

Australian T.O.S. Links

August 2010

We are midway through our year's activities and I trust that all is going well with implementing your plans. In this issue of the newsletter you'll find TOS news as well as information about opportunities to become involved in supporting animal and social welfare activities.

Thank you for the time and energy that you are devoting to your involvement in service activities within your local communities and supporting international projects.

The commitment we make to putting our theosophical principles into action is important, even though our efforts may seem miniscule in the face of the enormous physical and psychological needs we see daily in our world. When our service

flows unconsciously and naturally from our inner sense of Oneness with all life, we act not for ourselves but for those we serve. Through our individual and collective efforts we create points of light that radiate love and harmony.

I am reminded of N. Sri Ram's words: *What the world needs most of all is brotherhood, first in the heart of man, and next, as its reflection in the outer world... In the spiritual life radiation is existence; there is no separation between being and doing.*

Progress with national activities

Revised National Constitution

The revised National Constitution was approved at our 2010 AGM. Copies have been provided to each TOS group both in print and electronically. If you would like a personal copy, please contact me.

TOS brochure

Copies of the 2010 version of the brochure have been sent to all TOS groups. It is also available from our new Australian TOS website:

<http://australia.theoservice.org>

If your group would like extra printed copies, please contact me.

New-look national TOS website

The redesigned website went live in April. If you haven't yet visited it, you'll need to remember that the address is also new: <http://australia.theoservice.org>

We would welcome your feedback and any suggestions for improvement.

Focusing on selfless service to all life

What's in this newsletter

- Progress with national activities
- TS in Australia Convention 2011
- Generous donation from Maple-Brown Abbott
- Update on our national projects
- National TOS contact details
- International TOS news
- News from our TOS groups
- What's on our new Australian TOS web-site
- Good news story
- RSPCA puppy factory campaign
- Service ideas based on United Nations Days

TS in Australia Convention 2011

Undivided consciousness – in Mind and Nature is the topic of the TS in Australia convention from 15 to 22 January 2011 at the St. John's College, Brisbane, Queensland. We hold our TOS in Australia AGM in association with the convention. This provides an opportunity to meet other TOS workers, share service ideas and contribute to national planning. I'm looking forward to chatting with all of you who can get to this gathering in Brisbane.

Generous donation from Maple-Brown Abbott

Once again, Maple-Brown Abbott Limited has generously supported the work of the TOS. This company

is the investment manager for the Theosophical Society in Australia. We are very grateful that they have been able to make a donation to the International TOS work this year. They have asked that their donation of \$6 000 be distributed for the following work in 2010:

- \$2 000 for the TOS in Pakistan's Educational Sponsorship Program
- \$2 000 for the SEE Vision Project coordinated by the TOS in Chennai, India
- \$2 000 for the Heart Babies Project through the TOS in Tanzania.

These amounts have been transferred to the recipient international groups with the donations from Australian TOS groups and individuals.

Update on our national projects

Many, many thanks for your fundraising efforts and personal donations to our three major national projects in 2010.

Pakistan's literacy home-schools



Their National Director, Fareeda Amir, has just sent these latest pictures of the home-schools sponsored by Australia. She writes, "They are known locally as the Qandeel home schools. Qandeel means a lantern, and it symbolizes a means of spreading light. In this case it symbolizes the light of learning. Our schools are doing well despite the terrible conditions in Karachi, and this is due to the dedication of our teachers and our TOS office staff who visit the schools regularly."



The TOS in Pakistan also continues to coordinate scholarships for needy children's education, from primary school to college. The annual cost to sponsor a child is A\$150. The sponsored children work very hard and many have now completed college. If you or your group is interested in sponsoring a child's education or would like more information, please contact me.

Because of the political instability in Pakistan, Fareeda has asked if the Australian TOS could send donations in small amounts when needed, rather than transferring large donations. The National TOS in Australia is therefore holding a record of funds available to the Pakistan TOS projects.

