

Dear Friends of Operation Shanti,

In this issue, we highlight developments at our shelter, Karunya Mane, which we opened in February of this year. We also talk about our newly expanded Project Food and More, started in September of this year to help more destitute kids and families. For ongoing updates throughout the year and for more on how your support is put to good use, please see our website at [www.operation-shanti.org](http://www.operation-shanti.org) and our blog at [operationshanti.blogspot.com](http://operationshanti.blogspot.com). Most importantly, thank you for doing what you can during this difficult economic environment.

### Karunya Mane and the Street People Program

Karunya Mane now houses **32 kids**, **five adults**, and three full-time staff members, and engages **five tutors** and several volunteers. The kids at KM are from the streets of Mysore or from difficult slum conditions. Everyone has settled nicely in at KM, and the kids **attend a nearby school**, and participate in daily **after-school tutoring** and twice-a-week **karate** lessons.

Our staff include our excellent manager and his wife, **Ramesh** and **Saroja**, who are exceptional at their duties, and a full-time, live-in cook. Once a month, our friendly and helpful volunteer and “**kid inspector**,” Anuradha Ganesh, visits KM to talk to the kids about a variety of topics, such as being good people, maintaining a loving and supportive family environment at KM, being grateful for everything given to them, and maintaining good living habits like eating healthy food and keeping themselves and their areas clean.

Each day, the kids wake up at 6:00 a.m. to bathe, eat breakfast, and walk to school. The kids return from school at 4:30 p.m., have some milk and a snack, and then spend two hours with their after-school tutors. On Sundays, moms and dads can visit their kids in the afternoon. Volunteers come regularly on Sunday afternoons for **arts and crafts**, **mentoring** and **cricket** sessions with the kids.

In August, volunteers from Infosys planted 56 trees on our grounds. The kids had a great time helping them dig holes and plant the trees.

KM focuses on providing a **fully supportive environment**, similar to what kids from middle-class families enjoy in their homes. This includes **weekly doctor visits**, **healthy food and nutritional supplements**, **filtered drinking water**, and hot water for baths (from our solar panel). We grow vegetables and the older kids help out with chores when not doing their homework.



Little Vishnu flying a kite during Sunday arts and crafts



Visiting the temple



After-school tutoring



Getting ready for school



Morning karate class

At times, Karunya Mane shelters abused women from their husbands. We ensure that the women file the proper reports with the police, who then issue warnings or arrest warrants for the men depending on the nature and degree of the crime. Domestic violence is a significant issue in India, and some of our mothers have faced frequent beatings if they fail to give their earnings to their husbands, who then proceed to drink or gamble with the money.

The Street People Program continues with our daily visits to the street. The program, assisting 30+ individuals with everything from housing, medical, and shelter from abusive husbands, is also a source of kids for Karunya Mane. Our street moms refer other destitute children they know to us, which is how we met **Divya**, **Netravati**, **Shanti**, **Vinod**, **Arvind**, **Anand**, and **Swarana**, as well as our handyman and night watchman (and Divya's dad), **Ramu**, all of whom are now all happily living at KM.

### Project Food and More

Last issue, we wrote about being destitute and living with HIV/AIDS. To help even more destitutes, especially those stricken by HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases, we've recently expanded our Project Food program. With assistance from local HIV clinics that put us in contact with their poorest patients, we now provide a **monthly care package** to these kids and families.

To qualify, a child must have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS or another illness and is living with a relative (usually a grannie), causing an additional burden on the family, and the child must also come from the **poorest** economic background.

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We visit their homes to ensure that they meet our qualifications, and interview them about their often **heartbreaking** family lives. Most of the kids live in one- or two-room houses or shacks in villages and slums, with no running water or toilet facilities in the home.

Stigma in their communities is high. Often, the grannies don't know what hit them, and they suddenly find themselves taking care of their grandkids because mom or dad, and often both, passed away. One thing they do know is not to tell their neighbors about HIV in the family, as to do so can bring verbal and physical abuse and being shunned from their community. One uncle whom we met hasn't told his wife about his sister's and niece's condition. His sister lost her husband to HIV, and the in-laws then refused to acknowledge her and their daughter, forcing her to go to live with her brother and his family.

Our monthly care package, valued at about \$25, includes **healthy items** such as lentils and rice, protein powder, bath and laundry soap, mosquito repellent, and some of cash. This may not seem like much, but it represents a 30–50% increase in monthly intake for our families. Equally important, **by reaching out and connecting with these families**, they become familiar with our organization, allowing us to help the kids live full and productive lives, and ensure that they can attend school and receive proper medical care.

The care package alleviates the added burden of caring for the orphaned kids, and offsets some of the exorbitant price increases in basic necessities (rice, sugar, and gasoline) that continue in India.

If you'd like to learn more about the people we help through **Project Food and More**, please see our website. For privacy reasons, we do not publish the real names of these families and kids. We assure you that the kids are adorably cute and the grannies and uncles are incredibly dedicated. And you can now **sponsor** one of these kids with a **\$25 monthly donation, or less than a dollar a day**. For more on this, please see below.

#### Two Opportunities to Sponsor Our Kids

For just over \$1.00 per day, payable at \$400 (Rs.17,000) per year or \$33.33 (Rs.1400) per month for 12 months, you can sponsor one of our Karunya Mane kids. Your sponsorship pays for their stay at KM, including food, clothing, and education and medical needs. Click here to:

#### *Sponsor a Karunya Mane Kid!*

In return, you will receive a report on your child, and if you are ever in Mysore, you can even meet him or her. Several of our sponsors have met their kids, and have had a great time getting to know them.

To sponsor a child, you may do so through our **website**, indicating in the comment box on our donation page that you are sponsoring a Karunya Mane or Project Food and More child. You may also send a check to one of our mailing addresses (the U.S. or India), indicating that you would like to sponsor a child.

We understand that today's economic situation is pinching everyone's pockets; we also hope that you will find it in yourselves to help those who, even in today's times, can only dream about having as much as we do.

#### Other Ways to Help

- Donate to support the Street People Program, Karunya Mane, and Project Food and More. We need to expand our programs to help even more destitutes, and our kids appreciate your continued support.
- We now take donations through Google Checkout.



Vishnu's third birthday

- To volunteer, send us an email about your interests and skills.
- Give in other ways: host a luncheon, take up a collection at your school or workplace, spread the word to everyone you know on **Facebook** (search for Operation Shanti under 'causes'), write about us in your blog... be creative!
- And, thank you for your continued support.

#### Make a Difference. Donate Today.

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