

THE
Sylvia Wright

TRUST

Reg. Charity No.326139

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Dear Supporters,

Once again, I thought you might like a brief Summer Update in place of a full Newsletter.

Sylvia was with us in May and has returned to India, hopefully refreshed. This year, for the first time, she brought with her two teachers from the school and with the help of Hilary Sutherland, we took them on a wide ranging study tour, examining how deaf children are educated in the UK. This was most illuminating for the visitors and for the Trustees and a number of useful ideas and contacts emerged.

Among several new initiatives, one of the staff is now to be fully trained in audiology and the children are all being re-fitted with soft ear moulds. Even earlier intervention and the education of the parents can also make a huge difference but it is clear however that the quality of the childrens' hearing aids is poor which in turn limits the development of speech for some of them.

Things are going well in the Hospital, which is now licensed to carry out a number of additional operations, funded by the State Government and available to those below the official poverty line. State provision still has a long way to go but the trends are encouraging and who knows, this partnership may develop and the Government may be able to take over full responsibility one day.

The school is also running well and all of the GCSE and A level students passed in all subjects apart from a single unfortunate child who failed in Maths. The school now has broadband but a distinct lack of IT equipment. Old laptops would be most useful.

The two centres for severely disabled children continue to give a vital service and visitors are continually impressed and humbled by how much good is done at such little cost.

The first intake of 20 students into the Nursing College have completed the first of their four years and are awaiting their exam results, while the building of the college itself, the hostel and the dining hall are almost complete. The total cost will be around £190,000 of which around a half has been funded by some, specific donations and the other half from our reserves. The second 20 students have been selected and begin their studies in July.

In the UK, the Trust is in good health with an increase in the number of core supporters over the year. The Sylvia Wright Action Group (SWAG) has met 3 times and is proving to be a very valuable source of ideas and practical help. It is a very informal and flexible group. The last meeting was attended by 24 supporters, which

is marvellous and the next is at 2 pm on September 3rd in Leeds 16. Tony Hartigan would be pleased to hear from you on 01943 851431 if you would like to come along or if you think you can help in any way. The Essex support group is also very active and is raising funds for a microbiology unit, an ambulance and a keyhole surgery unit, and they have also formed our first Youth Group.

Angela and Denis Clark are nearing their very ambitious target of finding sponsors for all the children at the school and have now reached 200, with only 15 children not sponsored. It is now also possible to sponsor the children in the disabled centres, so please consider this. Angela can be contacted on 0113 2677660.

We have always suggested sponsors give what they can realistically afford, albeit, with inflation we have noted that the total cost of food, accommodation and education is now around £30 per month in the school and around £10 per month in the centres – both tremendous value for money. (For those who send small presents to the children from time to time, Jig Saws are apparently a current favourite.)

Pat Bailes has made great progress in developing school support and there are now twelve schools which regularly support Sylvia. Eight of these schools also sponsor children and one, Notre Dame 6th Form College, has formed its own Support Group. Many of our schools supported the Concert for Sylvia in May which was a great success and raised over £3,000 – many thanks to everyone who helped or came along. Pat is always looking for new school contacts and can be reached on 0113 2037228.

Tony Hartigan continues to develop our publicity materials and media contacts. The web site is up and running and Tony has taken on the task of publishing our Newsletter. With help from students and staff in the Media Department at Leeds Trinity University College, we have been working on our first DVD. There has been a marked increase in media attention over the last year including a pending article in “Yours” magazine on 27th July.

Visits to India to see Sylvia’s work are increasing and a number of first time visitors have gone out in the last year and thoroughly enjoyed and been inspired by the experience. If anyone would like to visit independently or perhaps join me in the Autumn, please let me know.

Our regular income has held up well despite the current economic difficulties but we do anticipate a small shortfall in our current account this year and have held the level of our regular grant unchanged at £15,600 per month. At the same time the capital cost of the Nursing College has reduced our reserves substantially. The Trustees did consider an appeal for the Nursing College but felt the time was not right, though any further related donations would of course be most welcome.

Sylvia continues her tireless work and sends her grateful thanks for your support. As she often says “Without you I can do nothing”

Can I add my own thanks to both new supporters and those who have helped Sylvia for so many years.

With Kind Regards

Tony Allinson (Chairman)