



www.rainbowcentresrilanka.com - UK Registered Charity Number 1114933

Maddewala Road, Obadawatta, Bentota - 26 Campden Grove, London W8 4JQ

alisonnagle@yahoo.co.uk - aruniw_cooray@yahoo.com

Patrons: Her Excellency Shiranthi Rajapaksa, Mrs Jane Chilcott and Mrs Evelina Girling

Ambassador: Gillian Anderson

Rainbow Centre News Summer 2014



Our Valuable Work

The Rainbow Centre is a daily haven for children who live in extreme poverty in South Western Sri Lanka. It provides welfare, education, medical care and loving support to more than one hundred children living in appalling conditions, whose parents are unable to provide adequate care. The Rainbow Centre's aim is to equip children with the skills to break free from the poverty in which they live. It works to ensure that children can access the mainstream school system and succeed with their studies by providing transport, scholarships and after-school tuition. The Rainbow Centre operates a school, pre-school and nursery. It runs medical programmes for children and their families. The Rainbow Centre is the only facility in this area for these children to turn to and has been praised highly for the standard of its work.

The number of children enabled to go to mainstream school reaches 205



School means the world to us

The Rainbow Centre began work in December 2005 with 22 children who had one dream: to go to school. It took three years for the Centre to find a school that would take its children. Discrimination against poverty was rampant at every level. However, in 2008, Moragalla Junior School's headmaster Peter Perera offered places to Rainbow Centre children in Grade One. Since then, the number of Rainbow Centre children attending the mainstream system has grown steadily. Older children still face the difficulty of having to start in Grade One, but thanks to support and tuition, they are promoted swiftly to an age appropriate class. Without support these children would not be able to go to school. Many still depend on the Rainbow Centre for transport and for after-school tuition, food, uniforms, school supplies, welfare and medical support. Peter Perera has now retired and teaches at the Rainbow Centre after school, helping the children with their Sinhala and general knowledge.

Sinhala and Tamil New Year Celebrations 2014



Rainbow Centre children were thrilled to receive wonderful Rainbow Drop gifts from Rotary Vectis Sunrise on the Isle of Wight

Sinhalese and Tamil New Year was celebrated in April at the Rainbow Centre with a party which started with a re-enactment of the ceremonies that start the holiday season. Milk was boiled on an open fire and traditional delicacies were served to a Rainbow Centre family. Many of the children at the Centre were not able to celebrate their New Year at home because their parents are unable to afford to buy food or gifts to mark the occasion. This year, the Rainbow Centre was delighted to be able again to distribute Rainbow Drop gifts from the Vectis Sunrise Rotary Club who have been extremely generous with their annual shipments of gifts. The Rainbow Centre is especially grateful to Maire Reeves and her team for all the hard work and thoughtful gifts. The children were thrilled.



Welcome to the Class of 2014



In March the new Rainbow Centre pre-school year started giving basic school lessons to a new group of three year olds. Eight of the 16 new children have been at the Rainbow Centre since they were infants. The newcomers were selected on the basis of poverty and all come from homes experiencing extreme hardship; empty shacks without water and electricity and a parent or carer who works as a labourer, hired by the day. Food is an extremely important part of the young children's day. They are welcomed with breakfast and given a large lunch and milk. Without the Rainbow Centre these children would go hungry; many are extremely thin and small for their age when they join the Rainbow Centre. To date, all the Rainbow Centre's pre-schoolers have gone into the mainstream school system and enter school extremely well prepared.

Rainbow Centre Children Come Top of their Class

The Rainbow Centre wants to congratulate Nirmila, Navodya, Sandun, Madushan, Ravindu, Dilshan, Nirosha, Iresha, Maneesha and Susanthika for outstanding results in their school exams.



All of the children above came top in their school exams - this group includes children who have been homeless in the past year but still managed to continue with their studies.

After- School Tuition Given Boost

The Rainbow Centre's after-school tuition programme has expanded every year as the Rainbow Centre children who are in the mainstream system grow older. Currently, the Centre offers tuition, nutrition and welfare to children aged between five and 15. The children are brought to and from school in the Rainbow Centre bus and are taken back to their homes in the evening. Where appropriate, funding is provided for children to attend private tuition classes. Particular help and focus is on children who will be sitting their 'O' Level exams next year.

