



Responsable de Publication: Hubert FABREGUES  
 Rédaction: Muriel BONET – Hubert FABREGUES –  
 Claude NEVERS – Jean-Michel COUTEAU –  
 Mise en page: Muriel BONET

## NEWS FROM INDIA AND FRANCE

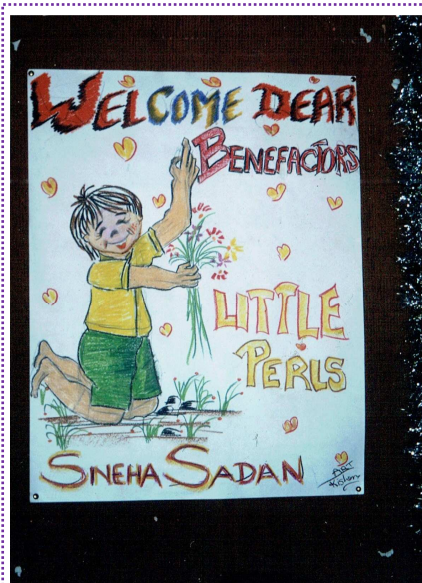
Bulletin of **A**ssociation **F**rançaise pour l'**E**nfance **A**bandonnée

A.F.E.A : 17 rue Voltaire, 44000 Nantes – Tel/fax : **02.53.45.12.18**

E-mail : [accueil@afea-sneha.org](mailto:accueil@afea-sneha.org) – ccp : Nantes 3093 77 N

Site : [www.afea-sneha.org](http://www.afea-sneha.org)

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### A« MODEL »

This issue, with news from one or the other, deals with three subjects :

- the rest of the tribute paid to house-parents, “in the front row” offering to children structuring educational markers.
- the investments to renovate the oldest buildings : a real restauration of Snehasadan assets, a token of the future
- the story of a family success by a former street-child : is it not what we aim for ? it gives all its meaning to your generosity.

These themes are mutually dependent, completing each other to form this “model” of family home which we dream of. Whether we like it or not, whether we know India or not, as tourist or professional, we are faced with the emergency call for help from underprivileged children. This call is often insistent, sometimes discreet or with lack of self confidence, sometimes more aggressive, but there it is ...

We may listen to it, we may react in our own way, with our heart, thus allowing a child to discover year after year these steps of an Indian saying : “*When I was young, I thought life was only joy. Thanks to my education, I learned that life was service. And now adult, I know that service is joy*”.

Jean-Michel Couteau - Président



### EDITORIAL

- page 1 Editorial from Président
- page 2-3 The House-Parents
- page 3-6 News from India
- page 7-9 Family success story
- page 9-10 News from France
- page 10 Contribution Help

*In the name of the AFEA team, we offer you our friendly best wishes for the year 2019, full of projects and ... fulfilments ! Beyond a simple ritual politeness, our wishes find their meaning in this impetus of collective solidarity which drives us.*





# *THE HOUSE-PARENTS* (LAST PART)

Dans quelles conditions matérielles vivent-ils ?

## **What are their living conditions ?**

In the home, there is a large multi-purpose room (sleeping, eating, working, playing ...) as well as a small quarter for the parents and their own children. Some recent buildings have 2 levels, allowing to separate the children of different age. It means the parents have to be present upstairs "and" downstairs !

Such a condition is frequent in India and it requires the participation of ALL to the day-to-day tasks, with organisation and self-discipline. The mother's role is to manage the home, with a salary as lady of the house and educator. The father often works outside : thus the children learn the value of money earned at work and the importance of a professional qualification for adults.

## **How to run the family budget ?**

The parents manage the running expenses and report about the use in the weekly meetings with their colleagues, during which they can share their possible difficulties and may call for help in order to cope with all sorts of problems.

## **What are the priorities of the educational team ?**

The parents's priority is of course the adequate schooling of their children but they also deal with wider issues of education : the girls and the boys want to do well but they nevertheless remain children, then teenagers more or less difficult.

Given the heavy task of house-parents to run their "large family", different forms of support are provided :

a/ social workers help in various ways : professional guidance, health problems, day-to-day life ...

b/ a psychologist deals with the sensitive cases

c/ a booklet describes « the job of parents »



Meeting of the house-parents



### To conclude :

If nothing is better than feeling at home, the parents do their best to offer this to children, acting as their « Mum and Dad » and growing, educating, loving them in order to allow them to become free men and women, capable of living with dignity.

