



## Australian T.O.S. Links

April 2010

Writing our first national TOS newsletter for 2010 has made me aware of just how quickly the first quarter of the year has flown past. Hopefully, it has seen all of us being able to progress the plans we made at our Annual General Meetings and first TOS meetings of the new year. I have a number of activities on which to report to you and initiatives that you are invited to participate in throughout the year.

Last year I provided a range of ideas for starting projects in our own communities. One of these strategies was establishing partnerships with community organisations whose aims and modes of operation were consistent with those of the TOS.

In the December newsletter I highlighted three International Days established by the United Nations that are frequently celebrated by community groups. This year I will continue to provide information on relevant UN Days that may fit with one of your group's interests.

### **A thought to focus our service in 2010**

The famous Jubilee Address of 1925 contains a message that speaks to all members of the Theosophical Society and the TOS:

*You cannot truly be students of the Divine Wisdom, save as you are active in the service of the Divine Life. Where trouble is, where suffering is, where ignorance is, where quarrel is, where injustice is, where tyranny is, where oppression is, where cruelty is – there must we find the earnest members of Our Society.*

May these words provide the energy behind our service activities. I look forward to working with you towards our shared goals throughout 2010.

### **Convention 2010**

As you are aware, when Dara Tatray became National President of the TS in Australia, she decided that it was important to make clear the independence of the Theosophical Society from other organisations begun by prominent TS members. The TOS is a separate organisation from the Theosophical Society, although the TOS is intimately connected with the TS as you can see in our constitution.

### **Our focus area: Service in our communities What's in this newsletter**

- A thought to focus our service
- Convention 2010
- National TOS contact details
- National Projects in 2010
- International TOS news
- What's on our new TOS website
- Service ideas based on United Nations Days

Consequently, the TOS no longer has a regular page in the national TS magazine, *Theosophy in Australia*, and the TS Convention program this year did not include a TOS organised session or our AGM, which was held after the convention was officially closed at lunchtime on the Friday. These changes, however, do not affect the ability of our two organisations to have a harmonious relationship and many of our local TOS groups are excellent examples of this.

The **Annual General Meeting of the TOS in Australia** was well attended and as usual provided an

ideal opportunity for planning for 2010 and for sharing ideas through the reports from TOS groups throughout the country. My annual report and minutes of the meeting have been sent to your local TOS Group.

Janice Scarabottolo, of the Canberra Group, continues as National Treasurer and Lynette Muller, of the Brisbane Group, continues as National Secretary. I am grateful for their continuing support and dedication to the ideals of the TOS.

Each local TOS Group is again invited to nominate a member to be their representative on the National Council. This group meets by email to work on national initiatives and enhance national communication and discussion.

We achieved our major goals for 2009. The brochure on the work of the TOS in Australia was revised. Copies were provided to all groups and it is now available on our TOS website. It has just been updated to include the third National Project agreed to at the AGM. You'll find details about this project later in the newsletter.

The revision of our National Constitution was also completed and approved at our AGM. I very much appreciate the time that each TOS group and the National Council members gave to discussing the revisions and providing feedback and suggestions. Your input has resulted in our having a constitution that provides clearer guidance organisationally and that will hopefully enable us to put our energies into our service work. Copies of the 2010 National TOS Constitution will be mailed to each TOS group early in May. Copies can also be provided electronically if you contact me by email.

During 2009, our webmaster, Geoffrey Harrod, and I began the redesign of our national TOS website. A draft version was demonstrated at the AGM and members' feedback was positive. The website has now



gone live and we hope you will find it quick and easy to access material through it. We would welcome your feedback and any suggestions for improvement.

The national newsletter will continue to be used as a major vehicle for sharing ideas between TOS groups. It is available by email to all TOS & TS members across Australia. To register to receive your email copy, contact: [tos.australia@gmail.com](mailto:tos.australia@gmail.com)

## National TOS contact details in 2010

### Contact for donations

Ms Janice Scarabottolo  
National TOS Treasurer  
PO Box 7418  
FISHER ACT 2611

Please send donations to the National Projects and other activities of international TOS groups to the National Treasurer. By amalgamating our donations into one or two electronic funds transfers a year to each international project, we can save several hundred dollars annually. Each individual or group donor is recognised in the email we send to the international project group confirming the funds transfer. Please make cheques out to the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia.

### Contact for newsletter

Ms Carolyn Harrod  
26 Lytham Street  
INDOOROPILLY QLD 4068  
[tos.australia@gmail.com](mailto:tos.australia@gmail.com)

**You are invited to send news items, photographs, ideas and comments that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. I would welcome your contributions to our national newsletter.**

## National projects

At the AGM it was decided to have three major national projects in 2010. We are continuing our support of the literacy home-schools in Pakistan and the SEE vision project in India, and including a new project in Africa.

