

Good Gifts Catalogue

8021: Transform the life of an Indian street child



With the generous support of Good Givers, the lives of street children in Mysore, Karnataka, are being transformed.

Two rehabilitation homes, Asha Bhavana for girls and Asha Kirana for boys, have been established to care for deprived, undernourished and marginalized street children. The programme in Karnataka provides the children with safety, health care, education and support.

Children with no financial support have no option but to discontinue their education. The staff at the two homes spend time with each child, coaching and encouraging them to learn, study and finish their education. When ready, the children are enrolled in mainstream school or supplementary educational centres. Out of 374 former street children who took their 10th standard exam last year, 256 of them passed with flying colours and have now joined colleges and professional courses. All are encouraged to change the way their communities live by saving for the future.

The slow learners are given extra tuition at one of the 40 supplementary education centres. Over 1200 children (from 36 slum areas) were enrolled in the supplementary education programme last year. 40 committed and competent teachers were trained in all aspects of child psychology and now, thanks to their dedication the children's hard work, the former street children have gained a quality education, completing middle and high school level. Classes are conducted in the evening for 2-3 hours on Maths, English, Science and languages. The local communities consider English an enormous advantage!

Many of the children have suffered poor treatment or child labour so teaching them an awareness of their rights is also a priority. Various committees operate within the homes, concentrating on finance, health, education and food, which provide opportunities for the children to express their views and suggestions, which are then incorporated into the day-to-day administration. The children are taught about nutrition, their personal health, and sanitation. Last year they participated in planting projects in the school compounds and were taught about protecting the environment rather than cutting down trees.

The story of Shalini, a 12 year old girl, shows what a difference Good Givers are making:

“Shalini wandered the streets of Mysore, begging for food. With the loss of her mother, her future looked bleak. Yet she began to see a ray of light when the staff from Asha Bhavana met her and talked to her with compassion. When she was brought to Asha Bhavana her medical and health care needs were immediately attended to, and she was put on a nutritional diet. With much counseling, care and love, she gradually came to terms with the loss of her mother. Soon her face brightened up and she started mingling well with other children. After being coached in learning skills, she was enrolled in 5th Standard in a nearby school. She loves to dance and sing, and enjoys going to school.”

Additionally, a pre-school and nutrition programme started in Vasanthnagar 2nd slum and 25 new health check up camps have been set up to treat poor and slum children. In times of sickness, the children quickly become undernourished and open wounds become infected. Between June 2009 and May 2010, 980 children with various illnesses and infections (stomach worms, coughs, fevers, skin problems and typhoid) were successfully nursed back to health. Thanks to Good Givers, the children continue to benefit from continuous health checks.