The SEE Project

We are holding funds donated for the SEE vision project and will pay the Udhi Eye Hospital as soon as we receive their account for supplying spectacles and performing cataract operations following the current sessions of vision checks arranged by the Chennai TOS.

The Heart Babies Project

On your behalf we have transferred \$2500 to the TOS in Tanzania for this project. Groups of 20 to 30 children

and babies travel together to India for heart surgery. The TOS provides the small essentials required by the children and their carers during their travel.



The National Coordinator of the TOS in Tanzania, Deepa Kapur, has sent her thanks:

"We are completely overwhelmed by your response to the 'Tanzania Heart Babies Project' !! This project brings to each of us, the opportunity to 'gift these children a new lease of life'. There could be no better gift!!"

"Thank you for bringing hope to our Tanzanian heart-crippled children... May I convey our thanks to all those connected with the T.O.S. in Australia. You have shown the spirit of brotherhood in action !!!"

In addition to these national projects we have transferred your donations to the Educational Sponsorship Program in Pakistan, to the Animal Hospital on the Adyar Estate, to the Assam TOS in India for their mobility aids program and to the Golden Link College in the Philippines.

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 and materials

Ms Carolyn Harrod
26 Lytham Street
INDOOROPILLY QLD 4068
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. The third edition in 2010 is published in December.

International TOS news

Have you read the latest issue of the **International electronic newsletter**, *in-touch.online*? It takes you to the recent World Congress of the Theosophical Society through the eyes of our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin. Diana shares her impressions and conversations in her own unique way and naturally, highlights the service aspects of the Rome Congress and the TOS connections.

You can access the newsletter via the International TOS website <http://international.theoservice.org> or contact me and I'll email it to you. The next issue of *in-touch.online* will be published in September.

The website also has news of the Italian TOS's amazing fundraising initiative at the Congress, Diana's talk at the TOS session during the Congress and highlights of a new project in the Philippines – the opening of the Lumen School for young children which is based on theosophical principles.

News from our TOS groups

Adelaide

Congratulations to Travis James and the members of the Adelaide TOS group who over the last year have collected 2200 book donations from schools. They have now packed them off to the Golden Link College in the Philippines – all 580kg of them!

Brisbane

To celebrate National Volunteer Week in May, Lynette Muller, President of the Brisbane TOS group, presented members with certificates recognising their volunteer service to the TS and to various community activities.

Management Committee members, Tina Fiedler and Karen Cipressi conducted a craft workshop that was well attended by young people. The workshop raised funds for the Pakistan home-school project.



Sydney

Richard Larkin, President of the Sydney TOS group, reports that they've had a good year, with their monthly Saturday afternoon talks and book sales well attended. Topics have had an holistic focus and have included comparative religion, philosophy, alternative approaches to health and personal development. These activities have funded the group's donations to the Pakistan educational scholarship program.

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>

You'll find ideas for celebrating Peace Day and other UN Days in October and November as well as links to animal welfare action.

Good news story

In a heart warming example of the importance and effectiveness of educational programs, *Humane Society International* reported on the successful rescue of a 2 week old leopard cub. *Wildlife SOS* had been conducting a major education campaign about living



with wild-life, including leopards, with villagers in India.

When a 15 day old cub was found in a sugarcane field and was obviously still nursing, the local villagers alerted the Forestry Department who immediately called

the *Wildlife SOS* team. The monitoring team housed the cub safely during the day and released it in the evening as the mother was more likely to return under cover of darkness. They settled to watch and within 45 minutes the mother arrived and immediately began grooming and nursing her cub. The mother and cub then calmly departed.

RSPCA campaign to close puppy factories

What is the truth behind that cute puppy in the window? The RSPCA has been investigating and you will be shocked at what they found.

Many dogs are treated merely as money-making machines living in appalling conditions. They are kept in small cages, often in unclean conditions that leave many living in their own waste and with ear and eye conditions. They aren't taken for walks, cuddled, shown affection or given opportunities to play and often develop emotional and behavioural conditions that are slow to heal even when they are removed from the factory by RSPCA inspectors.

