



## AN AMAZING LIFE!

**Murray Dryden**, SCAW's loved and esteemed co-founder, passed away peacefully on February 1, 2004 in his 93rd year. It seems fitting that his granddaughter Debra and her husband Sieg were in India delivering bedkits at the time of his death.

Murray was born on a farm in Domain, Manitoba, in 1911 and knew the meaning of hard work and a loving family. After leaving home during the Depression years, like many others, Murray found it difficult to find work. He became a door-to-door peddler, subsisting on whatever little cash he could make. While travelling East, many nights he slept in train stations as he rode the rails from one small town to another. He learned then what it was to be deprived of a good night's sleep.

In 1932, Murray found work in Hamilton selling plant food, and it was there that he met and married Margaret Campbell in 1938. In 1948, the Drydens moved to Etobicoke when Murray began selling building materials, and here they raised their three children. During the 1950's, Murray pursued a hobby in photography. One night he was particularly taken by the peaceful pose of his sleeping daughter, Judy, and took her photo. This led to a desire to photograph more and more children as they slept. It was his hope to publish a coffee-table book.

One night while travelling in India, Murray tripped over a child sleeping on the street. A man of ideas, he decided



that he must and would do something for children who had no comfortable bed. He couldn't feed the world, or alleviate hunger, but he believed a good night's sleep could make a hungry child's life more comfortable. Murray was a champion for children in developing countries, primarily because they have no welfare systems, no Medicare, and often little or no hope for a future. Thus, with a strong desire to help others and a firm belief that with God nothing is impossible,

Sleeping Children Around the World was begun in 1970, with a distribution of fifty bedkits in Pune, India.

Murray and Margaret devoted their retirement lives to this program, initially hoping to raise \$1,000,000. After this was achieved, Murray set a new goal of 1,000,000 bedkits. To date, 683,600 bedkits have been distributed.

Murray leaves his three children, Dave, Ken and Judy, grandchildren Greg, Debra, Sarah, Michael, Kate and Dana, and great-grandchildren Jeffrey, Chris, Kevin, Jennifer, Theo and Anaka. He was predeceased by wives Margaret (1985) and Theda (2002).

One of Murray's favourite quotes was "There is nothing more peaceful than a sleeping child". May you rest in peace, Murray, knowing that your work will be continued and your dream of 1,000,000 children being put to bed will be realized.

## LONG LIVE SLEEPING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD!

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# CHENNAI, INDIA: January 25 to February 5, 2004:

## 3,000 Bedkits & 1,000 Layettees

**BY TOM JACQUES  
HAMILTON, ONTARIO**

As I look back on our last week and a half, I have many fond memories to take back to Canada. I am happy and anxious to go home (to see my lovely wife and four children), but I am also sad to leave my new friends in Chennai, India. I want to thank all the hard working Rotarians from Ambattur. Sleeping Children Around the World could not have put 4,000 more children into beds without all their help. Putting the distributions together requires months of hard work, and the Rotarians did a "first rate" job.

This was my sixth overseas trip, and my second time to Chennai. It will always have a special meaning for me because during it, we heard the sad news of Murray Dryden's passing. I met Murray in 1995, and two months later found myself in Bangladesh. He was a true "living angel" and was loved by the millions of people his life touched. He will be missed by all who knew him, but will never be forgotten. I was sad to miss his funeral, but over the next few days, realized I was where Murray would have wanted me to be.

I would like to take a moment to thank my Canadian team: Karen, Jill, Greg and Tom. It was a great experience spending time in India, and thank you for all your hard work. You made my job as team leader so easy. As my Grandma Taylor would have said, "Any fool could have led that great team".

I want to thank all the donors that make Sleeping Children Around the World work. Without your financial support, nothing would happen. Let me pass on to you all the love, smiles and happiness you bring to the babies and children of Chennai, India. We thank you with all our hearts.

**BY TOM CHUDLEIGH  
MILTON, ONTARIO**

I would like to help you understand what it's like for children who receive your gift of a bedkit.

