



Australian T.O.S. Links December 2012

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National Annual General Meeting

National TOS AGM. Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thur 24 Jan at 2.00pm at St Marys College at The University of Melbourne. In addition our National President of TS Linda Oliveira has granted TOS another time slot on Tue 22 Jan .This will feature 3 separate talks on “Insights into the application of theosophical principles in the contemporary world”. The TOS thanks Linda for her attention to TOS.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in Melbourne.

Meetings such as this are a wonderful opportunity not only to meet face to face but to exchange ideas to take the work of TOS forward.

Your Co-ordinators Report

As I am writing my final report for 2012, I am speculating on how the year seems to have flown. Many of us are experiencing the stresses of these quickening times, yet, when I look at the reports that have been sent from our 9 groups, I am truly amazed at what you have achieved.

Our founder Annie Besant reminded us our goal as TOS members is to make our profession of brotherhood a real and practical one. This is certainly evident when one looks at the variety of service that you all participate in.

I was also impressed by the generous fundraising in support of our 3 international projects namely, The Pakistan Literacy Home Schools, The SEE Project in Chennai, and The Heart Babies Project in Tanzania. Many of our national groups have their own special project that they work towards assisting. These include supporting an orphanage in India (see article page 4 & 5): providing education and health programmes through SAW Australia’s Work for Women in Afghanistan: supporting and visiting a village in Western Kenya: supporting the Olcott School and the HPB Hostel at Adyar.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you my sincere thanks for your contributions and support. Special thanks to Carolyn Harrod and Travis James for their assistance to me and their dedication to our TOS. Also, to each and every one, best wishes to you and your families for Christmas and the New Year. May the love of doing for others remain with us during 2013?

All labour that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.

Martin Luther King.



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TS Summer Convention and TOS International Conference 19-27 Jul 2013

Registration is now open for the above.

There are two options for accommodation either stay on campus (shared accommodation only) or stay nearby at the Holiday Inn. Kindly note if you are staying at the Holiday Inn you must first register with TS in Wheaton before booking your accommodation with the Holiday Inn. If this is your option, please advise TS America at the time of registration that you will be staying at the Holiday Inn. Follow this link for more details:

<http://international.theoservice.org/news/201211-conference-update.html>

International TOS Conference Wheaton.

Check in Tue 23 Jul, check out Sat 27 Jul 2013

All office-bearers and those with responsibilities in the TOS at international, national or local level are warmly invited to attend. **All are cordially invited to also participate in the five-day Convention and Summer National Gathering** of the TS in America immediately preceding the TOS Conference, 19-23 Jul. 2013.



Wheaton Campus

Conference Programme Outline

Tue 23 Jul

Conference opening

Programme overview

Getting to know each other better

Wed 24 Jul

The TOS into the Future (1): What has been achieved in the past five years?

Keynote Talk: "The TOS 100 Years from Now"

Choice of workshops e.g. "Deep Listening"; "Social Action as Spiritual Practice"

Orientation to the TOS's international website

Thu 25 Jul

The TOS into the Future (2): "Planning for the next five years"

Keynote Talk: "Creative Meditation: Balancing Inner and Outer Action"

Choice of workshops

Round table discussion: "Rising to the challenges we face in our TOS work"

Fri 26 Jul

The TOS into the Future (3) "Commitments to action"- conclusion

Fri 27 Jul

Close of conference

Check out.

Insurance for our TOS Groups

The national secretary of the Theosophical Society in Australiam Dr Dara Tatrav has advised that TOS is now covered within the TS insurance policy.

Whether your group is holding a function either at your TS Lodge premises or a function at a different location, you are now covered with insurance. Some venues when making a booking at their premises require a copy of the Insurance Certificate. This document will be emailed to you by contacting our national secretary Dara Tatrav on nat.secretary@austheos@org.au



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Your stories: The Founding of Giri Orphanage in Kerala.

An inspirational story of Service from Celia Novy of the Blavatsky Lodge in Sydney. Celia visited the Sree Narayana Sevika Samajam, a Welfare Centre in Kerala, in 1975 and formed an immediate connection with Mrs Parvathy Ayyappan, founder of the orphanage and a follower of the spiritual organisation of "Unitive Understanding".

This article shows how two women of different cultural backgrounds formed a bond through mutual trust and their concern for the welfare of orphaned children. The outcome of their first meeting found two women sitting together and discussing how to best assist this important cause. A connection, which established this special relationship, has led to the Blavatsky Lodge now regularly contributing funds to this orphanage.

