

Report about the seventh help journey to Sri Lanka from 5th - 26th February 2007

Christine and Hans Heinrichs were once again able to achieve a great deal within the three weeks.

Monday, 5th Feb 2007

The first day was an orientation day with our different local helper groups. Various meetings were held to learn about the projects: Which works have been finished, are still going on and which new jobs have to be started?

Tuesday, 6th Feb 2007

In the morning we went to visit three godfather families. We visited a very happy 55 year old Christie who had been able to open a tyre repair business and could at the same time employ his son who was previously unemployed. In the afternoon we drove to Dondanduwa/Payagala where in the previous year we had helped seven destitute families by purchasing a piece of land. In the meantime, the Salvation Army kept their promise to build houses. They will be completed by June 2007.



Meanwhile the Lions Clubs in Bentota and Beruwala arranged further "glasses days". For 21 people who could no longer be helped with glasses, we have paid the costs for the eye operations (special price € 50 per person).



Wednesday, 7th Feb 2007

Together with our Swiss member Lotti we visited altogether sixteen families in the areas of Beruwala, Benota, Kosgoda and Balapitiya. Eight of these families are currently godfather families. We were able to adopt two new godfather families who had suffered extreme hardships. We were able to help three families by paying for medicine and furniture as well as by purchasing building materials.

We were able to help two family men to become self-employed. One is a lumberjack whom we helped by purchasing an electric saw. The other is a painter for whom we bought a compressor with nozzles.



Meanwhile we received the quote for the fountain in Kosgoda, the area with the difficult ground conditions (see last report). The money for now three fountains (€ 2,000) will be handed over to the villagers in June.

Thursday, 8th Feb 2007

We had eleven appointments today. Five of them were visits to godfather families and five were visits to families for whom we could arrange new sponsorships.

In our last report we described an old lady whose mud house broke down during an attempt to repair the roof. Now, a new small stone house is currently under construction for her.



After hard negotiations with a manufacturer of hearing aids we were able to negotiate a very low price for individual patients suffering from chronic hearing problems.



Friday, 9th Feb 2007

Today twelve appointments were on the agenda. Four of them were visits to godfather families and four were visits to families for whom we could arrange new sponsorships. We also came across an inventive smiling Sinhalese child in a "bath tub" which looked very funny.



We arranged for the missing € 500 to be paid to allow for an urgently needed heart surgery for a seven month old little girl.



Furthermore we decided to give € 5,000 for the building material for a small kindergarten for 25 children to be built in Katukele/Telawattha near Mathugama. We took the decision after the family fathers promised that they would build the Kindergarten themselves.

We helped a small inland grocer by paying the repair costs for his motorcycle (used to transport the goods). We also obtained a special hearing aid for a person with a severe hearing impairment and batteries for several hearing aids.

Saturday, 10th Feb 2007

Due to the very generous donation of a Berlin member we were able to pay the outstanding difference needed for the heart surgeries of a 9-year old girl and a 12 year old boy. Both children have in the meantime been successfully operated. We also visited a young boy whose heart surgery we had financed in last October. He is recovering very well. We also visited two of our godfather families and could arrange for four new sponsorships for families in need.

Whilst visiting two widows whose houses had been destroyed by the Tsunami, we paid for building material after their neighbours had agreed to carry out the construction works.

In a small village of 50 houses the government has given land to the welfare recipients. In 12 of the houses the toilets are missing. We have promised to give the money for their fitting in June.

Sunday, 11th Feb 2007

Today we visited eight godfather families. We promised the parents of an 18 year old girl who suffers from a cleft palate (the size of a 2 Euro) to pay the € 1,500 for the necessary operation in June 2007. The child has excellent school notes but the destitute parents are too poor to afford an operation. She will afterwards have a good chance to study and obtain a job.



Monday, 12th Feb 2007

Today three existing godfather families were visited. Additionally, we handed over € 2,300 to the community hospital in Gonedalle for urgently needed repair works and acquisitions that we have described in our last report.

The mother & child clinic in Beruwala is under construction and is expected to be completed in June.



Tuesday, 13th Feb 2007

So many people responded to our appeal for the donation of child wear, cuddly toys, caps and rain jackets that we will be able to bring 1,000 kilos of donated goods to Sri Lanka. In order to bring the goods in duty free we need a special permit from the Social Ministry in conjunction with the responsible area for import duties within the Finance Ministry. After six hours of negotiations we received the required approval and duty free assurances from the Social Minister. We will be able to bring the goods to Sri Lanka in June. Thomas Cook has in the meantime offered to transport

the goods from Frankfurt to Colombo for only € 1 per kilo.

In the late afternoon we visited a girls' orphanage in Balapitiya accompanied by German donors.