With an estimated 95% of pet shops sourcing their puppies from this cruel industry, educating the community on this issue is extremely important.

Visit <http://www.closepuppyfactories.org> to learn about the issue, see photographs and videos, and sign the petition. This is a national RSPCA campaign that is urging all of us who are concerned about animal welfare to

advocate that state and local governments tighten laws and legislation regulating puppy factories, ultimately closing them down for good.



Service ideas based on United Nations Days

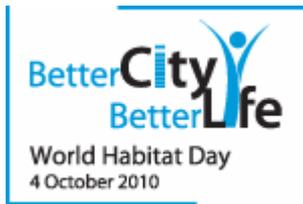
The United Nations shares many of the aspirations of the TOS. It was built on spiritual principles and universal values such as peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, justice, respect, freedom, good neighbourliness, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

Over the next three months we have:

September 21 International Day of Peace

Join with numerous community organisations or plan your own event to celebrate Peace Day. You'll find lots of ideas on our website.

October 4 World Habitat Day



The idea of World Habitat Day is to reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right of all, to adequate shelter. It is also intended to remind the world of its collective

responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

The United Nations chose the theme *Better City, Better Life* to highlight our collective vision of a sustainable urban world that harnesses the potential and possibilities, mitigates inequalities and disparities, and provides a safe home for people of all cultures and ages, both rich and poor.

It is projected that in the next generation, 70 percent of humanity will be living in towns and cities. So this is the time for us to look closely at urban life and how we can ensure our wellbeing on all levels.

We could also use this day to focus on the issue of homelessness which is a reality in our cities. What can we do to help on both a long term and an immediate basis? Who could we work with?

For more information see the UN website:
<http://www.unhabitat.org/>

October 10 World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day raises public awareness about mental health issues. The Day promotes more open discussion of illnesses, and investments in prevention and treatment services. WHO statistics for 2002 show that 154 million people globally suffer from depression, only one form of mental illness.

Mental, neurological and behavioural disorders are common in all countries around the world, causing immense suffering and staggering economic and social costs. People with disorders are often subjected to social isolation, poor quality of life and higher death rates.

World Mental Health Day could be used to focus attention on the needs of people with mental health disorders, provide information and challenge discriminatory practices. The World Health Organisation has suggestions on their website at:
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/world_mental_health_day/en/index.html

and www.youtube.com has related videos.



beyondblue

In Australia, beyondblue is an excellent source of information about issues associated with depression, anxiety

and related substance misuse disorders. It is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation formed as a bipartisan initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments. Its key goal is to raise community awareness about depression and reduce stigma associated with the illness.

You'll find accurate, up to date, easy to read information on depression, anxiety disorders, postnatal depression and bipolar disorder. There is material especially developed for young people, men and family and friends.

You'll find their website at:
<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

November 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime - with the abuser usually someone known to her.

See the UN site for information at:
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/elimination_vaw/en/

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women also launches the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, which runs through to 10 December, Human Rights Day.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign that is used as an organising strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

You can get involved on-line through the Center for Women's Global Leadership at:
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>.

The Center will also supply a free copy of an action kit that includes a bibliography and resource list, a list of suggested activities and supplemental information relevant to this year's theme.

The Australian Government has sponsored a project entitled, 'Violence against women – Australia says NO!'. You can find information about the project report and organisations working in this area, on their website at <http://www.australiasaysno.gov.au/index.htm>

Violence against women remains a significant social welfare issue in Australia, leading to mental and psychological problems for both women and children, as well as homelessness.

A thought to share

If each of us can be a spiritual lotus, we will be able to fill the world with the pure fragrance of the Spirit, and diffuse in the minds and hearts of men a happiness and a hope not there at present.

N. Sri Ram

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Yours in service
Carolyn*

