

Ramana's Sevi Samiti

2007 Newsletter

Greetings from all the staff and children at Ramana's Garden School and Orphanage to all of our treasured friends and supports around the world. It is with great pleasure that we prepare this newsletter for you so that you will know about the exciting things that have been happening for us here in India.

Progress at School

Xmas for us marks the time when the school year is half completed and we are moving into our winter holiday period. We are very proud at the high standard of academic achievement that the children showed during the recent exams. We are all able to relax a little now and enjoy ourselves with activities such as, volleyball, basketball, juggling and of course cricket.

Ramana's Garden Dance Troupe

Many of you will know, and would have seen, how expertly Ramana's children perform Indian cultural dancing. There have been several highlights in 2007 including winning a local dance competition during the Durga Puja festival, winning a talent competition called the "All India Talent Search" hosted by directors and producers from Bollywood which has led to the state competition in the capital Dehra Dun in January and performing every week at the Ananda Spa Resort which is said to be the leading spa resort in Asia.



Our Staff

Ramana's has attracted excellent staff, some of whom have been working here for many, many years and are very dedicated in their work. They manage the cooking, maintenance and vegetable garden as well as working in the café. Laxmi, who was widowed 23 years ago, recently joined our staff as a "big Mom" for the kids.

Volunteers

Ramana's Garden would not function so smoothly without the support of creative and talented volunteers who come to serve the children every year. 2007 saw volunteers from Australia, Canada, Holland, Israel, Spain and the United States who tirelessly worked with the children both in academic pursuits and fun-filled activities.

Rechel from Israel returned for a visit and to share a wonderful gift with the children. Since spending one and half year as a volunteer here in Ramana's Garden she and her husband Yan opened their own foundation in Israel called Heart to Heart to help children around the world. She came with her friend Yonat to share their latest business venture <http://www.agelnetwork.org/ProductInfoTestimonials.htm>

Agel products offer support to keep you healthy and revitalized. Each new membership to Agel would make it possible for all our kids to receive much needed fantastic nutritional supplements. If you are interested in this venture, contact Rechel Bennun.rechel@gmail.com



Visitors

Many visitors entered our gates and especially the Ambiya Mountain Paradise in 2007 including 8 youth groups from the USA and our first group from Nacel in OZ, who came to share with Ramana's kids. The students spent time working with the children and also at the Kodiya Mountain Retreat working to support the local villages and environment. One group was instrumental in constructing a playground at the village school where some children had never seen a playground in their lives. They also helped in the vegetable garden which provides lunch for the school children.

It was a challenging time for us all with the Forest Department trying to evict us from the Ambiya Mountain Paradise and grab back the bungalow so they would have access to cut all our ancient elder trees. Our hearts go out in gratitude to all our friends from around the world who sent letters of support to try to help us fight this battle which finally came to a temporary rest with A "High Court Stay Order". The future is not ours to know, BUT our beloved bunnies are still grazing.

Special thanks also go to Tyagan, our loyal friend and advocate, who donated hours of time and legal know-how to create our 501-3 in Washington D.C. He was one of Prabhavati's strongest supports during all the difficulties with trying to save the Kodiya Forest. Thank you one and all for your support during this difficult time.

There were moments when it really looked like all was lost when letters like the following two fuelled the heart's fire to keep us going with our fight to save this magnificent forest **and all our wild friends...**

My name is Mandi Christensen. I am an American college student studying abroad here in India through an amazing program called LEAPYear (by LEAPNow). It took me months of hard work, fundraising letters, and emotional turmoil to make this dream of coming to India come true. I am receiving college credit for my journey to India, but it will take years of hard work even after this program has ended to pay off the loans I had to get to come here. My experience thus far, not even a month into the journey, has proved well worth the monetary sacrifice.

My experience at the guesthouse, in the forest, and with the work of Dr. Prabhavati have changed my life in tremendous ways. I learned about organic gardening and helped grow food for many orphans and village children. I learned to constantly be in awe of the wonders of nature. The mountains, old trees, flowers, and animals of this forest have touched my soul. This forest and my experience here has brought me closer to God. The environment in this space has healed my heart in numerous ways and has brought our group closer together. Waking up each day to see the beauty of Kodiya has inspired me deeply and furthered me towards my life purpose. I came to Kodiya as a broken and severely damaged woman and soon I will leave healed and ready to give to the world.

I thank Kodiya forest and Dr. Prabhavati for giving me this life-changing opportunity. Please know that this forest and Dr. Prabhavati's guesthouse are changing lives for the better and that my life would have never been so blessed if they hadn't existed. I urge you to not let me be the last person to experience Kodiya in its fullness and the personal transformation that results.

My name is Shawnalle Guadalupe Guzman. I am a 17 years old college student from Santa Cruz California. I cannot accurately express the excitement I felt While our group was driving up to Kodiya forest. For me, being at Kodiya meant that all the hours and hard work I put in would finally be realized. I was going into one of the last intact biospheres in the entire Himalayan belt to help farm the crops that would be used to feed the children in the village schools and Ramanas Orphanage. I was given the chance to be with magnificent trees that were hundreds of years old in a forest that housed wild boars, chickens, thousands of insects, and endangered species such as leopards, minks, and red pandas. The energy coursing through my body was tremendous

Feeling our American hands deep in Indian soil sent tremors of glee through our spirits. Knowing that with the vegetables we were growing, schools full of village children would be nourished is an indescribable blessing.

