

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008



## **Mission Statement**

**Community Concern Society, a child-centred Christian NGO, empowers disadvantaged children and adults to improve their lives through education, rehabilitation, vocational development, communication, intervention, mobilization and for the most needy and destitute, direct assistance.**

15/4A, Aponsu Mawatha, Dehiwela  
[www.communityconcernsociety.com](http://www.communityconcernsociety.com)

## ***FOUNDERS NOTE***

*Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.* Francis of Assisi

Another year has passed quickly, and as we look back at 2008 we are so grateful to see what God has done in or midst at CCS.

One of this year's highlights was starting the Tiny Stars Preschool with 75 little cuties from the beach. Our hope for Tiny Stars graduates is that they will be able to enter government schools when they turn six. As we stay in close touch with the mothers of these kids, we are assuring they will not become drop-outs, but be ready to access the free government education that is available to them all.

We have also started a daycare where mothers can leave their children with us as they find employment and get out of poverty situations. We know that as opportunities arise, our moms will prove themselves responsible as they dearly desire to achieve a better life.

Our involvement in tsunami reconstruction projects has come to a close. Almost 500 homes have been built by CCS, and handed over to tsunami affected families in our community. CCS was also able to help many more families get homes through the government and other organizations.

The CCS Tsunami Project that operated from January 2005 through December 2008 under Jacco Groot, our wonderful and very effective director from Holland, came to an end after completing the mission. We are thrilled to have completed all the relief, reconstruction, livelihood regeneration and restoration that was undertaken for our community after the tsunami.

Now that many of the families have moved out of the immediate community, CCS has started outreaches to new locations, carrying out some of the same programmes initiated with our beach people in Dehiwela. One of the highlights is the new Kolonnawa Project, where we relocated 22 Gypsie families from our

beach, who lost everything to the tsunami waves. Today, we have a great outreach to this area where we are working with 600 poor children who live on the edge of a garbage dump. A separate team, trained through CCS, has been very effective in running this project.

Another new area of outreach is the livelihood project in Dankotuwa. Here, we have relocated 33 tsunami stricken families in small individual houses in a rural setting. We are running a tailoring project and also offering social mobilization work including micro loans, education programmes and a community library. Over 200 children are receiving aid.

Community Concern Society continues to function in Dehiwela and help families who never left after the tsunami. We have been able to develop and promote new initiatives that have empowered these families to regain balance and control in their lives. Our school, the medical clinic, the education programmes, the drug rehab work, the youth programme, and the child sponsorship work are all still available to hundreds of families. Our hope is that the love of God will always be expressed through CCS to help those in the greatest need. Mother Theresa said, "In this life we cannot do great things, but we can do small things with great love."

Many Blessings

Sriyani and Tom Tidball

## **Dehiwela Outreach Centre (DOC)**

The Dehiwela Outreach Centre was the heart of Community Concern Society when it opened its doors in 1982 and still remains the hub of all the programmes. The Centre focuses on the needs of the densely populated coastal community living on the beach which stretches all the way from Dehiwela up to Ratmalana.

After the Tsunami of 2004, hundreds of families were relocated into new homes and the families on the beach have decreased considerably. However, hundreds still live in hope of a new home, currently residing in make shift shelters, unable to make specific plans or improvements to their homes. Their conditions have improved only marginally despite concerted efforts to help mobilize the community.

The lack of a regular income, the incidence of drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, abuse of children and sickness is still prevalent.

CCS continues to focus on its vision of feeding the hungry, taking care of the sick and empowering communities to take charge of their own affairs. This is done through a series of programmes that are conducted through the Dehiwela Outreach Centre.

### **Feeding Programme**

During 2008, the feeding programme catered to 250 children on a daily basis. Those eligible need to fit certain criteria to be registered with the feeding programme. The programme focuses on not only nutritional meals but is based on a comprehensive plan to improve their overall health. The children are given a general medical check twice a year. Records of their height and weight are maintained. Worm treatment, cleanliness and administration of vitamins are carefully monitored and implemented.

In addition, to help discipline the children a reward system was in operation for good behavior. Table manners, clean hands and obedience earned the children stars that were maintained on a chart. Weekly prizes of toiletries and monthly prizes of clothes were gifted as incentives to the children.

Bible studies are also available. When children drop out of the programme, a field officer follows up and home visits help to identify circumstances that need to be addressed.

### **Village Welfare**

Emergencies and crises arise frequently in the lives of these families who already have much to contend with. Medical emergencies, accidents, dental care, dry rations, transport to hospitals and the sudden needs of a senior citizen all come under this category. During the monsoon season in Sri Lanka, when tin sheets from roofs are swept away and semi permanent shelters collapse, the house of the villager is battered in the relentless winds.

During this year as CCS continued to work in the remaining tsunami camps in Dehiwela and Ratmalana, the scheme helped to support 5 men and women in setting up their own income generating enterprise. This Village Welfare programme supports families with all these requirements, which grew from 40 to 80 recipients.

We recall Mahes Dinushan who joined our feeding programme two years ago. His father had no permanent job and had five children to support. Mahes was not only underweight but struggled with a wheeze. Through the Village Welfare programme he was given medical assistance and his wheeze is more manageable. He has gained weight, attends a government school and is now a thriving 11-year old.

### **Sewing School**

CCS has always identified vocational training as important in the empowerment of women. Most of those who join the sewing school have not gone through formal education and have no skills. In the last 15 years, the programme has evolved from a simple conventional curriculum which took one year to complete into an intense 3-month course where selected items are taught. These selected skills have been identified as marketable. The change in strategy enabled the women to generate an income. On completion of the course, orders for the sewing of school bags were undertaken which helped to make the programme a sustainable one.

The programme at the DOC continued with 7 students and one of the Trainees took on the leadership of the sewing programme. At the end of term, this Trainee was able to win a subcontract of supplying school bags with a local businessman.

