the pandemic I made it a point that I address them to strengthen the rapport with families. I spoke with them on the topic "Five important pillars in a child's life" they are The Child himself or herself, Family, School, Community and Vidiyal. They appreciated the take home message provided through this talk. Some of them asked about your well being and thanked Vidiyal / New Dawn for the support provided throughout the pandemic in providing relief kits to the family, elderly, children and organizing home based and community based activities for children during the lockdown.



Today we celebrated the **Sponsors Day** at Vidiyal in a fitting manner. 139 children and 20 volunteers participated which is 85% of turn out which is very encouraging. The children belonging to the Nandhavanam forum which looks after the special programmes for sponsored children anchored the event. The event began with the anthem of Vidiyal Child Rights Movement and then a welcome from the head of Nandhavanam forum.



During lockdown we have realised the value of modern technology and have managed to have meetings directly with Jim. Now we have discovered the technique I am sure that we will keep it going. Jim asked me, as sponsorship secretary, to send a video message to the children on this special day.
Sandra

Then we played the video of Sandra. I translated it for the children and then elucidated the importance of sponsorship in a child's life and the role of sponsors in the lives of children. Then children prayed for the sponsors and thanked the sponsors and New Dawn for the sponsorship, love, prayers and blessings. Children were served with butter milk, chicken puff and a cake during the break. After that children gathered in five age groups where children played and enjoyed fun games.



Then they returned back and got in groups of ten. Every year we organize this to encourage children to remember their sponsors and to thank them specially for the love and concern shown upon them. In the team event children were asked about their sponsor numbers, name of their sponsors and information about their sponsors and family. Children enthusiastically participated and one team won the prizes for the day.



Children were served with chicken Briyani at lunch which was sumptuous and tasty.



I take this opportunity to thank the sponsors for your special love for Vidiyal kids.