



SLEEPING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

5,000 Bedkits to Chennai • February 6 to 18, 2006



Five Thousand Comfortable Sleeps

Debbie Will-Dryden — Oakville, Ontario

Five thousand bedkits delivered to five thousand children. Over a thousand photos taken. Many more smiles, thank you's, embraces and good wishes. It was an honour to be in Chennai in your behalf and I know all the donors would be pleased with the way **their** child — the one in **their** photograph — was treated by our team of Canadians.

I feel very proud of the way each distribution ran; proud, because I firmly believe that each child went home feeling special and cared-for. They felt this way because of your bedkit gift and because our team treated each child in a manner that everyone should be treated — with kindness, encouragement, and dignity.

The stories of the children's backgrounds were many and varied, with the unfortunate unifying element being that all are at a disadvantage in their society. Some of the children in your photos are affected by last year's tsunami. They are slowly continuing to rebuild their lives although many are still living in temporary shelters. Other children could not walk properly as they had been stricken by polio — a disease which has been eradicated in the Western World. We were happy to learn that these children worked with others similarly affected at their group home to put together the items in the bedkit handed out at Vellore.



We gave out bedkits to children whose parents have AIDS, whose parents are in jail, whose parents died in the tsunami. Some of the children in the photos are city children: slum kids. Some are from remote tribal villages. Some are blind, deaf, or mentally challenged — all are poor and malnourished.

Yet all these children, we feel, went home with their bedkit knowing that people on the other side of the world care about them and wish the best for them. Thanks to you, they went home for a good night's sleep and the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

Five Hundred Mothers

Chris Pratt — Midhurst, Ontario

This was my second distribution with Sleeping Children Around the World [SCAW]. From the time I received the call from Laura Harper that I was going to Chennai, my husband commented that I hadn't stopped smiling in anticipation.

One thing I hadn't experienced on the last trip was the distribution of layettes given out to 500 infants in Avadi ranging in age from ten days to three months. Each layette of twenty-six items contained two containers of

multi-vitamins at a cost of seven rupees each — about 20 cents CDN. By the look of some of the babies this was going to be a great benefit to them. *(All items are listed on the next page.)*

This was a distribution of great joy and sadness since this was the last distribution of layettes. SCAW has decided to discontinue this program.

I couldn't help but giggle as I watched 500 mothers with their crying babies line up to receive their gifts. There were all kinds of cries: a hungry cry, a frustrated cry, an angry cry, a cry that says "I'm too hot and I want to go home." I hated having to wear a rubber apron and gloves but completely understood why: diapers are few and far between in this country.

It was my job to place the babies in baby carriers to have their picture taken. There must have been something either relaxing or scary about me, since most of the babies tinkled — or more — when the mothers passed them into my arms. I felt it a privilege to be allowed to take their precious babies from these concerned young mothers. Some premature babies could not have weighed more than three pounds. I was told one was born at seven months.

Looking at the condition of some of the premature babies I could see there wasn't a lot of hope for them. I could feel the desperation when I looked into the eyes of the mothers and I saw they understood that chances were slim for their tiny babies. We locked eyes for a brief moment — it was mother to mother and I understood that "Please help me," look that I could not answer and had no way to answer. So we both did what all mothers do in impossible situations. We focused on our love for this child and the joy of this day. All the wonderful things in the layette that would help keep their babies comfortable were a source of joy for them on that day.



As I watched them leave with babies in one hand and the layette in the other, I realized the harsh realities of this land and wondered if I would have the strength of these women. I think not, but will keep them in my thoughts and prayers forever.