### **Pilot Programme – Araliya Nivasa**

The sewing school conducted a pilot programme at the CCS tsunami complex, known as “Araliya Nivasa” in Ratmalana. One of the residents in the complex opened up her home and the sewing programme was able to rent two of her rooms. The batch comprised of 12 women who resided in the complex and the Supervisor was one of the students who was trained to overlook the tailor shop. The students followed a module implemented by CCFC, on how to start, improve and expand a business and also do market research. The enterprising women sourced their own orders, pooled their income and divided it amongst

themselves. CCS helped with advice, exposing them to market trends, provided guidance and encouraged them to manage their own programme.

Seasonal sales and stalls at church bazaars helped to generate funds to assist the running of the sewing programme.

## **Frank Whilsmith Medical Centre (FWMC)**

The medical unit of the Community Concern Society recognizes that it is not only direct assistance to patients that is vital for the community but also health education is a significant tool. It empowers individuals to make informed choices, resist oppression and enables communities to live healthy and productive lives.

FWMC has a range of programmes serving a wide variety of needs. The Medical Clinic is the pivotal point providing simple treatments and remedies. The unit also conducts the Prema Project (mobile clinic), Baby clinic, pregnant mothers clinic, Teens & Kids programme, Training of Trainers programme and the Senior Citizens programme.

### **Medical Unit**

The (FWMC) screens patients addressing health issues and identifying undetected illnesses, provides doctor consultations, assists in common maladies like diabetes, hypertension, respiratory ailments, fever and pain. It also provides help with detecting cholesterol levels, treating skin conditions and ENT services are just some of treatment meted out to 1004 patients that passed through the clinic this year. In addition 40 cases were funded which included eye examinations, spectacles and cataract operations.

Twenty dental cases were assisted. Serious cases are directed to Nawajeewana or the main Government hospitals.

Follow-up health checks for the children in the Tiny Stars School, Morning Star School and Feeding programmes take place regularly.

### **Prema Project**

This pioneering mobile clinic continues to serve those who are at home and do not have easy accessibility to health clinics. The mobile clinic works in the Dehiwela, Mt Lavinia, Ratmalana areas, as well as the Tsunami camps that still exist. The project helped 993 patients for a variety of needs. The team also directs people who wish to avail themselves of other programmes conducted by CCS.

### **Health Camp at Tsunami Camp**

Eighty patients were treated at the Health camp conducted in the Ratmalana Technical camp. The patients were treated for fever, headaches, joint pains, hypertension, dry, itchy skin, respiratory problems, coughs, wounds, scabies, worm infestation and fungal infections.

An HIV/AIDS awareness programme was also conducted in the camps.

### **Pregnant Mums Clinic**

The Pregnant Mums clinic assists families who live below the poverty line. Once again they come from the immediate vicinity as well as Badowita and the Tsunami camps. They are screened by the CCS Doctor who volunteers at the clinic. These mothers have many issues that range from health, psychological and financial problems.

Health and pre and post natal education is conducted, helping them to understand the importance of care and child rearing. A daily nutritious lunch on weekdays helps to build up their strength. The programme encourages them, builds their confidence and gives them hope.

A host of other topics are part of the programme including: group exercises; special activities which support psychological health; health education which covers a gamut of themes such as cleanliness, environmental care, safe drinking water, stages of a child's development and family planning. Twenty mothers were carefully monitored and gave birth to healthy babies - nine boys and eleven girls.

### **Sharety Baby Clinic**

A strict set of criteria helps the screening of mothers and babies who are below the poverty line and in need of health and nutritional support. In the year 2008, 120 babies were registered with the clinic. The programme provided milk food, rusks, cereals, fruits and education on child care. The doctor overlooks their progress and records are maintained.

### **Kids and Teens programme**

The teens and kids programme is a health education and awareness programme for children from poor families. The education includes good hygiene practices, health, diet and a host of subjects which are taught to them through demonstrative methods, interaction, song and play.

Twenty five young children were in the programme. Some who needed assistance with their homework could turn to the staff. At the end of the year they were permitted to demonstrate what they had learnt through a drama competition. It was interesting to note that they shared what they had learnt with their parents too, educating them on topics that they were not familiar with.

### **Senior Citizens programme**

This programme is in its third year and gaining momentum. Sixty senior citizens, twenty of whom are men meet once a week. The elderly talk of their joys, sorrows, achievements and failures, their loneliness and medical needs. It is a place to socialize and interact with one another which helps to dispel their loneliness.

Exercise, games, handicraft, memory games as well as time to use their talents through dance, music and song combine together to form this highly

comprehensive and successful programme. Hygiene and health education, cleanliness and care for the environment awareness programmes encourage them to teach their children and grandchildren about what they learn. Well woman clinics, medical assistance, counselling, conflict resolution, meditation and spiritual guidance make this one of the most popular and well patronized programmes at CCS.

All programmes at the end of year have fun-filled Christmas celebrations.

### **Training of Trainers**

This two year programme funded by CIDA helps women to evolve into leaders, tapping into potential that they never knew existed within them. It helps them to become productive members of society and directing them to live a life of their own choice, in a healthy way. A total of 80 peer educators successfully completed the programme and it was entirely handled by the educators at the FWMC.

A range of modules were specially developed and taught to the women. Topics included hygiene, HIV/AIDS, iodine deficiency, anti-drug abuse, family planning, reproductive health, garbage disposal, care for the environment amongst several others.

The teaching methods were tailor-made to suit each group so that they would be able to assimilate and retain the information in the easiest possible manner.

They, in turn, taught another 270 women who shared it with their families as well, increasing awareness levels to help improve the quality of their lives and those they have influence over.

## **Lotus Buds**

In 1989 Lotus Buds opened its doors as a home for children in crisis. It was not a typical children's home - it was actually a family which provided a healthy, stable atmosphere for the growth of 22 children, caring for their physical, mental, spiritual and social needs.

