

THANARBAID HEALTH CARE CENTRE CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2000

Greetings again from Thanarbaid.

Since our last newsletter exciting things have happened in the Thanarbaid Health Care Programme (T.H.C.P.), not the least being several important meetings.

Recently at their Annual General Meeting at Kailakuri Clinic, 129 diabetic patients made a unanimous decision to adopt their proposed constitution. This is a dramatic step forward. The constitution will form a base on which to work for the programme's independence, hopefully to be achieved in 2005.

It has long been our desire and concern that the wider community should be involved in the Thanarbaid programme as their Programme. The recent establishment of the Community Executive Committee comprising of village people (mainly women) from the three ethnic communities and senior program staff has been another giant step forward and dream realized. This committee will determine programme activities and solve problems. At the first of its three monthly meetings two important decisions were made. 1) Clinic workers will now attend village Muslim circumcisions to ensure a sterile technique is followed to reduce infection and the danger of HIV/Aids transmission.

2) Starting at Thanarbaid village, stray dogs are to be identified and killed in order to reduce the rabies menace. This is a very real problem in our area.

At the Thanarbaid and Kailakuri clinics, twice monthly regular staff meetings have been established. Selected staff, representing each ethnic group and each branch of the programme attend. They too have made important decisions. At Thanarbaid the group have considered such things as outpatient clinic management, new buildings, food costs and staff meal arrangements and at every meeting at least two of the rules are revised from the clinic rules book. Kailakuri staff have tackled future planning for independence and sustainability, a cycle theft and arrangements for the ordering and safe transport of the insulin

supply from Dhaka. This is no mean feat with the increase of lawlessness and disorder through out the country. These two groups are being participated in with enthusiasm and are having a strong motivating effect on the whole programme.

We have long believed that the family is the most precious central unit of society. The family is the most important prevention and healer of disease. It is based on partnerships.

In our last newsletter we told the story of HB the vangari driver whose marriage breakdown was the cause of his attempted suicide. Unfortunately they did not live happily ever after. Recently when bringing an accident victim to Thanarbaid in the course of his work, it was noted that HB was not his usual cheery self. Questioning by the appropriate staff revealed a very angry young man. His wife had gone to visit her parents over a week ago. She was now reluctant to return to his home. After further discussion with staff HB admitted a deep love for his wife and hurt at this further rejection. In partnership with Dipok (a relative and village leader) and Dipali (a health worker) we believe with further work the marriage will be restored.

Recently several of our staff or their nearest and dearest have had to be admitted as patients to Thanarbaid. This has given cause for concern that has been felt by all. Prokomila is one of our best and most senior paramedic workers. She and her husband are comparatively wealthy and have a stable and secure marriage. Their lives however have not been easy. Some years ago Prokomila's husband was kidnapped. She had to pay 75000 taka (approximately 2 1/2 years wages) for his safe return. Two years ago after a long and protracted illness, the elder of their two daughters, died of kidney failure. In the midst of their grief when Prokomila's reactions were extreme and at times irrational, she became the victim of various suspicions. These resulted in her temporary suspension from the programme. The accusations have never been proven but for the sake of the programme harmony and effectiveness Prokomila

was transferred to the Kailakuri T.B. programme. Very recently Prokomila's husband fell from a tree and fractured his spine. Thankfully it is a stable fracture with no spinal chord involvement. After thorough investigations and prolonged bed rest with pain relief he is now happily at home recuperating.

Shoroll, a Mandl village worker was admitted to Thanarbaid in a very weak state with high fevers and a dry hacking cough. Sadly her first baby was delivered stillborn three weeks previously. Her husband too is unwell. He has suffered intermittent fevers for several months. His father is the local "Kobiraj "(herbal doctor) and so they are caught between two cultures and healing systems. Fellow worker concerns motivated us to seek the help of an influential community Mandi woman. She arranged for Shoroli's parents to transfer Shoroli from her husband's home and herbalist influence to the Clinic. Shorilo's diagnosis was difficult to establish. The kobiraj medicines had altered and masked some of her partner symptoms. She is now making slow but steady progress on T.B medication. Her husband has agreed to come to the Clinic for further investigation of his fevers as soon as the cutting of the family rice is completed. [While the western world gears up for the

commercialism of Christmas our communities are working very hard to harvest their rice crops to enable them to survive the next few months]. Health work is full of partnerships. In partnership the staff of three different ethnic backgrounds and religions make important decisions and work in harmony together for the good of their families and communities.

Two thousand years ago Jesus established His mission on the basis of love and partnerships. This is the dynamic inspiration of the Christian religion and the Jubilee year. Partnerships are the essence of Mission. Without you, our mission partners, the Thanarbaid Health Care Programme could not function.

We take this opportunity to thank you once again for your support.

We also wish you all a very blessed and happy Christmas and may the peace, hope and joy of this sacred time remain with you throughout the coming year.

On behalf of the staff and people of the T.H.C.P. your correspondents are Dr Edric Baker, MOIC and **colleague** Libby Laing. Printing and distribution by our special Father Douglas Venne M.M



Glory to God in the Highest

And on Earth,

Peace to People of Goodwill