



SWISS LADIES CHARITY GROUP

Activities 2004/2005

The bazaar was again a huge success this year, with the Swiss stall being one of the most striking at the event due to the generous donations of Swiss companies and individuals and the efforts of the Ladies in baking, decorating and manning it.

A new attraction beside the staples of cheese, watches and chocolate was autographed posters, cards, and head and wrist bands personally donated by arguably the most famous Swiss citizen of the moment – Roger Federer.

The sheer variety of items on the Swiss stall and their striking presentation helped to pull in many more people and our total net profit was an impressive 200,500SLR!



This year we introduced a cookie bake, where twenty ladies got together to bake cookies, while their children decorated the boxes. The children used their imagination and got completely engrossed in making their boxes as beautiful as possible, while the ladies baked hard and then enjoyed wine and sandwiches together. Everybody really enjoyed the atmosphere, and have insisted we do it again this year – especially since the outcome was 20kg of delicious cookies!



However, less than three weeks after the bazaar, disaster hit Sri Lanka and since then our thoughts and actions have been tied up with helping those whose lives were devastated by the tsunami.

As we come to distributing the funds raised at the bazaar though, we have been struck by how much organisations not affected by the tsunami are suffering. While not so much as a drop of water touched them, their funding for the coming year has in many cases been diverted to the tsunami victims, leaving established projects struggling. For this reason we have decided not to focus on tsunami victims, but to continue to support the projects with which we have long term links, to ensure that in difficult times they are not left short.

Consequently, the proceeds from the bazaar were distributed as follows – with the entirety of our donations supporting established projects rather than emergency relief.

One organization which was particularly feeling the loss of donors was the **Independent Development Education (I.D.E) School**, which is struggling to find funds to cover even basic teaching materials this year. In January, Rs 36,000 was handed over to their representative, Sabine Carrard, to pay for vital running costs. A further 16,000 from the sale of watches and knives at the Swiss Circle AGM was also donated in February to enable them to buy classroom supplies.

At the other end of the scale was **Prithipura Infant Homes**, which was actually washed out by the tsunami waves. Miraculously, none of the 85 severely disabled children were injured, although all had to be evacuated, were unable to return for eight weeks. Rs 36,000 was donated through Catherine Liyanage – Project Advisor at the Homes – to be used for the second year running as a bonus for the carers, many of whom lost personal belongings on 26th December 2004. The repairs of all other damages have now been paid for by the generosity of international donors.

Action Gemina is a morning school for homeless children in Negombo, run by a Swiss Lady. Rs 15,000 was handed over to them and will be used to fund morning tea and purchase stationary materials.

Nylander Polio Home has been having serious financial difficulties in recent months, and so this year we decided to increase the donation to them, to ensure that they can continue to improve the lives of those affected by polio. Rs 15,000 was given as an encouragement to their work.

Sister of our Lady of S. Heart were given Rs 10,000 in order to purchase furniture to replace items that are now too old to use. It was decided that this year we would fund two meals at the **Wester Seaton Cheshire Home** to the value of Rs 5,000. One meal will be given on Swiss National Day, and the other on the birthday of Mrs Mendis, to commemorate her life.

A further Rs 15,000 will be given to the **Maharagama Childrens Cancer Hospital** in order to support their work with young cancer patients. **Daya Mina** works with the differently abled and used to receive our support in the form of sugar, tea and milk powder for the children's morning and afternoon drink. They contacted us after realizing we didn't give them the usual donation last year and we decided to use Rs 20,000 to restart our regular support for them again.

The Mother Theresa Home, Mathakuliya were given Rs 10,000 for their ongoing projects aimed at old and abandoned citizens. Finally, Rs 15,000 was earmarked for **Serve**, which provides day care for slum children on the coast of southern Colombo.

The proceeds from the bazaar ticket sales were given to the **Child Protection Authority of Sri Lanka**, a national organization which now has a huge job to do in protecting children affected by Decembers tragedy – many of whom are now orphans.

In summary, we have tried to retain links with projects we know in order to provide reliable support both to those affected by the tsunami and also those who are suffering from the loss of funding in its aftermath. Therefore, a wide range of vulnerable people benefit from what was raised at the bazaar – all of whom would like to extend their thanks to those who donated items and those who bought them, for their continued support in what are proving to be very difficult times.

To all those who have helped the charity group in any way in the past, we extend to you our sincere thanks on behalf of the beneficiaries – your efforts do make a difference in ensuring those without a voice are not forgotten.

The Bazaar 2005 will take place on Friday 9th December from 5-8pm at the BMICH New Exhibition Hall

The Swiss Stall this year is organized by Maria Cristina Regazzoni and Catherine Liyanage together with Arlette Palmer and Rosemary Samarasinghe.

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