

Summer 2006

Seeds on the Wind

News from Bethania

Shade From the Sun

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, summer greetings to you from Bethania!

Summer is an especially hot and dry time in India. In some parts of Tamil Nadu, the mercury soars so high you can fry an egg on the road!

Similar to the western model, summer for Indian families means freedom from school, reunion with friends, and road trip retreats to temperate resorts and wedding celebrations. Children pour into streets and parks to play soccer, cricket, and badminton. Others may be found with their dolls and toys, building dreams of adulthood.

At the Bethania homes, our children are blessed to enjoy summer as other Indian kids do. They laugh, scream, and jump like squirrels freed from a cage! Sports and games bring children together and form strong bonds of friendship. Picnics provide a fresh encounter with nature. They giggle with delight as they share stories around a meal, excited to be free from school!

This joy is made possible not simply by donated racquets, bats, and balls, but by the homes themselves as environments of steadfast nurture. Endowed with the generous gifts of our contributors, Bethania homes provide shade from the hot sun, nourishing meals to fuel youthful energy, and a haven for Christ's comforting, strengthening love.

Amidst a world of natural disaster and fleeting fortune, our children shine as inspiring rays of light. They have been driven to a hopeless destiny through no fault of their own, yet miraculously they find the strength to overcome these barriers. At Bethania, we are committed to fostering this self-discovery, showing that childhood is to be celebrated, and that God's love can change their lives.

I humbly thank you this summer season for your continued support of Bethania's mission. As you enjoy the warm weather with your loved ones, please turn your hearts and minds to Bethania, where your gracious offering brings the joy and love that all children deserve year round.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Solomon P. Benjamin

President, Bethania Indian Board



Bethania  Kids

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Chupples

Outside the Nathanael Care Centre in Kodaikanal, propped against the stone and mud wall, stands a fairly ordinary rack of shoes, painted red, housing around forty pairs. Some show the toe-shaped grooves of older, outgrown siblings. Others are fresh and stiff, yet to trudge through soccer fields and imaginary worlds. Some have laces and sturdy soles, though most are the standard, Tamil chupples (sandals).

Their wearers have stored them here for a day of fun and learning at Bethania. Later, they will carry the eager students back to homes where hard-laboring mothers and fathers -- their own cracked, dusty chupples resting beside boiling pots -- will tenderly field the reports of inspired, boundless minds.

When the day comes for a new fitting, what style shall our Bethania children wear?

Will they sport the loafers of a university student, seated with poise at the head of the classroom? Or will those bustling little feet come to blaze important trails through New India's global marketplace? I should like to imagine those hard-worn chupples of coolie parents put away for good, changed for a pair primed to enter a world brimming with opportunity, with success.



Kids Reaching Kids

MAX HEIDELBERGER

My trip to India was an amazing, eye-opening experience. There were so many new landscapes, animals and people. The journey was almost surreal; it felt as though I was in a different world.

Every time we entered one of the Bethania homes, there was a garland of flowers waiting for us, and a throng of joyful kids. They entertained us with amazing songs, dances and skits that were incredibly well organized, far more than anything of the kind I had seen in the United States.

I loved playing with the kids at the Bethania homes. They would take a soccer ball and play volleyball, baseball and basketball with it! It amazed me how they could do so much with so little -- I guess one soccer ball can go a long way in India!

The trip was an experience that changed the way I see and think. I hope I helped the children of Bethania as much as they helped me to grow in my worldview.

Sponsoring One Child

Bethania is honored with the responsibility of caring for 1,000 children in India. Prayerfully we thank God for this blessing and faithfully we aspire to meet the challenges this new milestone brings. All our children deserve to grow with a strong sense of God's love, equipping them to make a difference in their community.

Following a period of generous giving after the tsunami of 2004, we struggle to maintain firm support for the many new children this tragedy has brought to our homes. We're currently clinging to the hope that God will provide the resources for us to continue in our caring. Would you consider supporting one or more children through Bethania Kids for \$20 per month or \$240 per year? Please use the form included to help us care for one child.



MANUELA BENJAMIN

I loved singing and playing around with the Bethania children. In Nagercoil we played Kabaddi, a traditional game played both in the streets and in rural parts of India. It was a great blessing that I could relate to them in our own mother tongue... They even combed my hair and decorated it with flowers from their garden!