### Heart babies Project in Tanzania

Our new project in Africa is the Heart Babies Project in collaboration with the TOS in Tanzania.

One out of every 200 children born in developing countries suffers from a repairable congenital or rheumatic heart defect. In Tanzania, at any given time, more than 7,000 children and adolescents await surgery. This African state has few specialised paediatric cardiac facilities. Left untreated, the children die before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. There is an urgent need to send them abroad for open heart surgery.



The TOS in Tanzania is partnering with the Lions Club of Dar es Salaam and the Tanzanian Government's Ministry of Health in the **Heart Babies Project**. Groups of 20 to 30 children and babies travel together to India for heart surgery, where

altruistic surgeons waive their fees. To date 1,200 youngsters have been successfully operated upon.

The TOS in Dar es Salaam supports the Heart Babies Project by contributing towards the small essentials required by the children and their carers during their travel: suitcase, handbag, extra clothes, toiletries, biscuits, etc. Costs for this vary between US\$25 and \$50 per child.

The TOS group is a dedicated one that believes in giving the human touch to any project. In this regard, when children are ready to travel to India for their surgery, the group works prior to their departure to obtain a list of their personal requirements. Merely handing over money or just purchasing and passing on these essentials is not the philosophy of the group. The members make a point of interacting with the children and their escorts, speaking positively about their future and encouraging them to stay strong. Usually, a send-off ceremony is arranged at the main hospital or even at the airport, where members gather to lend their support in person. The same is done upon their return, so as to share the joy of their successful surgery.

### Literacy home-schools in Pakistan

Our collaboration with the TOS in Pakistan continues to flourish. Fareeda and Aman Amir have been working to ensure that the Pakistan TOS can sustain its educational and social welfare programs in today's difficult political climate. This year we are aiming to continue our support of four home-literacy schools. This gives us the challenge for 2010 of raising \$4,800 in donations to send to the Pakistan TOS group to keep these schools operating.



This Literacy Program enables children and young girls who have had no opportunity to pursue even a basic education, to attend classes. Reading, writing and arithmetic are taught by a teacher who holds classes at her own house which is in the same locality as the students.

The TOS provides teaching materials, a fan, water cooler, sitting rugs and a small salary to the teacher. A teachers' meeting is held every month. Problems encountered and suggestions for the improvement of the program are discussed. A representative of the TOS visits the schools regularly in order to monitor their progress. Our donations also contribute to the cost of this on-going professional support for the home-school teacher.



## The SEE Project in India

The SEE (Seeing Eyes for Everyone) Project is conducted by the TOS in Chennai, India. Screening for vision impairment are carried out in schools and slum areas to identify people whose vision could be corrected with spectacles or cataract removal. Our donations enable these to be provided free of charge.

The TOS in Chennai identifies deserving cases and institutions. Their member-volunteers make the non-medical arrangements and the Udhi Eye Hospitals send professionals to do the screening. If further treatment or glasses are required, the children and adults are sent to the hospital.

Costs are minimal because of the Udhi Hospitals' generosity. The concessional cost for spectacles is Rs 200 (approx. A\$6) and for cataract surgery, RS 1,000 (approx. A\$30) per eye.

## International TOS news

If you didn't receive the March issue of the electronic newsletter - *in-touch.online* - and would like to be put on the email list, send a message to [tos.intouch@gmail.com](mailto:tos.intouch@gmail.com) with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.

The electronic newsletter is published every two months from January and the international website is updated at the same time. The next issue will be published at the end of May.

Look out for the new Members Section of the International TOS website in July:  
<http://international.theoservice.org>

## What's on our new TOS web-site

As mentioned earlier, our national TOS website has been redeveloped and has a **new address**:  
<http://australia.theoservice.org>

The home page features our three national projects and latest information likely to be of interest to TOS groups, linked through pictures. It is intended that these items will be changed approximately every two months.

There is also information about the TOS in Australia, contacts for each group and a collection of service ideas that will grow over the coming year.

## Celebrate National Volunteer Week

10th - 16th May 2010 is National Volunteer Week, providing us with a perfect opportunity to recognise the significant contribution that many TOS members make to our TOS projects and to their communities.

## Service ideas based on United Nations Days

The United Nations shares many of the aspirations of the TOS. It was built on spiritual principles and universal values such as peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, justice, respect, freedom, good neighbourliness, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

In the December 2009 newsletter we provided ideas related to the **International Day of Families**, celebrated on **May 15**.

