

Kyle and myself after spending the night in Colombo arrived in Kandy early afternoon Feb 7th. After checking into the hotel we proceeded to Sarana Sevana where we met the Kandy Buddhist Assoc (KBA) leadership, the Sarana Sevana staff, and students.

Sarana Sevana Orphanage

We found the Sarana Sevana facility to be in much better shape than even last year. The showers now have a roof, and the toilet facilities much improved. The orphanage now has 26 inmates, up from 18 last year. Per the KBA, the government closed down one of the poorly managed orphanages and moved inmates to the better run facilities.

Kyle and myself were treated to a musical presentation, with tea and biscuits afterwards. The feedback we received concerning the matron was nothing but positive. As a group we went to the kitchen and compiled a list of what the matron needed to properly prepare food for the children. Here is what we came up with.

- 8 kilo industrial rice cooker. Current rice cooker we supplied, is now too small for larger number of inmates. Approx cost \$50
- 2 big Kettles \$20
- One big iron griddle. Current griddle simply too small. (About the size we would have in our home for 4.) Cost \$20.
- Two big enamel jugs. Cost \$10
- Coconut scrapper. Cost \$10
- Vegetable Cutter. Cost \$10. (Current one totally rusted over)
- Chopping knife. Cost \$10
- Kitchen utensils. Cost \$50. - Knives, forks, plates etc.

All the above will help the matron to continue to provide proper meals for the inmates. I will fund the purchase of the above items. Per our discussion with Sube, Nande and/or him can take the matron shopping to procure the much needed items. Please make arrangements for the above purchases.

Next we discussed vocational training at Sarana Sevana. The KBA and Sube seemed to like the idea of carpentry. It would be taught at Sarana Sevana. They believed they could either have a volunteer provide training, or for a small fee he could provide on going training. All parties thought this to be a good idea, as it provided skills with good demand, produced goods for Sarana Sevana use, and that could be taught on-site. Other ideas were brought forth such as mechanical repair, electrical repair etc. But it seems carpentry would be the simplest to start out with. Please inform Sube and Nande I will pay for the procurement of carpentry tools. Plus I will be open to various schemes to provide a vocational trainer.

We also discussed the procurement of garden tools for the orphanage. They are starting to grow their own vegetables, which will give them a much better diet. Garden tools would only make those efforts easier and more efficient. In addition to improved diet, an expanded garden would be very positive on various levels for the children. This would be an activity that I believe even the youngest children could participate in. I would imagine for \$100-200 we could procure all the tools needed.

And finally we discussed one inmate who was 17 yrs old and near the age he must leave Sarana Sevana. His mother is in prison for murdering his father and he has no other family. Sube and the KBA were very keen on finding a family for him to live with while he attends

vocational training. I informed Sube that I would assist with vocational school fees, plus pay a monthly stipend for him to live with a family selected by the KBA. To all concerned it is very important that we help him make the transition to a productive life on the outside. We have all worked so hard to give the children of Sarana Sevana a better life. It's imperative we do not lose our hard work and efforts during this crucial time in his life.

After visiting Sarana Sevana the Pahansila volunteers, Kyle and myself had dinner at the Hill Top Hotel. It was a delightful evening, where much was learned and shared. Geetha presented to myself a beautiful booklet with drawings from the children, plus a poster they made. I brought it home to Sara and the children. They were all touched by the drawings and comments from the students.

In review, in previous years we had big projects that desperately need to be done. In working with the KBA, Pahansila has greatly improved the physical condition of Sarana Sevana. For now, I believe that is behind us. We are now focusing on incremental improvements and continuation of tutoring programs. Please have Sube and Nande let the KBA know that I am very proud of my association with them, and proud of the work we have done together in recent years.

Weerodara School

On morning of Feb 8th Sube and myself visited the Weerodara School. The school Principal was away for meetings in Colombo. But one of his senior teachers, who acted as our tour guide last year, met us and was our guide again this year. The school was in a little better condition than last year. It appears they are getting more government funding for basic supplies like reading materials. The teacher who is also the librarian took us to the library. She reviewed the process they have for securing the books we have purchased for them. They have a very good system on checking books in and out, with complete records for review.

Weerodara School still has some basic needs to be addressed. The following is from my list compiled from the tour.

- 2 long reading tables with chairs - \$50
- Additional Sinhalese reading books - \$300?
- Office table - \$25
- Library Cabinet - \$50
- Crayon's and art supplies - \$150?
- Scanner - \$50 (said would really help with getting material for class)
- 2 computer memory 40 gigabit upgrade - \$200?
- Printer upgrade mouse.(not sure from notes now exactly what needed)
- Musical instruments \$ 200?

We were told of a new Wi-Fi technology tied to telephone lines. It cost \$ 50 set up fee then \$10 per month. Polgollawatte will have the same request. This sounds like a game changing technology to connect these students to the world. (I believe Sube said it was a pretty good technology.) We can review it's speed and quality after several months of set up to see if worth retaining for 2011.

And finally the staff introduced to a very bright student Shanika Wijerathne from a very needy family. She was I would say 12-13 yrs old, who one day wishes to be a lawyer. She is one of the students you meet, who you can immediately tell has the desire and talents to have a very successful life. Yet is from a desperately poor family. All she needs is just a little help. Sube

suggested she would be a strong candidate from one of the Pahansila scholarship programs. I believe Sube gave her a scholarship form. She was the only student brought to us by the staff. I believe because they recognized her special abilities, self motivation, and her financial situation. Please follow up with Sube on her application, and we can sponsor her from our funds if needed.

Polgollawatte School

In the afternoon we visited the Polgollawatte School. The Principal was very proud of his facilities and staff. His attendance is up to 175 students as families in the area are starting to choose his school. The school's condition was so much nicer than several years ago. The classes were bright and colorful, the students seemed much more engaged in their studies. The classes had new government supplied books, plus more funding for wooden room partitions etc. The Principal had only two requests.

- 1-2 more computers \$400 (?)
- Wi-Fi connection \$50 set up plus \$10 month.

Like with Sarana Sevana, since have been working with Polgollawatte School for several years now, many of the basic needs have been taken care of and their wish list is much smaller. To get them where they need to be, Pahansila has made a great positive impact on both institutions. Something we can all be proud of.

Sube told me Pahansila now has 125 students in its scholarship program. That is something you can certainly be proud of. And I appreciate how time consuming that must be now.

Kelley Davis