Those children have few material things in their lives, but they have so much joy and cheer to spread around. Being with them has motivated me to join God's ministry and give more of myself to make a difference. I have already started speaking about my experiences at my school and church.

I want to thank God for making me part of this Bethania ministry visit and for helping me to find His purpose for my life.

MOLLY BEYER

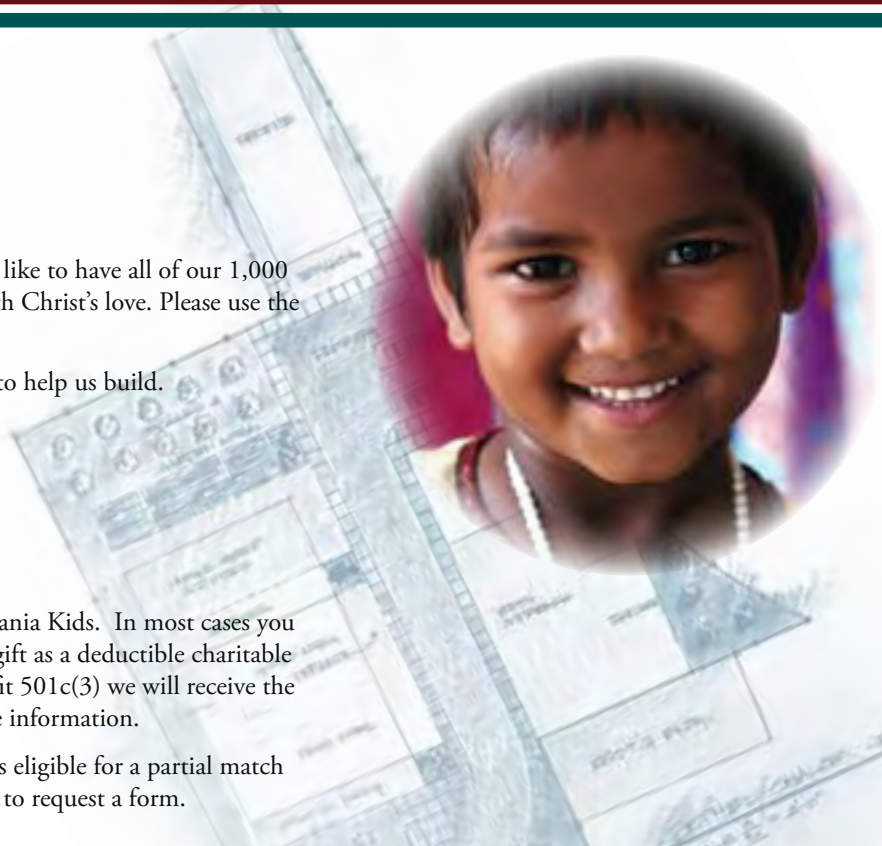
At the Angel Boys' home in Rajahmundry, after being entertained by songs, we played volleyball with a soccer ball. We couldn't understand each other's language, but we didn't let that keep us from enjoying our time together. At the girl's home in Nagercoil, I played a game where you hold hands, lean back, and spin around. The kids were so eager to play with us! Max, Aaron and I always had fun. Though it usually took a while to get to the next city, we knew that once we got there the children would be bright eyed and full of life: eager to hug and to be hugged.

Hoping for Help

BY DAVID GRANNER, President of Bethania Kids

Here are four ways you can help:

- 1) Sponsor a child for \$20 per month or \$240 per year. We'd like to have all of our 1,000 kids sponsored so that we can plan to reach more children with Christ's love. Please use the form provided.
- 2) Ask a school, church, Sunday School or civic organization to help us build.
 - a) Security Wall \$10,000
 - b) Toilet or kitchen \$15,000
 - c) Kids Center \$25,000
 - d) Kids Home \$35,000
- 3) Make a gift of an appreciated security or real estate to Bethania Kids. In most cases you will be entitled to declare the entire 'fair market value' of the gift as a deductible charitable contribution. When Bethania sells the asset, as a not-for-profit 501c(3) we will receive the proceeds tax-free. Please call the Bethania Kids office for more information.
- 4) If you are a member of Thrivent Financial, your donation is eligible for a partial match through a program called, "Giving Plus." Call or email today to request a form.



Bethania is a Christian mission bringing wholeness and hope to poor, abandoned and disabled children in India, equipping them to share God's love.

100% of your contribution will be used directly for children's ministry in India.

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