Father Fonseca, a former Snehasadan Director, always acknowledged the generosity and efficiency of the house-parents. *He paid tribute to them in saying : « over the years, I witnessed the commitment and dedication of parents towards the children they had in charge. It is a 24 hours a day task, from the beginning of the dawn to the one of backache. They work hard, even sometimes to the detriment of their own children. Many of these girls and boys discovered a way to love, a feeling of being safe, like being born again, that their own parents may not have had the possibility to offer them”.*

## *News from India*

### NEWS FROM SNEHASADAN

#### Investments in SNEHASADAN

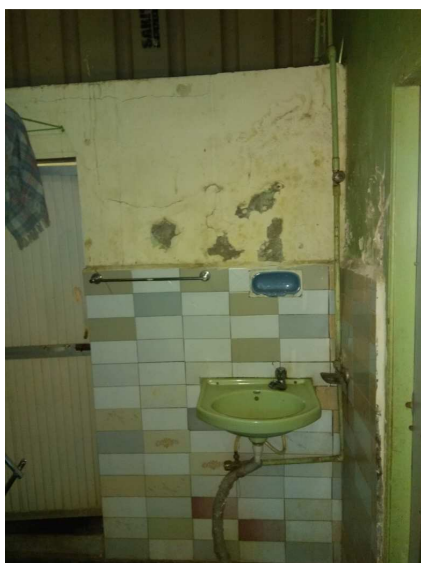
##### HOUSE 14 : LONAVALA

Installation of a drinking water tank and cleaning of the drainage basin used by the children as swimming pool.



##### HOUSE 12

Renovation of the showers and toilets



Before and after





## News from the family

The 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Snehasadan was celebrated on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, with Mass, entertainment program, dances, speeches and sharing experiences, prize-distribution.



**Ms Savita Sav**, one of our girl House no 9 underwent a surgery. Her condition was quite critical after the operation but thankfully she started her recovery and now she is doing well. We thank all those who helped us monetarily as well as in volunteering to stay with her for the night.

**Mr Anthony D'Souza**, a former house-parent of House 11 passed away at the age of 80. Many children loved him. He and his wife Flavia served Snehasadan for more than 10 years.

**On 20<sup>th</sup> August** the staff, houseparents and management spent a day of fellowship and interaction with each other. It was a time to let go and relax, enjoying the sharing in a cool and pleasant atmosphere.

**Our annual trip to the Mount** was different this year. Our finances were tight but everything fell into place as sponsors contributed to lunch and travel expenses. Many thanks.

**Amin Sheik** the author of "Bombay to Barcelona", one of our ex-boy, got married to Sara from Spain. The wedding reception was held on the ground in front of House 3.

**Our Diwali vacation** : the children enjoyed their camp with usual fun fare of festive decorations, long treks and various self-learning activities and presenting all their skills on last day of the camp. Fr Felix D'Souza was in charge of the boys and Fr Noel Pinto of the girls. Thanks to all those who helped out.

**Azharuddin Sayyed** joins Vinay Singh of House 6 to take up a job on a Cruise Liner. A farewell was held in his honour and we wish him all the best.

**We close the year with the Family Day** with Mrs Pratibha Owai of the DWC office as chief guest. The children put up several cultural programs, took part in a quiz competition and returned home loaded with gifts and smiles on their faces. The program was sponsored by Concordia.



## ASHRAYA : A home for mother and child

Given the major problem facing the country with ill-treatment of young girls and women, we - at Snehasadan - have been doing our little bit to assist these distressed sisters of ours, at a home called "Ashraya".

This home is a joint venture now with the Sisters Adorers, as a result of the efforts of our contact centre Amchi Kholi at the main Mumbai station, where several abandoned women and children come in search of a shelter, a job, a place where they can begin life all over again. "Ashraya" is not a crisis centre or shelter for women from the slums or pavements of Mumbai. It is a base for abandoned women and children who find themselves deserted by their near and dear ones. At the home, they are provided with counselling and efforts are made to revive their marriage (if any) and to do whatever possible to rehabilitate them.





At the moment there are 20 women and young girls residing who are being looked after by 4 Sisters. Their story is dramatic (a violent husband not working, harassment, abuse, forced marriage ...). This gives us an idea of the kind of complicated cases which the Sisters have to deal with. Their work requires a lot of patience. They have often to face violent behaviour and are forced to get in touch with the police and lawyers. Yet, the complete transformation they have been able to bring about in the many women they have succeeded in setting back on their feet to begin a new life makes their work immensely satisfying and highly commendable. We wish them all the best as they celebrate the golden jubilee of "Ashraya".