The centre has grown considerably since Celia and Parvathy first made contact. The Centre now provides full accommodation and education for children of all ages, including a kindergarten and a school for the outlying community. Plus a crèche, accommodations for young single women, and for widows and the elderly. Self-sufficiency is encouraged with a tailoring unit, a vegetable garden, a bakery and a dairy farm. English language is also taught.



Orphans in the Ananda Bhavan

Celia goes on with the following: The new buildings had come about through donations from people in Kerala, mostly devotees of Narayana Guru, and a small group of concerned friends from many countries as far as America, Sweden, France and Australia. I was told that people in the district called the place 'Giri', meaning Hill. Almost the whole fertile hillside belongs to this small institution.

"Parvathy, what made you think of opening this Welfare Centre?" She laughed: "I had just retired from my position as the head mistress of a girl's school and certainly did not expect to start a whole new life! My husband and I happened to be in a train one day where we became aware of a small, boy about three years, who seemed to be sitting all by himself.

After a few hours' ride and no-one attending to the child, I went to him to find out where his parents were. He did not know and did not seem to know when they would return to him. He just barely knew his name, but certainly not his parents' names. After making enquiries on the train and finding that no one knew him, we took him home with us. After a few weeks' search for his identity without results, we thought we should bring him to an orphanage where he would get care and eventually schooling.

What a shock these government-run institutions were for us both! The orphans were sharing accommodation with sad, old, destitute women, lost drunken men, in squalid rooms, under the care of loveless, untrained, rough, unintelligent people. What meals we saw, were certainly not nourishing. Mostly the little ones had to find food for themselves by either begging in the street or stealing from each other. We just could not possibly leave our shy, quiet little toddler in such a joyless atmosphere. We decided immediately to take him home again with us.

In his enthusiasm, my husband gave him the name Jawaharlal, our Prime Minister's, Jawaharlal Nehru's name. His reason being that surely, by the time this little boy would have grown to be a man, he, along with other orphans, would be educated well enough to possibly become Prime Minister of



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India. "You must have been already a grandmother then, so it may not have been easy for you to suddenly have a little child in your home!" "No it certainly was not. We looked around for some foster parents, but could just not forget the plight of the other children in those wretched places. We felt we needed to help them too, somehow or another. That is what made us decide to start a happy family style institution for these children. Once firmly established, we would then give the administration over to young and capable people."

"Then how did you get to own this wonderful hill here?" This large piece of land had been donated to Sree Narayana Guru by a man whose crimes were numerous over many years, until one day he met Narayana Guru on this very hill, here, where Guru used to sit and teach. That encounter changed his whole life. My husband and I had dedicated our life, even before our marriage to 'Unitive Understanding' and to supporting the many institutions which are practical applications of Narayana Guru's philosophy of the Brotherhood of Mankind.

We were offered this piece of land here when our friends knew of our project. An architect drew the plans for free and other friends came forward with donations for building materials. All went well when, suddenly, my husband died. "What did you decide then to do on your own?" I asked, knowing that in India, especially in Kerala, women alone, without a husband at their side, would find it almost impossible to undertake any business or project. "I felt too committed to this cause was the reply"

All my friends could not imagine that I would want to establish an orphanage for little children on my own, when fortunately a young intelligent woman offered her services. We two took courage to undertake this work. We even had to sleep in the open many nights to guard the tools and building materials against theft.

Then more help came from various donors and, no sooner did we have a roof over us, then children arrived – many, many sick and needy children.

Update Our TOS International Programmes

The year 2012 has been very beneficial thanks to the hard work and generosity of our members. We received donations amounting to \$18,399.15 (including the Maple Brown Abbott donation of \$5,000 reported in our Aug TOS Links); We made donations amounting to \$22,654.88 to our international projects. We continue to support our three major national projects: The Heart Babies Project in Tanzania, the SEE Vision project in Chennai and the Literacy Home-schools in Pakistan. The breakdown of these donations is as follows:

\$9080 to Pakistan TOS for 4 home-schools and our 31 scholarships as part of our Education Sponsorship Programme. The home schools project is locally called the 'Qandeel School Project'. 'Qandeel' means 'lantern', and symbolically signifies the shining of the light of knowledge among the participants. In this programme an educated woman who resides in a low-income area is employed as a teacher. One room in her home (which sometimes consists of only two rooms) is converted into a schoolroom during the day. The TOS provides a blackboard, mats for the children to sit on, an electric fan, a water-cooler, charts for the walls, books, pencils, etc.