An additional donation helped to have the sewing machines repaired as well as to arrange for sewing lessons for the girls.

Wednesday, 14th Feb 2007

Today we inspected the building progress of the 2 storey school building in Panadura. Unfortunately, after receipt of the planning permission it started to rain so badly in January and February that building works could only be commenced a short while ago. The fundement has know been poured and the raw construction work is well under way.

We also met the staff of St. Anthonis Boy School in Panadura in order to find out their demand for books and teaching material. € 3,900 were necessary which have been given by a law firm as well as by a Singhalese woman from Hamburg.

Thursday, 15th Feb 2007

We called on ten families today. Six of them were existing godfather families and three were families for whom we could arrange new sponsorships.

For a 3-year-old boy suffering from a kidney disease we paid the allowance necessary for a kidney operation.

The implementation of English classes (free of charge) for approx. 20 pupils (described in our last report) turned out to be so popular that there are currently 33 pupils attending the classes in a far too small classroom. Necessary is a classroom to accommodate about 60 students in the age of 7 to 17. We decided to finance two more classes for one year (€ 350 per class per year). This will give the children of very poor parents who cannot afford any fees the opportunity to learn English.



Friday, 16 Feb 2007

On this national holiday the foundation of the vice-secretary for social & welfare arranged for the distribution of donated goods to the poor population in the Civic hall in Galle. Among other things clothes, glasses, medicine, bicycles, tricycles, and toys were handed over. There was also the possibility of a medical examination free of charge.

We contributed three blood pressure gauges for the medical team and 20 wheelchairs for handicapped persons to the gathering.



In the afternoon we inspected three elementary schools which either lack classrooms or have buildings in wretched conditions. Through one very generous individual donation we were able to help with a new school building and repair works.



Saturday, 17th Feb 2007

In the morning we found a new home for a destitute family who was forced to leave their rented wooden hut. In addition we were able to arrange a sponsorship for them.

In the afternoon we handed over a wheelchair to a paralyzed man. Together with an otologist we then handed over hearing aids to 4 people with severe hearing problems. Since the doctor promised to continue working for our organisation free of charge; we bought her a hearing gauge.



Sunday, 18th Feb 2007

The mother & child station in Kalutara (described in our last report) has been completed. It was handed over in a ceremony attended by a Minister, the Mayor, other politicians, doctors, midwives and all pregnant women in the area. There were of course a number of thank you speeches.





In the late afternoon we gave a wheelchair to a lady who had both legs amputated as a result of diabetes.



Monday, 19th Feb 2007

In the poor settlement Kanihintota we looked at a small nursery school building for approximately 20-25 children. No more than three wooden benches plus a table and chair for the teacher were available. There were not even windows or bars for locking the school.



We have decided that on our next visit in June we will equip the school with bars and windows, a cupboard for teaching material, tables, chairs and a children's play ground. The costs of € 1,500 seem manageable.

We also handed over the promised equipment for a playground, a small building for the production of coconut mats as well as a toilet to the elementary school of Induruwa.



We then visited three existing godfather families and arranged for one new sponsorship. In the evening we called on a family of five in Haburugalla who lacked € 370 for the heart surgery of their 3-year old son Maura. We gave them the money.



Tuesday, 20th Feb 2007

Final conference with Lotti Loosli and office day.

Wednesday, 21st Feb 2007

Rest-day.

Thursday, 22nd Feb 2007

The horoscope man had decided that the handover of keys to the three new owners of the houses we had been built in Kosgoda should be carried out in the early morning in a formal ceremony.



The joy of the families who for the first time in their lives had their own home was indescribable. The sponsored fresh water fountain was also opened.



In the afternoon we had five further appointments. The 4-year Denishika had a successful heart surgery and is happy and enjoying her new life. In another case we could find German godparents for a child ill with leukaemia.



For € 100 we were able to obtain a special lense for a mother who was nearly blind. An operation in this case would have brought no success.

We want to try to find a house for a widow with a child who has to move out of the house of her deceased husband within the next 3 months as she has no income. Alternatively, we will look for a sponsorship for her to provide regular money for rent, school fees and living costs.

Friday, 23nd Feb 2007

In the morning we handed over the dental clinic to the Bentota hospital. A small ceremony took place in the presence of different doctors, politicians and the press.



Then we met with 3 children and their parents who wanted to thank us warmly for having made their children's heart surgeries possible. In the most astonishing case we gave the money for the operation on Monday, the child was brought to hospital on Tuesday and been operated on Wednesday. The operation was a success, within one and a half weeks he was still weak but happy and back on his feet.



One of our last acts was the handing over of a Tuk Tuk and the opening of a small Food store.



The trip was very exhausting, but also very successful.

The eighth help journey starts at the end of May.

Munich, March 16th, 2007