### **NEWS FROM ARULOLI (PONDICHERY)**

Month of April has been a busiest month for our girls. All of them were working hard for their annual Exams and four of them were preparing for their Board exams.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of April we the Daughters of the Heart of Mary celebrated the 200 years of our Foundress Marie Adelaide De Cice's death anniversary. All our children participated in the cultural programme and enjoyed the special meals.

By then all have finished their exams and got ready to go home for holidays. They were excited to go and spend few days in their home atmosphere. One or two did not go because their guardians could not come to take them; they remained in the home, few days they spend with our sisters at Parangipettai for a change. When asked they did not feel bad for not going home because during the absence of the majority, it is they who plan the day including the menu for their meals.

Whole of May there were other activities like painting of the house and cleaning and arranging things. At the end of May National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, New Delhi send their representatives for Social Auditing of Child Care Institution in our District. They had come to our home for Social Auditing and expressed their satisfaction.

First of June all have arrived after the holidays. For few days they were excited in sharing their holidays experience with one another including the one who remained in the home. Schools were reopened, thrilled to go back to school. Board exams results were out. Four have appeared for 10<sup>th</sup> std, three of them have passed, one of them got 85% marks ie Yashini. The others have gone to higher classes. This year the Government has changed School uniforms for students. They were happy to get new uniforms.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June Sr. Catherine arrived to be with children, since Sr. Vimala will be going away. Children were eagerly waiting for the arrival of the new sister and welcomed her in a traditional way.

21<sup>st</sup> June there was a Home Management Committee meeting. We welcomed Sr. Catherine as member of the Committee and thanked for the service rendered by Sr. Vimala and said bye to her. As the academic year began the official given certain instructions to our home and went through all the records and expressed their satisfaction.



On the 29<sup>th</sup> June evening a send off programme was planned for Sr. Vimala. They all actively participated and when they have to say thank you to Sr. Vimala they became emotional Including Sr. Vimala. As they expressed indeed she was a mother to them. Any parting is painful, 24 hours she was with children for the past 5 years. Somehow they have to reconcile with the reality that all of us can't be together always. We the sisters in the community too expressed our gratitude to Sr. Vimala for all that she had done and all that she was to the children as well as to each one us. We wish her all the best for her higher studies and assure her of our prayers. Sr. Vimala also shared her experiences with the children, told the children she will cherish the memories of her life with the children. On the 30<sup>th</sup> June Sr. Vimala left for Mangalore and Sr. Angela accompanied her to Pondicherry where she boarded the train. God Bless you Sr. Vimala.

We thank AFEA and its members for their continual support towards the poor children.  
Sr ANGELA



Feast in Sister Vimala's Honour



Warm welcome to Sr Catherine

## VISIT TO ARULOLI (PONDICHERRY) by BERNARD ANTHUVAN (AFEA Board member)

*Arriving in Pondicherry I arranged a meeting with Sr Angela on Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>. Children were present as the school was closed due to the death of a politician leader. I was accompanied by a priest friend of mine, who knows well Sr Angela as he worked in her village. The Sisters were all happy to meet a priest well known in the region. During the meeting, he took the girls in charge, organising various activities, songs, games, discussions ...*

The Sisters described the positive environment in the village and the happiness of the children. They announced the departure of Sr Vimala and the arrival of Sr Catherine who also speaks tamul. Their work for the girls is highly commendable.

It was also mentioned that the CWC representative often visits the home as she lives nearby and very much appreciate interacting with the children and reciprocally. She appreciates the way the home is managed.

The DCP authorities check twice a year the functioning of the home. No anomalies were noticed but they request that every child is admitted only after their approval. When the girls reach the age of 18, they are not allowed to stay in the home which creates a problem for those who are willing to study further. However, the Sisters continue to support a girl now living with her mother.

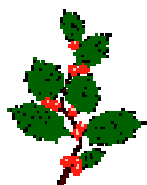


It was recommended to recruit a watchman as well as a social advisor. A watchman is not necessary full time but a part-time job for a young man is considered from time to time. For the role of advisor, Sr Angela has the appropriate degree although the authorities would prefer someone from outside. Some works are also being considered for improving the home.

This visit allowed me to witness the girls smiling faces. These smiles are the acknowledgments for your dedication and support.