As the years have gone by, the family has seen six of the girls get married, five move abroad to pursue their careers and one of them begin work on the Logos ship. The remaining ten are employed locally while two of them are still in school.

### **Stories from the Lotus Bud family**

#### *Rebecca and Nissansala - Growing up and moving on*

During 2008, Rebecca and Nissansala headed out to the Middle East for employment within two weeks of each other. Even though the family was sad to see them leave Lotus Buds, they rejoice with them as both girls have found lucrative jobs and want them to prosper financially just as much as they prosper spiritually and emotionally.

No doubt these fresh experiences will develop them to become well-rounded individuals.

#### *Kumari – Engagement*

Kumari and Tyronne, who works closely with the church, were formally engaged on the 14th of March this year. They are planning their wedding for February 2010. Kumari works in a Day Care centre and also works as a teacher in an art school.

#### *Indira & Kumara and Sarath & Charmaine – Bundles of Joy*

Indira, of the Lotus Bud family, delivered a bouncing baby girl on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2008. This was the first Lotus Buds grandchild followed by Jonathan who was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2008, to Sarath (from Lotus Buds) and Charmaine.

#### *Lotus Bud ladies – Moving on up*

Neela, who has been studying for the CIMA professional qualification, was able to find employment in a leading advertising firm and enjoys her work. She has now found an opportunity to actually put the theories she has learned into practice.

Kasthurie sat for her GCE Advanced Level Exam in August this year and is awaiting her results. She is a young lady who does not believe in procrastination and is already working at E-Nutrition.

Both Kasthurie and Shiromi completed the first level of their diploma for Administrative and Professional Secretaries.

Sue completed her teacher training at Ladies' College Department of Vocational Studies. Her certification covers pre-school and primary education which will open up several opportunities for her future.

As the children begin their new lives filled with hope, Lotus Buds continues to provide spiritual mentoring, quality education and vocational training opportunities coupled with the best health and emotional support in a loving, supportive family environment.

The Lotus Buds vision to provide a sincere lifelong foster family, expressing the love and acceptance of Christ to children who have experienced crisis, continues to be stronger and more passionate than ever before.

**KidzNet**  
***“Striving for excellence in residential childcare”***

**History**

KidzNet was birthed out of hearts that were touched during the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami. In response to the vast devastation and destruction caused to the entire nation of Sri Lanka, our children’s home - Lotus Buds - began a small scale relief outreach to other small Christian homes that were affected by the tsunami and/or began to admit children who lost their families due to the tragedy. Whilst relief efforts made a temporary impact on these homes, God prompted the team to work towards a more far-reaching, nationwide, long-term effort that would empower and encourage all of those working in Christian residential care. This was how KidzNet was born.

**Aims and Objectives**

To initiate an active network of Christian residential care workers who will facilitate fellowship, trouble-shooting and thereby create a forum to share ideas and information on a common platform

To host children’s homes training seminars for the management and staff of those working in residential care

To initiate a website for rapid and cost-efficient communication and networking; as well as to easily reference all training information and governmental requirements

To produce a quick reference directory for residential care givers. This directory will include contacts of both government and private sector administrations and organizations that can assist those working in residential childcare

To produce a residential care book of “Good practices” or standards for residential caregivers in Sri Lanka

To connect monthly with children’s homes who consider themselves as “partners” of the network by supporting their work through both relief and micro-grants

To initiate a “standards” forum for Christian children’s homes throughout Sri Lanka, and to assist and monitor any home that desires to adhere with such standards to build up, meet and maintain quality residential care

To establish and coordinate a child sponsorship program that would enable every child within the network to receive proper nutrition, education and vocational support

To eventually conduct camps, seminars and training sessions for the children living in the network homes

### **KidzNet office Opened**

On the 1st of February 2008, KidzNet hired Mr. Harendra Jayawardene (Haren) as the Manager of the project. Since that time, KidzNet has tripled in output and begun full- time service in partnering with children's homes in the network. Haren was given a small, economical car enabling him to personally visit all of the homes and outreach centres in the network. Whilst visiting, Haren carried out an evaluation of the facilities and requirements of each home. Since Kidznet can offer personal advice, support and contact, the quality of the network has drastically improved. With a greater understanding of the needs of each home, it is possible to also prepare seminars and training sessions much more effectively and successfully meet pending needs.

In addition to the outreach work, an office was set up, the necessary seminar equipment and office furniture were purchased. The office works out of a spare bedroom in the current Lotus Buds children's home as it is not necessary to pay rent and KidzNet pays a low monthly fee to Lotus Buds to cover the cost of utilities.

### **Training seminars throughout 2008**

KidzNet's highest priority is empowering and training - therefore the three seminars held were directed towards this goal. Each seminar was prepared with the input and direction given by the children's homes' directors in on-going needs assessments conducted at each seminar. The three seminars conducted this year covered the following topics in addition to a time of fellowship, networking and lunch.

In February the seminar included procedures for registering a home, connections with Childcare and Probation, Government offices, preparing a vision, mission and creating a three year plan. An introduction to budgeting and accountability was also given.

At the April seminar, the regional director of Childcare and Probation presented "Understanding the heart of a child." Information was also provided on the procedures and requirements of maintaining a log book and record keeping.

In June, Mrs. Ranjani Samarakoon, the regional director of Childcare and Probation, enumerated the detailed requirements for registration and the children's homes' daily running requirements set by the department.

Relief and micro-grant application procedures for initiating a children's home and empowerment for future standards was part of the training programme. The Kidznet website was also launched at this meeting.

In September, the subject was "Leadership within the home." Mrs Ranjini Samarakoon addressed the group and spoke extensively on how we should deal with the kids entrusted to our care.

Since this seminar was focused on achieving our goals for the year, the title it was given was "Dream Weavers." The aim was to instill into the members the necessity and value of having a vision and a mission.