### CHENNAI Bedkit

- 1 jamakkalam [night container]
- 1 quilt
- 2 bed sheets
- 1 pillow
- 1 pillowcase
- 1 towel
- 1 mosquito net
- 2 white shirts
- 2 shorts / skirts
- 1 T-shirt
- 1 clothes line
- 1 plastic bucket
- 1 plastic mug
- 1 school bag
- 1 writing pad
- 1 geometry box
- 10 pencils
- 1 Stainless Steel lunch box
- 1 umbrella
- 1 plastic soap box
- 1 soap "Hamam"[a popular brand]

First of all, most children with mom, dad, perhaps a sister or brother, and maybe a grandma and/or grandpa, would live in a "house" that measures approximately 12 x 15 feet, with some having an addition measuring approximately 12 x 8 feet. The floor may be soil or sand, but mostly would be boards or discarded rugs. The walls and ceilings vary too, but most are woven coconut leaves forming a large mat that has some insulating value. Some roofs are discarded corrugated steel. No electricity is available, and water is available only at various distances. January is the coldest month at 25 to 33°C, and July is the hottest at 42 to 48°C.

Two weeks ahead of our distribution, the child would have received a pair of shorts or skirt, plus a top, and was told of all the wonderful items he or she would be receiving. Visions of sugar plums must surely have danced in their heads.

The day of our distribution, the family may travel one to three hours in a bus provided, in order to receive their bedkit. It will be the largest gift that the child, or anyone else in the family, has ever received in their lifetime. The excitement and anticipation must have been "frightening".

The children are gathered together at the school, church, hospital or hall and fed perhaps a bun or some bread. Then the group may share some singing as they wait. Then, lined up, it's follow the leader, with 600 other excited children to receive their precious gifts.

In and around the building would be a thousand or more people, including parents, helpers, even onlookers watching the bedkit laid out to see if it's for real and up to its billing.

One might compare the wages of an average Chennai family to that of an average Canadian family, then compare the value of a bedkit. This would probably equate to a Canadian child receiving a \$2,500 gift! No wonder your gift creates a "stir" in the whole town.

Finally, each child is seated [in groups of three] behind all these treasures. Then an even stranger thing happens. Four or five tall, white-skinned, different-eye-coloured strangers start yelling "smile!" in a barely recognizable rendition of their Tamil Hindu language. So it's small wonder that some children look shocked, amazed, or bewildered when you get your photo. As with your own children, most are natural born "smilers", and they have good reason to smile the day they receive this overwhelming gift from a generous donor in Canada.

I'm now guessing of course, but I don't think you will ever give any gift that is more gratefully received or more truly needed.

Thank you for the opportunity of distributing your generosity.

**BY JILL MASLANKA  
MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO**

Upon our reception in Chennai, by the Ambattur Rotarians, we were welcomed and addressed as the "SCAW team". This was humorous to me, considering the fact that we had only met just briefly some two months previously, and we had yet to determine what role each of us would fulfil

on our “team”. We were still a group of individuals who simply shared the desire to aid the children in a third world country.

At our first distribution, I turned my attention to the many Rotarians, to watch a true team in action. It was quickly evident that they were supremely organized, with the countless responsibilities neatly delegated to the various team members. Chennai co-leaders, Rotarians Alban Rebello and P. Thiruvendakam (Thiru), organized our daily activities with precision. Much to our delight, they embraced us whole heartedly, and we quickly fell into a comfortable routine.

It seems that all successful teams are led by individuals who shoulder the greatest responsibilities, and our combined team had definite chiefs. But we also had unbelievably committed Indians as well. Each and every member of our combined team had a vital role to play, and the Chennai distributions could not have run so smoothly without the dedicated efforts of so many people. The word “team” might be the acronym for Together, Everyone Achieves the Maximum, and this was certainly the result of our efforts.

On behalf of the five of us, I would like to thank the Ambattur Rotarians for allowing us to join forces, to create such a team: one that spans the globe to encompass the donors, the office volunteers, the travelling volunteers and the countless men, women and children in Chennai who welcomed us into their homes and into their hearts.

