

PUPILS

When you are reading this we passed a very important milestone. On 22 October our first five pupils received their diplomas! Ernest, Tharanga, Tharindu, Thushara & Rawindra. They are the first to complete their education at Hellabeem. We celebrated this with a very big party for which we invited many people who contributed to this success. After their exam the boys get the equipment to build their own work shop. In our next newsletter we will show you the photographs of the party and the new work shops.



Ceremony



Rawindra and Tharanga making a wall painting

A day out

Our pupils had told us that they would like to go out for the day all together. We have granted this request. All together in a big bus we visited the Udawalawe Park, 700 elephants are living there. There is a special elephant nursery which we visited of course. Then we all went to the hot water springs. You will understand that, 20 boys on a day out, everybody was exhausted at the end of the day. A day out with disabled people in Sri Lanka is no sinecure. Society here is not adjusted to people who cannot walk properly. No paths for wheelchairs or elevators for the disabled! The bus trip was very nice. Like schooltrips in the Netherlands: we made music and sang a lot.

For the five boys who are now leaving us we organized a very special farewell picnic on the beach. They told us that they were very happy with the chances they got through Hellabeem. A great compliment, which makes our work here really worth while. A new group is waiting eagerly to fill up the five empty spaces.



Tharanga and Tharindu



Thushara and Ernest

Health

Our boys are doing well. Sometimes we have tense moments as far as their health is concerned. Some of them have been in hospital for a couple of days with the flu and high fever. Sometimes something looks just like 'the flu', but here it can turn out to be a horrible tropical disease. So we always have to be on the alert. Fortunately this time nothing serious happened.

Ajith is an orphan and was burned seriously as a baby. In addition to this he has a serious scoliosis. We had him operated upon by a plastic surgeon. In this operation deformed scars have been removed. The operation went well and Ajith feels like a new born child.

Indika is an orphan as well, his parents died in the tsunami. When he was nine years old Indika fell out of a mango tree and has been in a wheelchair ever since. Unfortunately he has got bedsores because of being in the wheelchair permanently. These were so extreme, that he had to remain in hospital for four months. He has been back with us for two months now, but he still needs special care. I am looking after his wounds every day.

Sasanka too has to be operated on. We are waiting for an Australian specialist surgeon. Sasanka's body is completely deformed. We hope that an operation will enable him to have a better use of one of his arms.

I always accompany the children during the hospital visits. This is a matter of positive discrimination. As I am white and address the doctors 'normally' our pupils are treated sooner. In Sri Lanka doctors are on a pedestal and people do not dare to ask them anything at all. Without the intervention of a 'white' the pupils would be on a long waiting list.



Ernest and Tharindu



Tharanga

STATUS PROJECT

Maybe you remember, last year we did a project together with AMURT International. AMURT then organized special courses like sewing, making shoes and making brooms and mats. We facilitated the courses. In all 200 boys and girls received a short training during a couple of weeks. The Japanese Post Office sponsored these trainings. Last August we started again, the courses will continue until the end of December. These 200 mentally retarded young people will do a five day course, in which they learn to lay out a kitchen garden. Apart from the skills, like making compost, building fences from natural material, laying out seedbeds, planting, making cuttings etcetera, they also learn to be conscious of their environment and of nature. They also get psycho-social help by means of dance and music to get them out of their isolation. This is organized by the Sunera Foundation. The trainers as well as the youngsters are very happy at Hellabeem. The youngsters are taught to earn their own living and Hellabeem keeps a model kitchen garden.



Homegarden project



Since June Ravi is one of our staff. We are very happy with him. Ravi is a disabled orthopaedic technician who makes orthopaedic aids and wheelchairs. For a number of small children he already made a brace for the correction of the ankle. Apart from the fact that he delivers excellent work, he also is a wonderful role model for our boys.

The Lions Club in Matara organized a medical afternoon a couple of weeks ago. A dentist and an eye doctor examined our boys and gave advice.



Rawi holds one of our clients who got an ankle correction device



Joost B. the volunteer with Indika

Volunteers

On 3rd October Joost B. arrived at Hellabeem. He is Belgian, but has been living in England for 20 years. He is helping us for a couple of weeks with the computer system. Also Derek and Dinja were here for some time.

Sponsors

We thank everybody for their gifts to Hellabeem. We especially thank the Liliane Foundation for her contribution and the Lakeland Foundation for the funding of the second part of the construction of the electricity. Many thanks to Stichting Schreuders, the Vrijzinnige Geloofgemeenschap Naarden and Stichting Rommelmarkt Haren. We thank the Hartingbank for a wheelchair and other equipment. Lions Clubs Texel and Schagen. All gifts, great and small, too many to name them all, we are very grateful for them! It is a warm feeling that there are so many people who help us in whatever way building Hellabeem.

NEWS FROM THE DUTCH BOARD

Hellabeem is music to the ears

Last May we had the first benefit concert for Hellabeem. Again next year!

More than a hundred people came to the beautiful little church in the Spieghel in Bussum and enjoyed Evelina Vorontsova playing the piano and Hans Roelofsen on bass. An unusual combination that the audience appreciated very much. It was a present in itself that the wonderful spring weather enabled us to enjoy our glasses of wine and delicious refreshments during the interval and after the concert in the church garden. We were happy with the € 2.500,00 proceeds for Hellabeem. The enthusiasm of the audience was enormous and we, the board have been asked many times to organize another concert next year. We answered this question with a whole-hearted yes!

Do you like this idea? May be there is a nice location in your area where you could organize a benefit concert yourself. Small scale, a home concert or a nice little church somewhere nearby. It is a very rewarding thing to organize!



We all wish you Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Best wishes, Helène Heijen and Jan van Beek and the Dutch board.

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