*Bernard hand over a letter to a goddaughter*

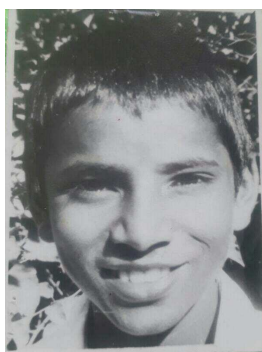


*Games with the guests*

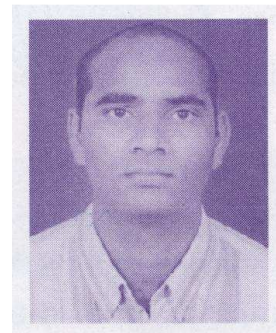


## *A FAMILY SUCCESS STORY*

**From RAJU ANAPPA**



It is very hard to pen down my life story and to share the details. Every time I remember my mother and my grandmother I cry silently within my heart. At the childhood after my mother's death I cried everyday whenever I saw a loving family living together happily. As I grew up I learn it's useless to cry and show other your weakness and get sympathy.



I'm from very remote village from Karnataka state. I was very young and my mother was fighting for small property, which was our only source of income. After my birth my dad left us and went back to his first wife and not ready to accept me and my mother, even not ready to support my mother to raise me up. For that too she was worried and same time my grandmother got paralytic stroke. But she didn't give up and tried her best for her mother to get cure. Granny's sickness and my future's living started killing my mother slowly. Suddenly she became bedridden and one day in sleep she passed away silently.

Till my mother's burial I was a normal child and not realizing that my mother is no more living with me. When I saw the people lowering my mother in the grave and cover her with mud I started crying because I felt something wrong happening with her. But it was late for me to love my mother and stay with her for some more time...





The next day the day was different. The sun was bright and the whole village was happy but in my life frighten and insecure and darkness had taken place. I'm young boy and my granny is sick, so who will feed us and how we will survive.

In the village the children in a very young age learn how to help their parent's in house work. So these skills helped me to get job in rich men house and I arranged my daily bread and started staying in the cow's stable. My job was to clean the cowdunks, collect water from river, and gather wood from forest for cooking and so on.

As I was working in the rich man's house one day my aunt came with my granny and she had some word with my owner and took me with her to her village. Actually I didn't like my aunt at all, because she once ordered her husband to beat my mother. Her husband had very badly insulted my mother front of all village people. Even my aunt was very cruel.

My life was worse in my aunt's village. I use to get up early morning and collect water and clean the cow shed and then take the cows for grazing to the field. That too without food. Later I learnt that they wanted to kill me for that small property, because I was only heir. When they didn't succeed of killing me, they plan to shift me from village to city. That's how I landed in the city and now I'm writing my story...

We came to Mumbai city and they got job in building construction. There too they started punishing me everyday. This went for long time and whenever they plan for their visit to village, they left me behind in the city and they went alone to village. During these periods I learnt how to survive alone. So, when they came back from the village and one day I heard them saying how they are going to kill me. I just ran and ran with frighten. I stopped at crowded place that was railway station of Borivali. I was very tired and hungry – thirsty and was severing of frightened.

The same day I was abused by a tea vender in the night at the Borivali yard. My frighten grew and I ran from that place. I started roaming in the local train whole day and not ready to get down. But finally I got down at the Churchgate station. A street boy observed me and offered food and asked me to stay with him but previous incident made me aware. I choose my way. As street children have to fend for themselves and think of survival more than anything else, their opportunities and dreams seem limited. When I was forced to run away and live on the streets, I grew up in the midst of street children. They were my companions, heroes and role models until the age of 12. We had no one to guide us, so we became each other's family and picked up numerous 'talents' in order to survive.



As a street child, I lived one day at a time without fully realizing my capabilities. But God was always there with me. Throughout my nomadic childhood, I gained a lot of experiences which have made me adult at the young age.

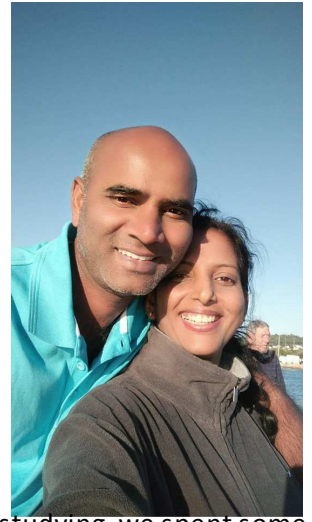
As a young boy I had witnessed the some of India's past, (the Sikh riot) and the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's crimination and then the Bhopal gas disaster. After roaming many cities I returned to Bombay (now it called Mumbai).