#### Initiation of Relief and Micro-grants

The initiation of the Relief and Micro-grant system began on the 25th of June. At the seminar, information was shared about the two grant applications as well as a method by which each home could identify the categories of the type of grant for which they should apply.

A relief grant is a request for essential, urgently needed items required by the children's homes in order to take care of the children under their care. The grant would be for items that would enhance some sort of standard of care for the children directly. Such items would include items like mattresses, beds, cupboards, cookers, fans, crockery and cutlery. The total funding requested may not exceed Rs.30,000 (US\$300). The simple relief grant application procedures are straightforward which encourages the directors to apply and enable the homes to receive their required items in an efficient and simple manner.

A micro-grant is a request that does not exceed Rs.50,000 (US \$ 500) for an essential item or items that will enable the homes to have the required items in order to empower their kids to increase their capacity to excel in educational, vocational, social or recreational skills. Like the relief grant, the micro-grant is a simple application but the additional requirement is on the part of the home to provide the necessary follow up and training. Micro grants facilitate the purchase of items such as cookers and ovens for cookery classes, stationery for classes, computer equipment, and classroom equipment.

KidzNet will fund the relief grants as a portion of the monthly budget - approximately 25% of the budget has been set aside for both the Relief and Micro-grant disbursements.

## **Finances**

The entire KidzNet budget is run off of the grant supplied by the Russell Family Foundation. This grant has been deposited as both “fixed” and “call” deposits with the National Development Bank in Sri Lanka. Currently, we earn 18-20% interest. The three month deposits earn interest which is withdrawn and the capital is re-deposited. The entire running budget, including the set up of the office, vehicle, salaries, seminar fees and both the relief and micro-grant allocations are covered by the interest only. Due to the increase in both relief and micro-grant applications, fund raising has begun as the budget is insufficient to meet the demand of the homes within the network. Kidznet hopes to expand the current grant disbursements as well as to integrate a KidzNet child sponsorship program in conjunction with Childcare International in the Unites States and Canada. Through these additional donors, Kidznet hopes to triple and quadruple the grant support available to the homes within the network.

## **Launching of the KidzNet website**

The KidzNet website ([www.kidznet.com](http://www.kidznet.com)) was recently launched to facilitate the rapid dissemination of information to the expanding network of KidzNet affiliated homes in the fastest, most inexpensive way possible. In terms of structure and layout, the site is extremely user friendly and accessible, immediately connecting with its intended audience. The site also contains general content such as the history and vision of KidzNet as well as more specific information which is only accessible via secure user login.

Whilst reviewing the progress of KidzNet, the team is thankful for all that has been accomplished in this inaugural year. KidzNet is now networking with 25 homes, training over 50 directors and managers - who work in four provinces - and indirectly care for over 600 children. And this is just the beginning. The whole team now looks forward with great expectation to more expansion in the areas of empowerment, capacity building, grassroots training, disbursement of both relief and micro-grants and child sponsorship assistance. The marching orders for the Kidznet staff are clearly defined, yet greatly accommodating in order to meet the ever expanding needs within the KidzNet network. The small yet devoted team is steadfast in their desire to serve Jesus by blessing those who work on the front lines of Christian residential care in Sri Lanka. Kidznet has been blessed to be a blessing in order to ensure that every child in Christian Residential Care in Sri Lanka is offered an opportunity to walk in the true hope and future Jesus has prepared for them.

## **Power House**

In 1985 the first drug addict got totally delivered from heroin. In faith help was provided to this young dad and with prayer and care, he was delivered from drugs. This was the beginning of the realization that with God's power, men addicted to drugs could be delivered from their addiction. Power House was formally established in 1989 and has grown over the years into a renowned, successful project where young men come into residential care and through a relationship with God can get free from drugs and have a new life.

The programme supports the family with relief, while the family member is in Power House for a period of 6 months. Counselling, medical assistance, emotional and spiritual support are given when needed and close follow up once the member leaves the centre.

Power House has two residential estates. At Power House in Bandaragama there is a capacity to take in 25 men at a time.

### **Vocational & skills training**

Vocational training is available in the production of handicrafts, agricultural, poultry and livestock. Their handicraft products gained recognition in the previous year due to success at a recent exhibition where two of the exhibits created by Power House residents were given placements. There was an even greater incentive created when their first consignment of handicrafts was purchased for the Maldivian market.

The facility has a multipurpose building which is used for skills training. It is available for hire for seminars, training programmes, conferences and functions.

### **Holistic restoration**

The programme takes on a holistic approach by focusing on each individual being built up physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually. Special spiritual leadership classes were conducted and interactive methods were used. A workshop on breaking down the challenges in their lives was equated to Goliath who depicted their drug addiction. A dummy of Goliath was created out of paper maché by the group. They were then invited to pelt the dummy with stones using catapults, drawing the parallel from the bible when David slew the giant and in this case, the weaponry was prayer.

The men gain spiritual insights, where confidence is built, and new friendships are forged in a caring atmosphere, preparing them to exit the programme and find their place once more in society. Their families are also supported at this time and prepared to accept their family member once he is released.

### **Special events**

This year the Anti Drug Day was celebrated when the group prepared a special programme and was featured at the local church. The musical group called “Faith Music Makers” created and presented their original songs. This helped to create an awareness of the project and the extent of the rehabilitation work undertaken.

In keeping with the local culture, the Sinhala and Tamil New Year was a time to enjoy themselves. The Christmas programme took place where 175 members of the group and their families attended.

### **Education on Drug abuse**

Power House was instrumental in conducting a programme to a congregation of 750 young people in the local church. The message conveyed was on the prevention of substance abuse. The dramatized message was appreciated.

### **HIV/AIDS awareness**

The group was given awareness education on HIV/AIDS, conducted by the Public Health Inspector-Kalutara and the Ministry of Health Department of Bandaragama, which helps them to be constantly aware of dangers that they exposed to.