We will cherish the memories of our magnificent teamwork ... we were surely hitting home runs every single day!

### **BY KAREN BELL KITCHENER, ONTARIO**

After a long plane ride, we were received with a very warm welcome by many of the members of the Rotarian Club of Ambattur in Chennai, India. It was so nice to see their warm, smiling faces!

We then piled into a van and travelled to where we were to all call home for the duration of our stay. The streets of Chennai could be described as “controlled chaos” with vendors, auto rickshaws, non-stop honking of horns, and a constant flow of people – it was amazing.

### **CHENNAI Layette**

- 1 carry bag
- 1 syn. Cotton quilt
- 1 syn. cotton pillow
- 1 rubber sheet
- 2 bed sheets (printed cotton)
- 1 flannel sheet
- 1 mosquito net (umbrella type)
- 4 coloured dresses
- 1 woolen sweater set
- 4 T.T. napkins
- 1 T.T. towel
- 1 Stainless Steel bowl
- 1 Stainless Steel tumbler
- 1 Stainless Steel teaspoon
- 1 vacuum flask
- 1 bottle brush
- 1 juice sipper
- 1 teether & rattle set
- 1 soft toy
- 1 plastic bath tub
- 1 plastic mug
- 1 plastic soap box
- 1 soap “Hamam”[a popular brand]
- 2 bottles of multivitamin drops
- 1 traditional cradle set

Since we basically arrived in the middle of the night, the following day was spent adjusting to the ten-and-a-half-plus hour time difference from Canada. We attended a meeting with the local Rotarians to discuss the distributions, amongst other “business”.

The following day was the first of seven days worth of distributions of bedkits to children. I was extremely excited! The number of local people that show up to sneak a peak at the distributions to see what was going on was breathtaking. There were so many smiling faces everywhere.

Everything went smoothly at each and every distribution. I can’t even begin to explain what a tremendous feeling it was being with these children and delivering the bedkits first hand, gifts that caring people have so generously donated. I was overwhelmed with the generosity of you, the donors. This program couldn’t survive without you!

Although many of the children we came across were very poor and didn’t have much, they seemed to be some of the happiest children I have ever set eyes on. The children of India are absolutely beautiful, and the people so kind and generous. It is an interesting and great culture. I enjoyed myself very much!

We delivered 3,000 bedkits to children and 1,000 layettes to babies. I thoroughly enjoyed each aspect of the distributions, and the layettes were a special bonus! Giving these innocent little ones a head start and a good night’s sleep is key.

I had a fantastic experience in India, and I feel I made a special friend in all of the Rotarians that helped us while we were in our second home of Chennai, India. The help we received from all of the volunteers was spectacular!

Thank you to my superb team for making my trip so enjoyable. I couldn’t have asked for a better team. Thank you to all the Rotarians of Ambattur and the people of India for welcoming me into India and for making my stay so comfortable. And thanks to SCAW, but especially to you, the donors, for making all of this possible. I will cherish this experience for the rest of my life!

### **BY GREG O’NEILL AJAX, ONTARIO**

Blaise Pascal once wrote, “I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

India is the seventh largest country in the world, with a population second only to China. For visitors and residents alike, India can be a powerful assault on the senses: noisy, frantic, vibrant and chaotic. It’s a land of a billion people with a history rich in culture, with incredible contrasts and paradoxes. As we draw near to leaving this truly diverse nation, the overwhelming impression that will stay with me is the warmth, kindness and generous spirit of the people with whom we came in contact.