Chennai Bedkit

- mattress
- 2 bedsheets
- pillow
- 2 pillowcases
- 2 towels
- mosquito net
- pyjama
- 2 school uniforms
- t-shirt
- clothes line
- plastic bucket
- plastic mug
- school bag
- clipboard
- geometry box
- box of 10 pencils
- stainless steel *tiffin* (lunch) container
- umbrella
- plastic soap box
- bar of soap
- toothbrush
- tube of toothpaste
- *jamakkalam* (mat)

Chennai Distribution

Total Bedkits: 5,000

Overseas Partners: Ambattur Rotary Club, Yercaud Rotary Club

SCAW Fast Facts

Total Bedkits: 804,850

Future Distributions: Kenya, March; Philippines, April; Uganda, June

Expanding Our Reach

Sieg Will — Oakville, Ontario

Murray's Dream

Murray Dryden had a dream of distributing one million bedkits in memory of his wife Margaret. Since Murray's death last February, volunteers at Sleeping Children Around the World have taken on the goal of distributing 1,000,000 bedkits by 2010, which would have been Murray's 100th birthday. After the Chennai distribution, we reached 804,850 bedkits.



The distribution has ended for the SCAW team in Chennai and an overwhelming sense of accomplishment sets in: 4,500 bedkits and 500 layettes distributed over seven days at seven sites in the Indian state of Tamilnadu. Every distribution site had been well-organized for the arrival of the Canadian SCAW team and the pictures of the children receiving their bedkits were of excellent quality. This was my second year conducting a distribution in Chennai and it was nice to see that we were able to expand the distribution by over 25% in one year.

We distributed an extra one thousand bedkits based on the needs of the children in this part of India. The expansion can be directly attributed to the knowledge that the Ambattur Rotarians shared with fellow Rotarians. They have participated in SCAW distributions for nineteen years but this year they worked with the Rotary club of Yercaud to distribute 650 bedkits to children in that area for the very first time — children from schools from over a 60 km radius. They were in the first standard (Grade 1) — approximately six years of age. These children were chosen with the hope that the bedkit would provide them with incentive to attend school and become literate. They were referred to as tribal people — their ancestors had lived in tribes for centuries. The living conditions of these children were difficult and they appeared to be malnourished and physically frail.



Conducting a distribution — especially one in a new region — is never an easy task. The previous year, the Yercaud Rotary club attended a SCAW distribution in Chennai so they would know what the SCAW team and the Rotarians would be responsible for on the day of the distribution. All the procedures were explained to them several months before and planning meetings were held to ensure that their distribution would be a successful one. They learned the logistics involved in coordinating the receipt of the bedkit items from various suppliers, the packing and completion of the bed-

kits, the storage of the bedkits in secure locations, and the transportation of the bedkits to the distribution sites.

They also needed to gain an understanding of the child selection process which requires that the recipient be attending school, be between the ages of six and twelve years of age, and live in a family with a household income of less than \$90 CDN a



month. Working with the 44 local schools, two other Rotary clubs, and the 65 villages in the region, the child selection process was completed successfully. Once this was done, suitable transportation for the children needed to be coordinated so they could attend the distribution with chaperones — normally a teacher — who would assist them with the trip to and from the distribution site.

As the Chennai SCAW distribution moves into its 20th year, SCAW intends to continue to provide bedkits to children in this area and to expand this distribution to other regions where children have not yet benefited from a bedkit. The model that the Rotary club of Ambattur has created seems to be one in which the mission of providing a child with a good night's sleep can work effectively.

It is my **hope** that we can continue to focus on the **dream** that Murray Dryden had over thirty years ago of distributing over 1,000,000 bedkits to children around the world. I believe with this type of cooperation and partnership with our overseas volunteers we will be able to reach this goal by 2010.

Economic Contrast

Bob Carroll — Toronto, Ontario

Like all who have participated in a SCAW distribution I have returned to Canada with conflicting emotions. I feel very happy about the small contribution that I was able to make to the children who were recipients of the generosity of SCAW donors. To see the happy and appreciative smiles of these children and to know how helpful the bedkit would be to them was indeed a gratifying experience. But I also felt sad about the conditions that made these children candidates to receive a bedkit.