When we were given the chance to go into the trees and moss covered rocks a whole new part of my being was awakened. Have you ever been somewhere that makes you see with fresh eyes? Have you ever had an experience that calls you to life in ways that you didn't know existed? The feeling is pure bliss. through the magic of Kodiya and eco-tourism new parts of me have been besieged into feeling. The trees and noises of the forest are majestic. If it weren't for this place I never would have seen or known all the gifts I have been given.

Prabhavati Dwabha

Prabha has had a challenging year as always in keeping Ramana's in a financially stable position. Her fundraising in 2007 spanned 6 countries and 18 cities, brilliantly supported by her fund raising teams in each country. Thank you so much to everyone who participated so selflessly to make the fundraising a success - friends do make the world go 'around'.

Giving IT All Back

It all began one evening at the Ananda Spa when David & Debbie Smail and Jo & Robert Seaton saw the children dance. Each one was moved by the children and approached us and offer help. David & Debbie provided the funds for building the only 2 Super Adobe Pods in India, now home to 15 of our boys. YEAH!!



Jo & Robert of Butlins Resort Chain in the U.K. invited the Ramana's Dance Troop to come over and dance in their resorts this summer!! WoW!! While In London being hosted by David and Debbie in a meeting with Butlins, a wonderful new concept was born: **Giving It All Back!**

While the kids are over in the U.K. to Dance, it just so happens that David owns England's finest Danish Pastry Co., Bakehouse, and we decided it would be great to get our little Ramana's bakers into his "state of the art" kitchens to bake up a lot of yummy Danish pastry and then all pile into Butlin's buses and head off to distribute them to all those less fortunate, ill, or homeless.

Special Thanks to Kenneth & Ingrid, from Switzerland for their generous donation toward getting the kids over to the U.K.

When Prabhavati visited Pegasus Children's Happy Home and met Simon the Creator/Director and all 67 of his wonderful children outside Kathmandu Nepal in November, the children launched let's ***Give It all Back from Darbur Square, Nepal – Trafalgar Square London***

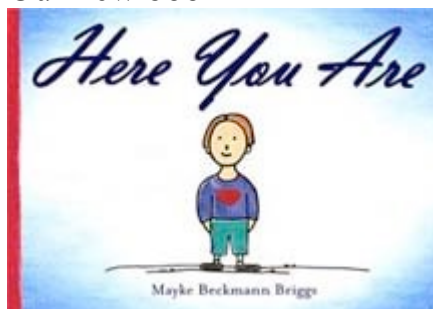


They spent the whole day cooking up bucketfuls of fantastic pasta and headed down to Darbur Square, where many of them had once lived homeless in the streets before being given the gift of coming to Pegasus home.

Please double-click to join us on that magical evening in the wonderful video Simon made <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FL6cfR2XJJ4>

Special Thanks To All of you Who Made So Many Miracles Possible and to Charlie Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation for their donation and wonderful documentary on Ramana's Garden. Special thanks to Rocio Martinez for editing the film www.dailymotion.com/video/x2fxx8_ramanas-garden

Our new book



One of Ramana's oldest and dearest friends Mayke Briggs has written a delightful Children's book, for us all, about the "ultimate truth." Proceeds from this little treasure come to Ramana's Kids...
<http://hereyouarebook.blogspot.com/2007/06/start-your-exploration-of-ramanas.html>

Natural Energy

There is no gift so dear a nice hot shower on these cold, frosty, mornings. Two solar water heaters and a wind generator, the first of it's kind in our state, will soon be providing $\frac{3}{4}$ of our power which will protect our new computers and electrical appliances.... So many thanks to Clive and Eriko, who hosted Prabhavati in their fabulous home on the sea in Sydney, and Heart-to-Heart, Israel, for making this happen.

It was a year for meeting "Remarkable Women"

Gurmukh Founder/creator of Golden Bridges L.A. and Satya of Golden Bridges New York both hosted Prabhavati with beautiful events. The childrens' jewellery sold in Satya's upmarket Soho boutique

<http://www.goldenbridgeyoga.com/uploads/images/ramana.html>

Ambassadors for Children, Sally Brown, along with Judy O'Bannon, former 1st Lady of Indianapolis, hosted Prabhavati for her first visit to Indiana. They are coming again in February to set up a computer training centre for all the village children and a fantastic library. See the interview at

<http://ambassadorsforchildren.org/www2/?action=invite>

Spreading our Wings

Jadish has returned to his home state Kerela and is opening a children's project there.
www.unnisadan.org unnisadan@yahoo.com

Thanks!!

Once again, thank you so much for your generous support and love of the children at Ramana's Garden. We enormously value your friendship and look forward to seeing you next time, either in your country or here at Ramana's Garden in beautiful India.