When we arrived in our host country, the Rotarians were there to meet us at the airport, in the middle of the night no less, and they stayed with us every step of the way until we boarded our plane to return home. Not only were they extremely helpful in facilitating the distribution of the bedkits and layettes, but made every effort to ensure that we had every opportunity to experience as much of their culture as we could possibly cram into a relatively short period of time. We leave them with a truly deep appreciation for the tremendous effort that they put into

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Chennai, India by Greg O'Neil, Ajax, Ontario, continued from page 3)

making certain that the distributions were a complete success, not only for the children and their families, but also for all the SCAW travelling volunteers. It was very obvious to all of us that many of them had put a tremendous amount of effort into their activities from the moment they received notice that a distribution would take place until they saw us off on our return journey home. So many details needed to be looked after, from selecting, ordering and checking the items to be included, working through the process of identifying and selecting the children, organizing the distributions, packing the bedkits, transporting them to the outlying distribution centres, organizing the transportation of children and their families to and from the distribution sites, not to mention organizing the army of volunteers who helped us every day and who arranged all the details to accommodate the SCAW team.



Despite the tremendous amount of volunteer manpower that the local Rotarians put into this event, in addition, they spent \$1.20 Canadian [over and above SCAW's \$30] for each bedkit that was distributed. Most is used to pay for the buses and trucks needed to transport the bedkits, the children and their families to and from distribution sites. They raise the funds throughout the rest of the year for this, as well as several other projects through activities such as the sale of fireworks for the Indian festival of Divah, plus selling wrapped candies and nuts.

Not only was working with the Rotarians in Chennai a very gratifying experience, but the coming together of a diverse group of travelling volunteers from SCAW, none of whom knew each other before the trip was

equally as gratifying. Under the very capable, enthusiastic and sensitive leadership of our SCAW veteran leader, Tom Jacques, we not only got along and worked very well as a team, but we also thoroughly enjoyed each other's company.

We also thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. The day to day work activities, as well as the extracurricular activities that go along with a trip like this, were indeed a joy for all of us. One of the highlights was spending an evening at the circus as a group, along with our driver, his wife and their two sons.

On the third working day of our trip, in addition to a number of bedkits, we distributed our first set of layettes (400 in total) to mothers with babies. Two of the requirements for a mother to receive a layette from SCAW is that the family's income has to be below the poverty line, and the mother has to be connected with a primary health provider. Despite this latter requirement, we encountered a handful of children that day who were severely malnourished, and one child who was both malnourished and dehydrated. In addition, there were a few other children who were listless and appeared significantly under stimulated. In a debriefing with the Rotarians later that evening, we shared our observations and concerns of the day. After several minutes of discussion, one of the Rotarians suggested that possibly a nurse practitioner could attend future distributions of layettes for babies. This provided an additional resource for mothers struggling with meeting the needs of their newborns, as well as a check on the health of their babies.

A few days later, the same Rotarian related to us some statistics she was able to find. Fifty percent of children in India below the age of five are severely malnourished, and that 20% of the children below the age of five come from families living below the poverty line. Together we expressed the hope that the partnership of SCAW and the Rotarians could help to reduce those odds, one child at a time.

At 6:30 a.m. on the second to last day of distributions, our leader, Tom Jacques, informed us that Murray Dryden had died in his sleep the night before. Before we began the distribution later that morning, we all stood in somber silence as a group, remembering the personal significance of Murray Dryden to our activities, and we donned black ribbons in his honor. We all took great pride in knowing that we were participating in one of three different

distributions throughout India that day, a fitting tribute to a man who was so loved and respected by so many, and through whom so many children had benefitted through his kindness, his benevolence and his vision.

To all the donors who have given from the bottom of their hearts, we want to thank you for the pleasure and privilege of representing you and presenting your gifts to very appreciative children and mothers. On the recipients' behalf, we would like to convey their gratitude to you, which they so freely and spontaneously expressed to us through their smiles, gestures of appreciation and their "Thank you's".

As we leave India, having completed our assignment, the faces of the children, the gestures of gratitude and the pride that the mothers took in their babies are indelibly etched on our souls. I personally return to Canada with a newfound humility, a profound respect for the people we have come to help, and a deep appreciation for all that we have waiting for us back home.

**THANK YOU**  
for your  
contribution to this  
Chennai, India trip

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photofinishing

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funding film and photofinishing  
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**Konica Canada Inc.** for  
donating film

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Maurice Kowanetz**  
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