All of the children we encountered live in material poverty. Some had the added burden of physical disability or the emotional trauma of being orphaned by the tsunami disaster or other misfortune. It is amazing to me that despite the difficult circumstances that these children face they can give you a smile that will melt your heart and renew your confidence in the strength of the human spirit.

Chennai Layette

- carry bag
- quilt
- pillow
- plastic sheet
- bedsheet
- 2 fitted sheets
- 2 flannel sheets
- cradle type mosquito net
- 4 dresses/onesies
- woollen sweater set
- 4 cloth diapers
- 2 terry cloth towels
- stainless steel bowl with lid
- stainless steel tumbler
- stainless steel teaspoon
- thermos
- bottle brush
- sipper cup
- teether & rattle set
- stuffed animal
- plastic bath tub
- plastic mug
- plastic soap box
- 2 bars of soap
- 2 containers of multivitamins
- hanging cradle

Free-will Giving
 Sleeping Children Around the World is dedicated to the concept of free-will giving. We seek to spread the word about Sleeping Children through personal contact. We do not seek donations by telemarketing, door-to-door appeals, mass-mailings or professional fund-raisers.

Our team had the good fortune to have distributions in both rural and urban settings. Our first distribution was in Yercaud, a hill station about 400 km northwest of Chennai. Yercaud is the centre of an agricultural area of small coffee plantations. It has a very lush, tropical vegetation. Monkeys are abundant and easily seen from the roadway that winds its way up the mountain from Salem. The people of the area are poor and lead a simple agricultural workers' lifestyle. The average income would be \$1.50 CDN a day — that's correct: a buck and a half a day.



Our main distribution area was in the city of Chennai, formerly known as Madras. Chennai is a bustling city with a population density that far exceeds Toronto. The traffic, made up of a variety of vehicles including ox-pulled wagons, defies description both in volume and in movement. To a westerner the traffic seems totally chaotic but surprisingly this chaos moves in a seemingly organized way and the accident rate is quite low. Chennai is a city that typifies the emerging new India. The economic vibrancy is palpable.

Our Dream
 A world in which every child benefits from the comfort of a good night's sleep.

Our Mission
 Through free-will donations and in partnership with our volunteers, we give bedkits to needy children in developing countries, thus helping them to face the challenges of the coming day.

A Bedkit
 Each \$30 CDN donation provides a bedkit that consists of a mat or mattress, pillow, sheet, blanket, mosquito net (if applicable), clothes outfit, towel and school supplies. Bedkit contents will vary from country to country depending upon local needs.

We also distributed kits in Vellore, a mid-sized city about 150 km north of Chennai. This city is home to a well-respected university that focuses its educational programs on high tech and commerce. This university is one of many such institutions in India that are producing a very well-educated population that is contributing to the economic powerhouse that India is becoming.

One can only hope that the economic growth that is obviously taking place will bring benefits to all level of society including those who presently need SCAW's assistance.

Children Helping Children
 Sue Small - Oakville, Ontario

I am a newly retired teacher from Chisholm Public School in Oakville. For several years I've been involved in fundraising for SCAW. Instead of teachers' gifts at Christmas, we encouraged the Chisholm children to do household chores. In return they would receive a small sum of money from their parents which they would bring to school. They would print their chore on a prepared heart which was then placed on the Giving Tree in the front hall of the school. In each classroom we would count our contributions each day and when we reached \$30, we would celebrate that another child on mother earth would be receiving a bedkit and having a good night's sleep because of us. At Chisholm we

stressed that it was "children helping children." The Giving Tree was very inspirational to the student body and the community as it encouraged everyone to participate in our cause. Our trip to Chennai also embraced the theme of "children helping children."

At each distribution site the older children helped the bedkit recipients. The helpers were often Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, or students at the school where the distribution was taking place. The SCAW team would model their task to our helpers and then the older children would take over. Often these "angel" helpers would devise an even better plan.