### **Ruwanwella**

After successful completion of the programme, the men have several options: they can stay on and become more involved with the project by assisting new entrants; they may go back to their families; or enter into the second stage project at Ruwanwella.

Power House Ruwanwella provides a safe supervised environment and is open to those who cannot go back home and are not ready to go out and live on their own.

### **Previous members**

Those who have exited the programme are members of a group known as the *Sons of Zebedee*. They are a support group to the programme and meet regularly as part of the follow up programme.

A family camp is conducted annually where nearly 75 members who have exited along with the families and current residents meet for spiritual guidance and support.

### **Capacity building**

With a view to improving and encouraging capacity building, two members of the management of Power House were sent to India. Exposure to five drug rehabilitation centres in Bangalow, Madras, Laknow and Delhi gave them more insight and a fresh outlook.

During the year, 57 men were in the programme and a 40% success rate was recorded. Power House has now opened its doors to those who wish to join the programme from overseas.

## **Education Programme Morning Star School**

The Morning Star School (MSS) was begun as it recognized that there were children who were so poverty stricken that they were unable to even be part of the free education offered by Government schools. The initial batch of children was from the beach and the streets. As education is one of the most effective tools to help children who are marginalized to break out of the circle of poverty, a non-formal curriculum was implemented. Now families who cannot afford to send their children to school for lack of bus-fare, school books, uniforms and meals, register their children with MSS.

### **Attendance Rewards system**

Currently 60-65 children are enrolled. As these children hail from difficult backgrounds and parents do not understand the value of education, there is a tendency for children to drop out of school. To encourage the children to complete the course an Attendance Rewards System has been put in place. Children who record a 100% attendance for the week are given “bonus coins” to put into their tills (through National Savings Bank - Dehiwela). Money collected when the till is full is deposited in the child’s savings book.

Those in the higher classes - which are an equivalent to grade 5 of formal education - continue to study the subjects of Sinhala, Tamil, Mathematics, English, Environment, Health and Special literacy under the non formal format.

During the year under review, a girl who is physically handicapped was also registered with MSS.

As the goal for MSS is to bring the children to a standard which would then enable them to be mainstreamed into Government schools, there is still some who do not make the grade and have other aptitudes.

### **Vocational Training**

MSS gives these children the opportunity to learn an alternate skill. A special Vocational Training room was built in October 2008. A course in Home Economics is held for senior children once a week. The snacks that are made have gained popularity and have become a small scale fund raiser to sustain the programme.

In addition, Sewing and Hand work classes are also conducted and are well patronized.

**Other activities**

The school held 3 parent meetings during the year. This was a highly fruitful exercise as parents and teachers had meaningful interaction, gaining insights into the children's progress.

World Children's day was celebrated with an art exhibition and the children were able to display their talents.

Vacation Bible School was introduced for both the MSS and children from the Tuition programme. A total of 132 children sang and enjoyed themselves thoroughly, while learning biblical principles at the same time.

A programme on drug abuse was conducted with a goal to reduce the risk of this deadly addiction among the youth.

**Annual Events**

The annual sports meet, drill displays, the Sri Lankan new year celebrations and Christmas Concert successfully took place.

**Field Visits**

Home visits are made on a regular basis by a field officer, who checks on absenteeism, or when the family is in a crisis.

**Staff Training**

Heart to Heart from Kansas City was able to conduct 3 training sessions which helped the staff understand the behaviour of children.

**MSS Tuition Programme**

This has proved to be an effective programme where school-going children attend classes so that they can keep up with their education, do their homework and stay on par with their school mates in the Government schools. This is helpful to illiterate parents and for families whose simple homes are not conducive to studying in, especially at night.

The classes available follow the formal education system and are from Grade 1 to 11 in the Sinhala and Tamil medium. Two hundred students are tutored in Sinhala, Tamil, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

An evening snack is provided as most often this may be the only thing they eat for the night because they are from backgrounds with limited resources.

**Special Activities****Attendance Rewards System**

To encourage a higher percentage of attendance, the children - who are not motivated by their parents with respect to the value of education - are helped through the attendance reward system. This motivation factor keeps them in the programme.

State schools most often do not have an annual prize giving due to the high cost of such events. The performance rewards event culminates in a fun-filled day which is avidly looked forward to by the students.

### **Tiny Stars Montessori**

Every child has a right to education. CCS firmly advocates this, and strives to ensure that children, especially from low income families, have access to high quality Montessori education. In the year 2000, a pre-school was initiated because children who attended the Morning Star School (MSS) would be absent from school, as they had to stay home and look after their brothers and sisters, while their mothers went to work.

#### **Change**

The school had humble beginnings, starting with just eight pre-school children and one teacher. By early 2008, it had grown to 30 children and 4 teachers. In May, the school moved to a more spacious building and an increased student intake was recorded. With 80 students and more teachers added to the staff, the Montessori method was adopted with advice from a consultant. Teachers were equipped accordingly and the school was formally opened and renamed as Tiny Stars Montessori.

#### **Nurturing and Developing**

The holistic nature of the programme encompasses education, health, psychological support and nutrition for the child. The children are provided with milk, breakfast and lunch. They are given thorough medical check-ups biannually through the CCS in-house medical clinic, and records are maintained.

Developing their talents with singing and painting being included into their curriculum, along with different methods of teaching being used such as puppetry and rhythmic learning, work towards developing a well rounded student.

Parent/Teacher meetings took place on a monthly basis and both parents are encouraged to attend. Teachers share their observations, providing insight into the children's strengths, weaknesses and talents.

A *Pola* was organized with different stalls, offering a variety of vegetables, fruits and confectionaries. The exercise helped the children to understand how to handle simple calculations and how to use the weighing scale. Dressing up for the event and having their mums buy the goods back was all part of the learning process.

A shramadana [clean up] had parents and children participating together to take care of the environment. Children's Day, the end of year concert, and the

Christmas party were all events to showcase the children's talents and indulge in seasonal festivities.