Once again I started rag-picking job and while doing this I came into contact with a father Placie, who was regular visitor to street boys. He became good friend but I didn't trust him and didn't go with him. But one day my friend took me to his place and I liked that ashram (Snehasadan). Now I was almost 13 to 14 years old. I remember father and his team took lots of trouble to admit me in the school.



What is Snehasadan ? It was my new ray of hope, my stepping stone. It was here that I found my feet and built a strong foundation for my life. Snehasadan had a set time table for the children. We would get up early in the morning and do small assignments. One of the older boys would prepare breakfast for us, after which the others left for school. A few other boys and I were new, so we were yet to begin school, but we studied at the Snehasadan office. Madhuri Didi would take our lessons, but she was very strict. Within a few weeks, I learnt how to read the *Devanagari* script and was able to read the first grade *Baal Bharti* textbook.

Once the class got over, we returned to our home. We would take our afternoon meals together, after which we would do some chores and then take rest. In the evening, once again, we cleaned our garden and played cricket on the ground for an hour. After the game, Auntie made sure that everyone showered. Later, we would study for two hours between 6 and 8 p.m. I remember how the older boys helped me to study. I would also get a *khatush* (knock in the head) if I did not study. After studying, we spent some time in prayer, and at 8.30, we sat for food and watched television. The older boys would clean up and then at 10.30 sharp, the lights would go off.



House no. 11 had many older boys, Stywan, Raja, Vinod Mhatre, Ashok Mariadas, Rajesh Kadam, Yunus, Rashid, Allwyn, Shiva Murthi and I was youngest. Vinod and Rashid were very good at acting and always won prizes at fancy dress competitions. Many boys also excelled in sports. Snehasadan helped the boys develop their talents further.

I, too, put in a lot of effort in my studies and looked up to the older boys. I was also motivated by inspiring role models such as Fr. Tony, Fr. Placy, Br. Molines, Br. Romuald Misquitta and Madhuri Didi. My house parents were also a source of encouragement.

But I stayed for few days and ran away again and again... Finally settled down and finished my secondary school. Father knew what is good for me and put me in the technical training. After 3 years training I started working in the small scale industry. Later I join the religious order (Jesuits). I went through the Jesuit formation and suddenly I left the society. But good lord kept me guiding through Fr. Placie and once again I started working and one fine day I got married to a young lady who was a divorcee. At present I'm working with Jesuit. And I have two children and staying in the rented home.



#### • SHRUTI ANAPPA

I met Raju thanks to a friend of us, who invited us for dinner. Raju fell in love with me but I hesitated as he had no home and no work. Our common friend insisted and Raju, after finding my employer's address, invited me to a restaurant and sent me SMS. I took advice from my father who, after some investigation, gave his agreement. The wedding took place in Mangalore in the presence of our parents.

**Lots of thanks and prayer from bottom of my heart to all benefactors and good wishers.**





## NEWS FROM NANTES

It is with a deep sorrow that we announce the death of Mr Nicolas Riom, former VP of AFEA in 1990, and General Secretary after Chantal Damay. He left in 1995 for professional reasons as he worked in the USA. He and his wife were godfather and godmother of a Snehasadan boy.

Our thoughts go out to his family and his father Joël who is a faithful member of AFEA.

Nicolas Riom's quote : " Looking back, I realise I had a lot of luck, dealt with challenging tasks, met wonderful people, of course with doubts and difficulties, like everyone".

### Christmas Market at Grandchamp des Fontaines

We will have a stand at Granchamp des Fontaines on Saturday december 15th from 10am to 18pm.

#### **Bulletin de parrainage** : formulaire à retourner à AFEA, 17 rue Voltaire – 44000 NANTES

Si vous souhaitez régler par prélèvement automatique, merci de le signaler au secrétariat de l'AFEA qui vous adressera un formulaire à remplir

- ☐ Pour parrainer un enfant : 23 euros par mois (8€ par mois après déduction fiscale)
- ☐ **Pour parrainer un enfant et aider son foyer : 35 euros par mois (12€ par mois après déduction fiscale)**
- ☐ Pour aider un foyer ou une réalisation précise : somme à votre convenance.....
- ☐ Pour soutenir et recevoir notre bulletin : 30 euros par an

*En retour vous recevrez : le bulletin de l'association, par mail ou par voie postale, un reçu permettant une déduction fiscale de 66%, et pour ceux qui parrainent, un courrier de leur filleul*

NOM.....PRENOM.....AGE.....

SITUATION FAMILIALE.....PROFESSION.....

ADRESSE.....

.....TEL.....E-Mail.....

Informé par.....Date.....signature.....

**PS : nous sommes habilités à recevoir des legs**

