



Australian T.O.S. Links March 2014

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Coordinator's Report

Welcome to our first issue for 2014. Our year began on a positive note during the annual Theosophical Conference held at the Womens College at the Sydney University during January. TOS was given two sectors which were well attended. Thanks to our national TS headquarters for making these segments available.

It was very special to observe the interaction between TS and TOS members. There was much interest and dialogue around the dining room as members met each other. It is such a wonderful annual event to come together and exchange ideas. The Blavatsky TOS committee organized our opening session with a talk by Keith Howes on Service within the Galactic Universe. This was followed by a quick overview of the recent TOS conference in Chicago, and a presentation of how TOS can help the TS.

During the AGM we discussed the TOS international survey to develop a Plan of Action for the next five years. This has been a truly massive project which began at the recent Chicago TOS Conference. All TOS members worldwide have contributed preliminary ideas. These ideas were presented at the AGM as Commitments to Action. These pledges are to be reviewed in a few months with the prospect of developing a plan for TOS Australia. There was an amazing synchronicity of ideas and suggestions put forward. One collective initiative was the need for TS and TOS to work more closely together. Another was to encourage TOS members to reach out into their local community.

National Projects for 2014. Support for the following was unanimously approved;- Continue sustaining the four home schools in Pakistan. Two new projects to support were added – the Olcott Memorial High School at Adyar and the Golden Links College in the Philippines. For more information please contact your local TOS for a copy of the minutes which gives more details on our AGM.

Thank you all for your generous support and willingness to serve. Jean



Girls at Olcott Memorial High School, Adyar

**Your Stories: Work of the
Social Welfare Centre, Adyar**
from Dianne Kynaston,
National Member.

Whilst attending the International Convention of The Theosophical Society during December 2012, I also took the opportunity to attend a number of activities that run in conjunction with the convention programme. One of these was an afternoon spent at the Social Welfare Centre for its "Cultural Activities and Exhibition". The Social Welfare Centre provides a special service to young women in the area of Adyar in that it gives them the opportunity to take part in a year-long training programme in various aspects of sewing, from making clothes to embroidery, and in developing skills in arts and crafts. At the end of the year their achievement in successfully completing the course is acknowledged by a certificate, and they can now enter the workforce as a skilled worker.

These young women come from situations such as marital abuse or desertion, and have very young children to care for. Whilst they attend the course the Centre also provides care, education and meals for their children. The afternoon's events began with a number of dances and songs performed by the children (whose age ranged from 2-5 years), wearing costumes made by their mothers. These were delightful presentations, with the children obviously enjoying themselves. The young mothers then sang several songs and performed a number of dances.

Unexpectedly I was then asked to present the women with their certificates and a gift of a jug to acknowledge the completion of their training. The Centre was then opened up for us to inspect the rooms where the women learnt their new skills, and they proudly showed samples of their embroidery and craft work.

It was an afternoon of gentle entertainment, and a fine example of the philanthropic work that is undertaken at the International Headquarters of The Theosophical Society.



Dianne presenting certificates

Note: The Social Welfare Centre was one of the projects started by our late international president the late Mrs Radha Burnier.



Reports from Queensland



Queensland delegates at the Sydney conference

Brisbane – Lynette Muller

The selfless service of the members of Brisbane TOS has shown how a small but dedicated group of individuals can contribute to the upliftment of peace, harmony and love through service in the community. TOS provided an opportunity for fellowship providing a special morning tea with some of the older members. Thank you volunteers from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast for their work at the Theosophical Retreat Centre at Springbrook. Acknowledgment is also given to the ongoing commitment of Dr. K. Arunachalam for donating his Guided Meditation Books and CD's for sale.

We gave a total of \$8,250 in donations – projects supported included:- Queensland flood affected communities; Fully funding a home school in Karachi plus two educational scholarships; Mobility Aids project in Assam and Arunachi, India, Golden Links College in the Philippines: The Kitui village in Kenya: the Billboard project in Bhubaneswar and the Adyar Animal dispensary at Adyar.

Thank you all of you for your commitment and service.

Sunshine Coast – Joyce Tozer

It has been a busy year of service, fund raising. and a few social activities. Our TS committee generously allowed us to dedicate two of the regular weekly public meetings to TOS awareness. In March we hosted a talk by one of our members and a friend, to update us on the Mblori village project in Kenya, which we support.

On World Refugee Day we had a talk by representatives of Buddies Refugee Support group including a very moving speech by Ranjan, a Sri Lankan Refugee. A sale that night allowed us to donate \$400 to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Brisbane. Raffles and regular weekly donations to our silver coin jar enabled us to donate \$800 to TOS National. Special thanks go to the yoga group run by one of our members who donated over \$300 in 5 cent coins and to our treasurer for \$100 from course books he produced. Donations were also made to Save the Children Syria appeal \$300 and \$280 to Free to Shine which educates girls in Cambodia. Cinema visits and social events finalised a very successful year. Thank you to all those that supported us throughout the year.

National Project

Billboards to combat violence against women in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India from Dr Deepa Padhi.

This project was adopted at the 2013 AGM following the death of a young woman by gang rape in India. TOS National donated aud1400 to this project. Our donation covered the design and production of one enormous billboard (see below) plus rental for the space for one year.

Dr Padhi reports as follows;- On 26 and 27 Oct TOS held its biggest event of the year graced by the presence of the Royal King of Puri, Odisha, Sri Dibyasingha Dev. Guest of honour, TOS national director, Sri Birendra L. Bhattacharyaa, inaugurated a billboard erected near a premier Autonomous College. Sponsored by the TOS in Australia, it carries the slogan;

“From womb to tomb, woman is being abused. Empowered women, empower humanity”

The commission praised the installation of the TOS billboards for their impact. The commission also gave us permission to add its helpline number to the billboards, which is of immense practical help to women and female children.



United Nations International Observance Days

Organise events based on UN themes.

22 April International Mother Earth Day

05 May – Day of Vesak

20 June - World Refugee Day. Copies of the award winning Australian documentary “Mary Meets Mohammed” is now available to purchase on the web. The DVD costs \$30 plus postage from;- www.waratahfilms.com.au

The film is based on Tasmania’s first refugee centre and the transformation that takes place when we see each others humanity.

More information on international days from;- www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.



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