The themes of the following four days in the coming months relate to our TOS service areas of social welfare, world peace and the environment. They could provide ideas for service activities ranging from simply

sharing promotional material to initiating a long term project.

## June 5 World Environment Day

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and World Environment Day picks up this theme of: **Many Species. One Planet. One Future.**



We humans are one in 15 million species that inhabit our planet, according to scientists. Yet humans are among only a handful of species whose populations are growing, while most animals and plants are becoming rarer and fewer.

A total of 17,291 species are known to be threatened with extinction – from little-known plants and insects to iconic birds and mammals.

Why is this happening at such a pace? Scientists tell us that it is the result of human activities. With our present approach to development, we have caused the clearing of much of the original forest, drained half of the world's wetlands, depleted three-quarters of all fish stocks, and emitted enough heat-trapping gases to keep our planet warming for centuries to come. Our activities are making species extinctions occur at up to 1000 times the natural rate.

Find out more about the risks of losing our planet's biodiversity on the World Environment Day website  
<http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/theme.asp>

Join your fellow TOS members, friends and neighbours to review your environmental footprint. (That's all the things you use from the environment for food, energy, shelter, clothing, transport, etc.)

We can take five important steps right now to reduce our personal impact on the environment. We can:

- **reduce consumption**
- **reduce or eliminate the meat in our diets**
- **reduce energy use**
- **reduce water use**
- **plant trees.**

## July 17 World Day for International Justice

World Day for International Justice calls upon all countries to fully support the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to honour their international obligations to prosecute alleged perpetrators of torture and other human rights violations.



As well as investigating and prosecuting alleged acts of violence against the most basic human rights, the ICC plays a strong advocacy role. Its recent activities include creating provisions for the protection of women's rights, promoting the rights of victims of torture and advocacy for the plight of child

soldiers. As a result of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, an Optional Protocol came into force prohibiting the recruitment of children under 18 into armed groups and government armies and their direct participation in hostilities.

Find out more by visiting the ICC website:  
<http://www.iccnw.org/index.php?mod=home>

World Day for International Justice provides TOS members with an opportunity to partner with groups such as Amnesty International. We can also promote awareness of human rights issues, particularly those related to civil war, genocide and religious conflicts. We can organise candlelight vigils and meditation circles for peace and we can support refugees in our communities.

### August 12 International Youth Day

Young people deserve our full commitment -- full access to education, adequate healthcare, employment opportunities, financial services and full participation in public life. On International Youth Day, we can renew our pledge to support young people in their development.

The World Program of Action for Youth works in ten main fields – starvation, poverty, education, employment, health, drug exploitation, childhood felony, recreation events, young women and children and environment.



You can get involved in many ways.

- Team up with key groups in your locality to focus on what has been done to further the World Program of Action for Youth.

- Organise forums, public discussions and information campaigns in support of young people focusing on youth issues and how they can be addressed.
- Celebrate the achievements of young people in your community, highlighting their rich and varied skills, interests and aspirations.
- Plan practical action to further encourage the empowerment and participation of youth in the processes and decisions that affect their lives.

For more ideas and information go to:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyouthday.htm>

### September 21 International Day of Peace

The International Day of Peace (*Peace Day*) provides an opportunity for individuals, organisations and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date. It was established by a United Nations resolution in 1981 to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly and was launched with these words:

*Peace Day should be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples... This day will serve as a reminder to all peoples that our organisation, with all its limitations, is a living instrument in the service of peace and should serve all of us as a constantly pealing bell reminding us that our permanent commitment, above all interests or differences of any kind, is to peace.*

Anyone, anywhere can celebrate Peace Day. It can be as simple as lighting a candle at noon, or just sitting in silent meditation. Or it can involve getting your TOS group engaged in a larger event, either on its own or in partnership with other organisations. The impact of millions of people in all parts of the world, coming together for one day of peace, is immense.

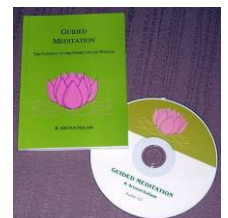


International Day of Peace is also a Day of Ceasefire – personal or political. Take this opportunity to make peace in your own relationships as well as focusing on the larger conflicts of our time.

For more ideas, go to:  
<http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/>

### Meditation book and CD

You can purchase this useful guided meditation by Dr. K Arunachalam from the Brisbane TOS. The cost of \$12 goes to the Pakistan home-schools.



### A thought to share

*If you are yourself full of happiness, that radiant joy is poured out upon all who come near you, and you become a veritable sun, showering life and light and love in your small circle on the earth.....*

C.W. Leadbeater

*Yours in service  
 Carolyn*