



Australian T.O.S. Links

November 2005

As 2005 draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your dedication, enthusiasm and focus on serving humanity in many ways, particularly through your involvement in the Theosophical Order of Service.

Convention 2006

The National T.O.S. **Annual General Meeting** will be held during the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Australia at St. Mary's College, University of Melbourne. It is scheduled for **Thursday 19 January at 2.00pm.**

The T.O.S. has also been invited to organise a special interest session during the convention. Georgina Fode and I have selected ***The contribution of service to world peace*** as the title for this session, to reflect the overall theme of the convention. The session is scheduled for **Tuesday 17 January from 2.00 to 3.15pm.** We would like this to be a shared session with co-presenters from T.O.S. groups around the country and have invited groups to nominate a person to talk on this topic for 10 minutes. This certainly has the potential to be a lively session with a range of ideas and anecdotes.

The role of the Director and the National TOS

Thank you to those groups who provided feedback to my questions about the role of the National Director and T.O.S. The following is a summary of the ideas received.

What do you think the role of the National Director should be?

Members expressed the view that the role should be to:

- facilitate communication across local groups, possibly linking them through an email network
- provide a channel for communication internationally
- provide a central point for economically sending bank drafts for international donations
- provide a point for distributing donations
- communicate with national members about the potential to join in TOS service activities
- provide a sense of direction and coordination
- share ideas about service activities.

Do we need a National T.O.S. organisation that is separate from the local T.O.S. groups?

Members expressed the view that the National Director should be only an administrative role. Local groups were autonomous and service activities and fund raising were best carried out locally. Some thought that there was no need for membership of a national group.

Service in our communities

Building on the ideas shared in the September newsletter, here are some more effective ways that T.O.S. groups serve their local and global communities:

- collecting postage stamps for the Red Cross

- organising a *Rice for Life* seminar
- conducting T.O.S. Saturday talks on a range of topics associated with the T.O.S. streams of service
- collecting toys and clothes for the Ukrainian Orphans Relief Appeal
- holding *Planetary Healing* sessions
- organising a musical concert entitled *Music to Heal the Soul* to raise funds for supported charities
- organising public talks on the Quakers and a seminar on non-violence
- creating and maintaining a Peace Garden
- organising a Peace Day Gathering with music, poetry, talks and short plays
- tutoring refugees in English and helping them adjust to Australian society
- being a regular visitor and friend to people in aged-care residences.

Mandala Art Project

Mandalas have been used for centuries as sacred spiritual aids and tools for meditation and healing. The *Artists for Peace* network is sponsoring a mandala art project. Contributions of Mandala artwork not larger than 24 inches (60.96cm) square are invited for display at the TS Headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois in February 2006. For details, refer to the information sheet attached to this newsletter, or contact Carolyn Harrod on (07) 3378 8534 or by email: cdharrod@bigpond.net.au.

The Service Link

Our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham-Chapotin has informed me that due to unforeseen circumstances the publishing of the 2004/2005 issue of *The Service Link* has been delayed. She anticipates that it will be available early in the new year. When I receive the copies ordered for Australia I will mail them immediately to subscribers and T.O.S. Groups.

Update on the Chennai Tsunami Relief Work

An update has been received from the T.O.S. in Chennai. Three water purification plants have now been installed in villages on the coast of Tamil Nadu. A German company has recently offered a donation of another reverse osmosis plant. It will be used to provide drinking water in one of the smaller villages, as it only has a capacity of six hundred litres per hour (as compared with the thousand litres per hour ones already installed). Plans are underway to install two more of the larger plants in the tsunami-hit areas in Nagoor and perhaps in the neighbourhood of Nagapattinam. The Ramakrishna Mission's orphanage which has started housing tsunami-affected children has also requested a small reverse osmosis plant, which the T.O.S. group plans on donating soon.

On the vocational training front, the 91 sewing machines the Chennai T.O.S. acquired are now being used across the coastal districts for training tsunami victims. There are also plans for giving tools and implements to masons, plumbers and electricians, who are craftsmen affected by the tsunami. Two paper re-cycling plants will be set up as soon as the sites are ready to accommodate them. This will provide ecologically constructive livelihoods for two women's self-help groups.

Another important focus is the *Back to school* project that is funding children affected by the tsunami. The T.O.S. in Chennai will soon have utilised all the donations received to date. Support for its long term tsunami relief work is now its major preoccupation, in addition to its regular free medical service work at the Social Welfare Centre and other projects at Adyar.

Thank you to those who have already contributed. If you are in a position to contribute to this ongoing work, please send your cheque, made out to the T.O.S. in Australia, to the National Director.

Other international TOS work appeals

✧ The Theosophical Order of Service in Pakistan is collecting donations for the victims of the horrific earthquake that devastated the northern areas of Pakistan and Kashmir. Their fund is being monitored by their government so that the money can be used for both immediate and long-term rehabilitation. Building shelters and housing is a major priority with winter fast approaching. Funds can be sent directly to the President's Earthquake Relief Fund, account number 05-7412231-90, Standard Chartered Bank, Garden Road Branch, Karachi, Pakistan, (SWIFT CODE: SCBLU533).

✧ The USA Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service are jointly sponsoring the Katrina Relief Fund. The project includes therapeutic seminars to help first responders such as police, firefighters, etc., now suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Anyone wanting to help financially are invited to send their donation to The Theosophical Society, PO Box 270, Wheaton, IL, 60189

✧ The orphanage run by the TS in Brazil (featured in the September newsletter) is in desperate need of funds to continue its operation. If you choose to support this work, cheques made out to Lar da Crianca Nossa Senhora das Gracas can be sent to:
Zeneida Cereja da Silva
President, Lar da Crianca Nossa Senhora das Gracas
SGAS Quadro 603, Conj. E s/no
Brasilia DF 70200-630
BRAZIL

If your group or individuals decide to support any of these international welfare activities, cheques can be sent to the TOS in Australia so that bank charges are minimised by sending an aggregated cheque or funds transfer. All sources of donations are acknowledged in the covering letter to the relevant international TOS group.

A thought to share

*For as long as space remains,
For as long as sentient beings remain,
May I too remain
And dispel the miseries of the world.*

Shantideva (7th C Indian Buddhist Master)

Contact

Please contact me by email at cdharrod@bigpond.net.au
or by mail at Ms C Harrod, 26 Lytham Street, Indooroopilly Q4068.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Yours in service
Carolyn*