Our first distribution was at Yercaud. The older children were invaluable since this was the first time for SCAW in this area. Many of the SCAW children had walked down from the mountains and were truly exhausted by the time they reached us. In this area polio was a big issue and the local Rotary is very involved in going into remote areas in the mountains to have polio injections given to the children. The SCAW children were fearful that this was another needle and the helpers comforted them and told them this was not the case. The older children gently helped them put on their new clothes. They then proceeded to guide them through the distribution.

At Tiruvallur the older children wiped the little ones' noses and gave stickers to the children who were feeling overwhelmed. The older children exhibited an awareness that this was a very special moment for the SCAW child and they shared in their excitement.



Avadi was our next site and here we distributed 500 infant layettes. We used mother helpers for the layettes. At times, this was very emotional for all the team because many of the babies were very sick and premature. It gave us great comfort to know that these young souls were lying on clean sheets that were in the SCAW bedkit. Many of these babies would not survive. In the afternoon we distributed 300 bedkits and the older children helped us. It was so rewarding to watch the helpers carrying the bedkit and the SCAW child holding their precious pail as they walked side by side to the child's guardian or the awaiting bus.

Our visit to Kilpauk took place on Sunday, February 12 and our helpers were Guides. Their assistance was invaluable and added to the spirit of "children helping children."

At Vellore we did not have older children helping us and really missed them. The SCAW team recommended that they look into student helpers for the following year as we all recognized this to be an area where SCAW was needed.

(Continued next page)

At T. Nagar we distributed 822 bedkits. Many of the SCAW bedkits went to tsunami children. The student helpers were very sensitive to the children's needs and guided them through their day with love and kindness.

Our last distribution site was at Ambattur. Here we distributed 800 bedkits. It was an ideal site for a distribution. The SCAW children were located a short distance away in a shaded area. Locals even brought mats for them to sit on. They walked to our distribution site and sat in classrooms briefly. They were then lined up to begin their journey through the distribution. At all times the SCAW children could see the whole process including the ultimate where they received their colourful bedkit and pail. Once again the local Scouts were there to carry the children's treasures to their guardians. At this site we also had police helpers who watched with eagle eyes making sure the children were safe.

It is our hope that the little SCAW child will grow into a future SCAW helper completing the circle of "child helping child."

Thank you for helping this dream come true.

Photo Credits:

Chennai Distribution:
Debbie Will-Dryden



SCAW is a Registered Canadian Charity founded in 1970 by Margaret and Murray Dryden

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Lighting a Candle

Bob Carroll — Toronto, Ontario

Our host, the Rotary Club of Ambattur, could not have been more generous in their help or hospitality. It was indeed a pleasure to meet and work with these men and women who lived by the motto of their club — "Service above Self." We had the pleasure of attending one of their meetings. The meeting started with a candle lighting ceremony.

This ceremony reminded me of a similar meeting I attended several years ago at another service club where the guest speaker was reporting on his involvement with an organization that was helping people in a country that had been devastated by a series of disasters. The speaker was asked why he bothered when the problems were so great and he could only help such a small percentage of the people affected. His simple answer was that he would rather light a candle than curse at the darkness.

When the Rotarians were lighting their candles I thought of his answer and how it symbolized what the mission of SCAW is all about: human spirit.

Thank you for your contribution to the Chennai Distribution

- **Anonymous donors** for providing a myriad of gifts
- **Blacks at Humbertown** for doing the Chennai photofinishing at a 50% discount
- **The Printing House** (Gordy Leong) 5120 Dundas Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario for printing this newsletter
- **SCAW's Donors and volunteers** for their continuing support



The SCAW 2006 Chennai Travelling Team

(Left to Right) Bob Carroll, Sue Small, Sieg Will, Debbie Will-Dryden, Chris Pratt.

Thirty Dollars = One Bedkit

To donate a bedkit — \$30 each — simply send your money to our office at the address to the left. Include your name and address so we'll know where to send your tax receipt and bedkit photo.

To make a donation online with your credit card, you can go to our web site www.scaw.org.

Remember, SCAW guarantees that 100% of every bedkit donation reaches a needy child.