Staff skills were increased through teacher training by a consultant, English classes and special courses conducted by Lifeline as well as Heart to Heart from Kansas City.. Outbound training helped with team building for the staff as well as leadership training for the Principal.

### **Daycare**

The Daycare Centre provides as much assistance to the children as possible, providing them with nourishing meals and snacks and even assisting the older kids with their homework. The Center had 35 children in 2008, with most of the children coming from Tiny Stars Montessori, MSS and other schools in the vicinity.

Thanks to our Daycare Center, parents are now able to go to work with the reassurance that their children are being cared for in a safe, secure environment. We try to ensure that when their parents return to accompany them home, they find them washed and eager to show off what they have learnt during the day.

## **Heavena Shelter for abused or homeless woman and children**

It all began in November 2003 when a young woman with her 2 children sought shelter from an abusive situation. CCS did not have accommodation for such cases but a vision to open a home for those who were homeless and abused came to fruition.

Recognizing this pressing need, CCS opened its doors to the first batch of five women in the same predicament and over the past five years, 67 women and 85 children have been assisted through the Heavena residential facility. The vision is to restore and empower women to their ultimate potential.

### **Holistic support**

In the year under review, Heavena helped 18 mothers and 26 children. The programme has a holistic approach providing counselling, awareness, advocacy, training and spiritual support in a safe environment for women and children affected by homelessness and abuse.

### **Skills Training**

The women were given vocational training in English and sewing as well as card and jewellery making. Programmes on self esteem, self awareness, stress management, health awareness, problem-solving, identifying one's needs and creating future plans were conducted.

Lessons with regard to personal hygiene, caring for their children and hygiene practices were implemented by the Medical Health Officer in the area.

### **Special Attention**

In addition, three of the mothers were assisted with their court cases and ten of them were helped with legal advice. Those who needed psychological support were sent for counselling and during this period, seven mothers and a child were helped through this service.

Special medical attention is also provided and three mothers were assisted for specific needs.

Once the women have gained their confidence and self esteem, they are encouraged to resume an independent life outside the home. We were happy to see eight mothers and fifteen kids relocated independently while two of the mothers reunited with their husbands. Once they leave the home, a field officer follows up on the progress of the mothers and their children.

## **Capacity Building**

CCS continually invests in capacity building programmes for its staff. Training conducted by Lifeline, Kidznet and Heart to Heart was valuable to the staff in helping them care for the residents.

Entrance to Heavena is screened and follows a set of criteria for the selection process. Four mothers who did not qualify for the programme were assisted, even though they were not in-house residents.

Heavena is in demand as women and children are directed to the facility by churches, juvenile courts, area courts, probation officers, and social services such as Women In Need and the Human Rights Organization. It has gained popularity and is a haven for those who come to CCS looking for solace and safety from intolerable situations.

## **DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)**

When the Tsunami swept over the Dehiwela/Mount Lavinia beach area, it was estimated that over 1500 houses were inundated and thousands of livelihoods and businesses were lost in the massive wave. To ensure that the community would be better prepared in the future, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programme was implemented to empower the Dehiwela beach community and the families that were relocated to Tsunami houses constructed by CCS. These are at Hilda Nivasa in Dehiwela, Araliya Nivasa in Ratmalana, Namal Uyana in Dankotuwa and Kolonnawa, as well as the existing Tsunami camps in the vicinity.

The programme was designed to proactively work towards reducing risks in the areas of natural, health and social hazards. The plan was executed through direct assistance, training and community based strategies.

The following activities were implemented under the programme.

### **Natural Hazard Reduction:**

#### **First Aid and CPR Training:**

The Red Cross trained the DRR staff and members of the Sanitation and Health committee in selected locations on First Aid and CPR. In addition to the 69 mothers from the Mother Mentoring programme, 22 fishermen received First Aid training from the Red Cross up until March 2008.

#### **Lifeguard Training:**

The Lifeguard unit (or Community Disaster Response Unit) which was set up in October 2007 gained popularity. First Aid education and training provided by the Police Lifeguards helped the community to be better equipped to handle those who got into difficulties in the ocean. 12 fishermen also followed training courses conducted by the Police Lifeguard unit.

The membership grew as 20 new members joined the club. As the Lifeguard Unit scans the horizon for those in difficulty, it has been recorded that 116 lives have been saved since its inception with only 3 reported deaths. The team's rescue operation has gained recognition and has been featured on local television several times.

The Lifeguard Club has now gained official status as it has been registered with the Mount Lavinia District Secretary. In addition the Lifeguard Club/Community Disaster Response Unit in November 2008 obtained Government registration as

a social service organization. The unit is self managed through its leadership structure and the membership policy

With its newly earned status, the members have got several opportunities to patrol the beaches at public events organized on the beach.

One of the Lifeguard members has been employed locally and two others have gained employment overseas in the same capacity.

A Community Disaster Plan booklet has been developed and distributed among the Dehiwela/Mount Lavinia community to educate them regarding various forms of hazards in the community and ways in which they could protect themselves.

The club has developed income generating mechanisms by providing training and renting their equipment to those who request their services. A brochure is also now available which advertises their services.

### **Health Hazard Reduction Sanitation, Hygiene & Garbage disposal**

The Sanitation committee was mobilized to conduct awareness programmes. It was implemented through zonal groups and house-to-house visits. The Morning Star School was exposed to the same training. Health talks and Health Awareness programmes were conducted among 85 houses and educational leaflets were distributed to help understand and recall the message further.

Garbage awareness programmes were conducted in Araliya Nivasa Ratmalana and Hilda flats in Dehiwela.

The community was exposed to beach clean ups when nearly 80% of the area was cleaned. Five hundred garbage bins were also distributed. CCS facilitated meetings between the community and the Municipality which resulted in a rapport being built up between them, thereby ensuring a regular pick up of garbage.