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\$500 to Tanzanian TOS for the Heart Babies Project. The African state has few specialised paediatric cardiac specialists. . At any given time there are approximately 7000 children waiting for open-heart surgery. The fortunate ones are flown to India in groups of 20 to 30.

The altruistic action of organizations working together is the backbone of this project. Airlines offer concessional rates, surgeons waive their fees, the Indian government processes visas free of charge and in all the hospitals are able to offer world-class surgery at a tenth of the cost as in the west .The TOS provides \$50 per child and this is given to the mothers for incidental expenses related to the travel, plus teddy bears are provided for the children. This programme runs under the umbrella of the Lions Club of Dar es Salaam. To date 1,200 youngsters have been successfully treated.

\$3374.88 to Udhi Eye Hospitals in Chennai for The SEE Project. This project operates as collaboration between the TOS and the Udhi Eye Hospitals in Chennai, which provides highly subsidised medical care. 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



In addition to our 3 major projects we donated \$500 to the Annie Besant Animal Memorial Dispensary at Adyar where 3 veterinarians treat approx 35 animals per day.

\$2000 to Golden Link College (via USA for Kern Foundation grant)

\$1000 to Assam TOS for Mobility Aids Project. Walking sticks, special shoes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs and hand-propelled tricycles are distributed by many TOS groups throughout the country.

\$6200 to Kenyan TOS for the famine relief and water-bore project. Whilst this programme has been a tremendous successful it will require ongoing support.

Reports from our Local TOS Groups

Hobart: From Ro Dallow

We held one major event this year and our guest speaker was a 14-year-old Richard Thompson. Last Jul Richard, along with others from the Taroon Baptist Church visited the Bethlehem Orphanage at Mwea, Kenya. Money for the trip had been raised by Richard busking. He proudly boasted that enough money to provide 160 pairs of shoes for the Kenyan children as well as beds for the orphanage had been raised by his busking.

Money collected that night was presented to Richard as well as \$110 from our TOS funds.

After his power-point presentation showing village life and our guest departed, we entered into a discussion on happiness. The Kenyan people whom this young man befriended seemed to be happy despite their miserable circumstances. In contrast we relatively rich Australians seem to complain about life in general. We concluded we are not happy.



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Perth: From Pam-Meli Wetheridge

This year has been another successful and rewarding year for our group. Our service activities included:

Collected clothing and toys for Foster Carers Association at Cottesloe
Supplied donations of used towels to the Animal Protection Society and to Cat Haven.

Our group knitted and crocheted 25 Acrylic Knee Rugs, complete with TOS labels sewn onto the rugs. These were delivered to a home for dementia sufferers in Bayswater. The staff at St. George's Home were overwhelmed by the number and colours.



During the year we held successful fundraiser presentations these included:-

Walking the Ancient Pilgrim Road The Camino de Santiago de Compostela

A Women in Theosophy Evening
A TOS social event attending a movie
A Japanese Tea Ceremony evening with members taking part in the ceremony

Donations to our national TOS in Australia:
The SEE project in India \$320.
Pakistan Home Schools \$1000.

Membership Drive 2012

As a result of the membership drive initiated in the first issue of TOS Links 2012, I am happy to announce that our membership drive has increased our total membership by forty.. We now have a total of one hundred and sixty five on our distribution list

The largest increase was to our electronic database; twenty-seven new addresses were added.

Australia Post mail outs increased by an additional thirteen. This was mainly due to the wonderful effort by the Melbourne TOS lead by Georgina Fode.

Our total membership remains comparatively small in number when one looks at the overall membership of the Theosophical Society in Australia. (over one thousand members) If you have any additional names to be added please forward ASAP. Thank you to all the groups and individuals that contributed towards this project.

Your contacts

National Co-ordinator: Jean Carroll

tos.australia@gmail.com

National Acting Secretary: Travis James

tajames@ozemail.com.au

National Treasurer: Carolyn Harrod

cdharrod@gmail.com

Donations may be mailed to

Ms Carolyn Harrod

216 Lytham Street,

Indooroopilly Qld.4068

Web addresses:

<http://australia.theoservice.org>

<http://international.theoservice.org>