After-school tuition classes with the Rainbow Centre's new and highly inspiring maths teacher



Lord Wandsworth College Visit

Everyone at the Rainbow Centre was delighted to welcome visitors from Lord Wandsworth College's Cricket Tour in April. The visitors were welcomed with a traditional dance and engaged in team competitions and made friends in no time. Lord Wandsworth College put a tremendous effort into fundraising (including a bat-a-thon) and were extremely generous with their support. The visit included taking the English children on a trip down the railway line to see where some of the Rainbow children live. The visit was a highlight of the year for the Rainbow Centre children who really welcome to the chance to get to know young people from other countries and cultures.



'We arrived at the side of a rail track which we had to cross to get to the "homes". Basically, shacks made of wood and rusted tin on a rubbish dump. I can't say it differently...These people have nothing and what they get they spend on booze and drugs, not furniture or food or their children. They go to bed hungry most nights...' (An excerpt from Lord Wandsworth's blog)

Spiralling Food Prices and Huge Thanks to the Tasker Family and Rotary Clubs in Kings Lynn

The cost of basic staples has been hit extremely hard by inflation in the past year. These price rises have a devastating effect on the poor. The cost of medicine has also increased significantly. The Rainbow Centre is extremely grateful for the support of the Tasker family who raised awareness of the Rainbow Centre's work amongst Rotary Clubs in Kings Lynn. Thanks to their very generous support the Rainbow Centre children's nutritional and medical programmes have been given the additional help they need. Currently 55 families depend on the Rainbow Centre and for many it is their only lifeline.

My Story



'My name is Ravindu. I am the oldest of three children and aged seven. My father doesn't help us and we have to live in a room without walls which floods when it is wet. I often go hungry. Until the Rainbow Centre helped us we only got food when my mother could find some work. My mother is very sick. I love school. I love the Rainbow. I came top of my year in my last exams. I need to work to help my mother after school.'

Pen Pal Scheme with Pembridge Hall School

The Rainbow Centre is extremely grateful to the teachers, parents and girls at Pembridge Hall School for all their amazing support since the Rainbow Centre first began work in 2005. Recent exchanges of letters from Pembridge Hall's Plan Ed Team have meant a great deal to the Rainbow Centre children. The children are now able to read letters from their London friends without assistance and write back talking about their lives. The scheme provides a great incentive for the Sri Lankan children to continue to improve their language skills. The Rainbow Centre is especially thankful to Mrs Ross Hulme for her stalwart support and to all those involved in the recent cake sale on behalf of the Rainbow Centre children.



Susanthika and Nirmila read a letter from their English pen friends.

Congratulations to Nirmila, Tharika and Dilshan



Certificates of achievement in a national children's competition to mark last year's Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka.

Congratulations for top sporting achievements



Congratulations to Madushan, Piuymal, Dehan, Suranjan and Dilshan who have taken part in regional sporting events and won first place in athletics and team competitions. Cricket at the Rainbow Centre remains the number one sport.

Arts Prizes for Rainbow Centre Students



Huge congratulations to Nirosha, Susanthika, Iresha and Sandun; prize winners in regional art competitions for poetry, story and song writing in English and in Sinhala. All of the girls hope to go into teaching after school, while Sandun, kneeling at the front wants to go into the music business.

Huge thanks to Priyantha Gunawardena



The Rainbow Centre is extremely grateful for the support of swimming teacher, life-guard and international windsurfing champion, Priyantha Gunawardena to enable the older children to learn to swim in the river.



The Pre-school children are taken on trips to the beach to introduce them to the dangers and fun of the sea.



Fact File

The Rainbow Centre was set up in December 2005 in response to the plight of children living and begging on the street whose dream was to go to school.

It began meeting in a temple with eleven children and has grown steadily. It now provides education, welfare and support to 55 families in an area stretching from north of Beruwala to south of Bentota.

The Rainbow Centre runs its own school bus and ensures that children attend school regularly and receive all the support that they need.

The Centre operates from premises rented on a long lease in Bentota with purpose-built classrooms and facilities thanks to support from Rotary Clubs in the Isle of Wight

It is run by a highly dedicated team of four, three of who are volunteers: Aruni Cooray, Piyathissa Cooray, Alison Nagle and Alasdair Nagle. It is a registered UK Charity Number 1114933 and a Sri Lankan NGO.

It depends on the great generosity of numerous schools, clubs, companies and individuals without whom none of this work would be possible.

How to Support the Rainbow Centre

Please go to www.justgiving.com/rcsl/donate

Or please make cheques payable to: "The Rainbow Centre Sri Lanka" at 26 Campden Grove, London W8 4JQ. Alternatively, please contact **Alison at alisonnagle@yahoo.co.uk** or visit **www.rainbowcentresrilanka.com**