The community also benefited from awareness programmes on the benefits of recycling of plastic and glass. Twenty two toilets were cleaned and repaired in the community. The sewer was cleaned which improved overall cleanliness and hygiene in the area.

### **Cleanups in Tsunami Camps:**

The families living in the Tsunami camp in Ratmalana and the Salusala camp needed much attention. After a needs assessment, a cleanup was conducted. Ten toilets were repaired and in collaboration with the Municipality, the sewer was dredged and cleaned as well.

A leadership structure was established, rosters were drawn up which designated responsibility and ensured regular cleanliness. Cleaning material, dustbins, baby commodes and mosquito nets were distributed. Weekly monitoring and awareness was conducted after the cleanup. Children with severe skin diseases and other sicknesses were taken to specialists for treatment.

A positive impact was recorded when there was an 85% improvement in their lifestyle – which was calculated through house-to-house needs assessment.

### **Prevention of Substance Abuse**

With drug addiction rapidly increasing among young school children, a drug awareness programme was initiated. The programme co-coordinator and 4 Peer Educators received training from ADIC (Alcoholic Drug Information Centre), Sumithrayo and YFC (Youth For Christ).

Resource material was created which included a DVD on substance abuse and 500 copies were made available for distribution. A Drug Prevention manual was developed and 2,000 posters were printed.

With the seal of approval from the Education Ministry, the team conducted the programme in 34 schools, 1 temple, 3 rehabilitation centers, 2 World Vision Youth/Kids clubs, 4 communities in Dehiwela, Ratmalana, Badowitta and Dankotuwa. Ninety teachers were also trained.

The Drug prevention DVD and awareness material is available to schools to conduct ongoing training programmes.

A Drug Counseling programme was launched in partnership with Power House. The initiative was administered under the guidance of a part-time counselor as well as a handpicked team of assistants. A Drop-in Centre for drug addicts was also set up to accommodate the program. Fifty six people have attended the Drug Drop-in centre from its inception in July 2007. Out of the programme, 95 addicts were supported at Power House and 107 were directed to rehabilitation centers.

### **Social Hazard Reduction**

#### **Mother Mentoring programme**

The Mother Mentoring programme was implemented by CCS in January 2007 to educate poor and marginalized mothers to better love, care and protect their children.

The programme has a discipleship format. Training was conducted weekly and spans a period of 2-3 months. Groups of mothers consisting of 12 were trained on a series of topics ranging from: Empowering mothers (developing self-esteem), Health & Nutrition (includes pregnancy wellness), Needs of a Child, Parenting Skills, Anger/Stress Management, Child Protection (child trafficking, sexual abuse, child labor, neglect), Maintaining a Happy Family (family planning, husband-wife relationships), Literacy/Education and Financial Management. Many enjoyable practical exercises are included within the training.

A booklet on Mother Mentoring has been developed and printed and handed to the mothers. A Mother Mentoring Training Manual was developed and distributed amongst Social Workers to implement Mother Mentoring programmes in their respective churches. These training materials were developed with the assistance of students and the course instructors of Lanka Bible College's Holistic Child Development course. So far over 600 mothers have been trained, out of which 23 mothers have qualified as Mother Mentors who themselves teach other mothers and conduct programmes.

The programme has mobilized 17 child care workers from churches to conduct Mother Mentoring in their respective churches. This programme is designed to achieve sustainability through its ability to multiply its impact using a dual mechanism:

1. By training mothers to train other mothers
2. To train social workers to implement Mother Mentoring programmes in their respective churches

In addition to the training programmes, individual counselling is provided for mothers who have various special needs:

1. Mothers are assisted with finding employment
2. Children are helped with gaining admission to schools and day care centers
3. Sick children are supported with finding proper medical care, legal advice is provided especially to initiate legal action in cases of sexual abuse, domestic abuse and especially victims of human trafficking. When addicts are identified they are referred to rehabilitation programmes.

The Mother Mentoring programme is now launched nationally via churches.

### **Father Mentoring programme**

Child rearing cannot be undertaken by the mother alone therefore the program was extended to educate the fathers as well, especially those in the fisherman's committee who were enthusiastic participants at all the discussions. Several key topics were covered under the program including family planning and self-empowerment.

Four awareness programmes on child abuse prevention and family planning took place, supported by specially-created banners on Child Abuse Prevention. They were then distributed in the communities of Dehiwela, Ratmalana and Dankotuwa.

The nation-wide initiative 'National Day for Children at Risk' was conducted in partnership with a network of NGOs and churches. The event was attended by over 180 participants from various churches and NGOs around the island.

### **Namal Uyana Housing complex and Community Centre Dankotuwa**

Namal Uyana Dankotuwa is one of the Tsunami relocation sites where CCS constructed a housing scheme and a community centre which houses 33 families. After relocating the families to this site, the community hall was officially opened that year. CCS began implementing programmes to enable them to settle and integrate into their new environment and also to meet the needs of the surrounding community of Dankotuwa.

The community centre has a library enabling both the young and the old to borrow and read books to increase their knowledge. Currently, the library has 84 members and is expanding.

#### **Library**

To enhance the education levels of students, group tuition programmes are conducted for students who require extra assistance in English, Sinhala and Mathematics.

#### **The Kids Club**

A kids club have was also initiated. Various programmes take place on a weekly basis, mainly to enhance the social/interpersonal skills and talents of the children. Sports activities are also held to further hone their skills.

#### **Water and Sanitation**

The well was repaired and renovated to enable the community to have access to clean water, since the pressure in the pipe-borne water to community houses is very low. Monthly sharamadanas [clean-ups] were held to ensure that Namal Uyana stays tidy and clean.

#### **Women's empowerment**

A mother mentoring programme was conducted to educate and empower the mothers to gain knowledge in the care and protection of their children. Further events were hosted to celebrate Women's Day. Resource personnel enabled the mothers to understand the importance of their role within the family as well as the nation at large.

## **Kolonnawa**

Among the Tsunami-affected population on the Dehiwela beach were 33 Malayalam families, with whom CCS have been in touch for over a decade. Twenty two 1-storey houses were built for this “gypsy” community, as they are fondly known as, in the new Tsunami scheme built in Kolonnawa. CCS had finally completed one of the most challenging tasks undertaken by the organization in uncharted territory.

The families were relocated and many lifestyle training programmes were conducted to enable these families to adjust to their new way of living in these houses.

### **Mother Mentoring**

This programme was conducted to educate the mothers to value their children and to better love, care for and protect them.

### **Shramadana**

Organized programmes are conducted to help clean the vicinity and ensure that garbage from the homes is collected by the Municipality on a regular basis.

**Medical clinics** were also conducted on a monthly basis, mainly to dress wounds.

### **Lak Daruwo Kolonnawa**

#### **Child Sponsorship and Community Development:**

CCS has now begun to expand its development activities beyond the 22 families that were relocated in Kolonnawa.

Needs-assessments, community mapping and gathering of baseline information have been conducted involving the community and a community development plan designed with community participation. Government officials and all relevant stakeholders were part of the design.

With donor partnership, CCS will sponsor 600 children from 5 Grama Niladari Divisions, impacting the needy urban community of over 4,000 people. A satellite office will be set up in Kolonnawa to better serve the population.

The community development plan will implement programmes in the following sectors:

- Education, Health and Nutrition
- Water and Sanitation
- Livelihood Development and Community Based Organization
- Institutional Capacity Development

Six hundred children who meet the required criteria will be enrolled into the programme. The team is in the process of forming Self-Help Groups and establishing a leadership, reporting and a monitoring structure in the community.

### **Lak Daruwo 2008**

The year 2008 has been a year of change and transition. This year hundreds of families relocated to houses and flats in locations away from the beach. CCS helped to relocate 455 families through the tsunami project.

As people moved away, the number of families reduced in the Dehiwela area and some of the children had to exit the programme as they did not live in close proximity to Lak Daruwo. There are still approximately one hundred families who are part of our programme still left on the beach and are unsure of their future. As they live in hope of relocation, Lak Daruwo is unable to make plans for community development with this remaining group.

However, the remaining who are registered with the project and those who have been relocated or living close to the project amount to approximately 550 families. They continue to be assisted by the project through individual sponsorship activities. The overall development programme has now been redirected to a new location identified in Kolonnawa, where a large number of sponsorship and community development programmes are now in progress.

#### **Sponsorships**

During this year, 978 children were assisted through the sponsorship programme – which included education, medical assistance, emotional support, vocational training and career guidance.

One child, who lived in a children's home, was assisted through Lak Daruwo, and underwent corrective surgery on her clubbed feet. She is recovering well.

#### **Community Development**

A need arose to assess the housing and the families that remained on the beach. A mini survey was conducted in the Dehiwela beach area and the families were categorised by Lak Daruwo. Those who were eligible were directed to the CCS Tsunami Home Owner Driver project (HOD) and a further segment was referred to Habitat where they are being helped with housing.

In January dozens of families were relocated into the CCS Tsunami scheme called Araliya Nivasa in Ratmalana. Lak Daruwo conducted research so as to gather

information on sponsored children, employment situations, the members of Self Help Groups and to check on new entrants into the programme.

Meetings took place at the flats encouraging the families to regroup into Self Help Groups. A new leadership emerged and new Self Help Groups were restructured. Lifestyle training was conducted in partnership with Save Lanka Kids. Several meetings took place to help the community identify their problems, mostly pertaining to lifestyle issues. They were assisted in finding solutions to as many of them as possible.

The National Housing Development Authority with GTZ also conducted a condominium workshop.

### **Education**

This year there were 39 children under the sponsorship who sat for the Ordinary Level examination in December 2008. This is an achievement as keeping these children committed to their studies is often a difficult task.

Tuition fees were provided through sponsorships, which helped several of the children through additional classes. This was instrumental in their progress and once they receive their results will move on to doing their Advanced Level exams. School items were provided to 821 children.

Two boys have had the opportunity to enroll for vocational training – one in air-conditioning and electrical engineering while the other is continuing a Degree in Management studies. Three others have completed courses in Electronics and Beauty culture.

### **Special Events**

As Women's Day is always an event that builds unity amongst the community, the day was celebrated in all locations that Lak Daruwo works - which include the Dehiwela area, Araliya Nivasa - Ratmalana, Hilda Lane - Dehiwela, Badowita and Dankotuwa.

At the end of the year a Christmas programme took place where special gift packs were distributed. The message of Christmas was conveyed through song and drama.

## **Capacity Building**

### **Wilderness Survival Training**

It was the opportunity of a lifetime. For the first time in the history of CCS, the entire staff were able to attend a team building training programme together, which took place in Belihuloya. The staff members were blessed to have such an experience as the training was designed specifically to encourage leadership skills and team spirit.

There were several exercises which included long hours of hiking, kayaking, raft building and others had to build a platform to retrieve flags placed high on a tree. These exercises stretched muscles, ignited imaginations and pushed everyone to their limits in every way.

The learning curve was lasting. It created a mindset change in the attitudes of the staff, taught members to listen and encouraged one other to accept each other's differences.

There was much laughter and enjoyment through it all. It will be a lasting memory to all those who participated.

### **Unleash Talent**

This leadership training programme took place in Bentota. The programme blends games and role playing in a way that brings out leadership potential.

The "amazing chase" required management skills and leadership skills so as to get the best out of team players in the minimum amount of time.

The movie "Freedom Writers" was screened so as to teach principles that should be applied in everyday living.

Overall it was a tremendous learning experience with staff members stopping to reflect on their own skills and abilities. These programmes were just two of the several training programmes that the staff attend throughout the year.

