



# SLEEPING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

## 6,000 Bedkits to Kolkata • January 10 to 19, 2006



### Thank You, SCAW

Tom Chudleigh — Milton, Ontario

My third overseas trip has reinforced my appreciation of the dedicated organization that is Sleeping Children Around the World [SCAW]. SCAW delivers two rewarding humanitarian services:

- fulfilling an immeasurable need to the children; and
- offering an unparalleled cultural experience to its volunteers.

SCAW has developed a process for melding like-minded people together on a volunteer mission, a delivery system to fill a need, and a 'thank you' system to return to the donors a visual image confirming gratitude for their gift. Over 50,000 times a year, SCAW coordinates the transformation of funding from donors into bedkits filled with needed treasures, and delivers them all over the world. The planning for the travel safety of the volunteers is faultless. It is so unbelievable that SCAW has managed to accomplish this and keep the overhead costs so minimal that they are paid by an investment account set up by Murray Dryden. This means that every penny of your \$30 donation for the children goes to the children.

As a volunteer, I will remember for a lifetime the rich cultural experience. The chaos of the rules of the road with horns blasting, animals, people, and vehicles intertwined, are unforgettable. Some accommodations absent of amenities such as hot water and comfortable beds were most likely far better than those of the children we were here for. I can only imagine the conditions experienced by Murray Dryden in the 70s and 80s as he began this great humanitarian idea.

But most of all, I will remember the children. Thank you for your bedkit donation. I have seen the children, their need, their thrill, and their parents' gratitude. As a volunteer, I thank you for providing the funding to satisfy so many with a good night's sleep.

### A Bedkit Recipient

Jeanne Culp — Port Perry, Ontario

Imagine being a 6-year-old living in a tribal village where your Dad **might** make \$30 CDN a month. Your Mom, Dad, sister, brother, and you live in a house that is 40 square feet in size and your meal for the day might be rice, berries, seeds, and bark. You attend the village school with 30 to 40 classmates and one day your teacher tells the class that each will receive a bedkit from special people from Canada.

You have never been away from your village but on this special day you, your classmates, your teacher, and your Mom or Dad are trucked 3 to 4 hours in a big 5-ton truck to a large fenced-in area where you are separated from your parent and taken to a big building where you are given a school bag containing a shirt, a pair of shorts, and a pair of flip-flop shoes. You have always been



barefoot but ladies tell you to change into your new clothes, put on the shoes, and put the school bag on your back. You are so excited because you have just received your very first gifts and one of the gifts is a pair of shoes. It will take a while to learn how to walk with your feet in shoes. You do not realize there will be more gifts for you after your picture is snapped. The ladies then tell you to go outside, get in line and have your picture taken. You have no idea what this means but you and your classmates follow instructions.

Outside in the hot sun you and 29 classmates line up and a woman comes along to do the high five with you and try to get you to *hasho* (smile). She takes your tiny hand and touches it to her big white hand. You quickly pull your hand away and look at it. You and another boy and girl are motioned over to three little stools. You are each placed on one and told to *hasho, hasho* to the man with the camera. You are then given a white label to take over and hand to another lady.

You run with your other two classmates toward the a lady with a lot of bags but as you get closer the tears spill from your big brown eyes and roll down cheeks. When asked by the lady's Rotarian helper why you are crying you sob out that you are too little to carry the big bag. The bedkit weighs 12 kg. and you don't even weigh that much. The lady smiles and reassures you that one of the Rotarians will help carry your bedkit to the truck — you **will** get it. Suddenly there is a big *hasho* on your face — you have more gifts.

### The Kolkata Bedkit

Loreen Cumming — Owen Sound, Ontario

*One of the duties of SCAW travelling volunteers is to assess the bedkits assembled by our overseas partners. You can see photos of items in the bedkit that Loreen describes on the SCAW website [www.scaw.org].*

We were very pleased with the contents of the bedkits in Kolkata. The quality appeared to be good. We spot-checked the contents of the large plastic bags (63"x36") which held the bedkits and were satisfied that all sets contained the stated items. We were impressed that a \$30 donation could provide this array of items:

- Nylon Mat 6'x4': Intended *(Continued next page)*

### Kolkata Bedkit Contents

- nylon mat
- mattress
- pillow
- pillow cover
- bed sheet
- mosquito net
- woolen blanket
- plate
- 2 sets of clothes
- shoes
- towel
- shawl
- t-shirt
- school bag
- water bottle
- school supplies

### Kolkata Distribution

Total Bedkits: 6,000

Overseas Dum Dum  
Partner: Rotary club

### SCAW Fast Facts

Total 805,850  
Bedkits:

Total 31  
Countries:

Future Distributions  
Mumbai, Jan/Feb  
Chennai, Feb  
Kenya, Mar  
Philippines, Apr

### Murray's Dream

Murray Dryden had a dream of distributing one million bedkits. 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 Kolkata distribution, we reached 805,850 bedkits.

- for use under the sleeping mattress.
- Mattress 6'x4': Large enough for more than one child to sleep on if that was the need in the home. The colours of the covers were strikingly bright and variable and the inside of the mattress was heavy padding that there were times we were tempted to stretch out for a rest ourselves! When folded double the thickness was close to 8". The interior was secured with stitching 4" apart throughout the depth of the mattress.
- Pillow 20"x14"
- Pillow Cover 22"x15": These cotton pillow cases were done in prints that would appeal to young children.
- Bed Sheet 6'6"x4'6": The cotton fabric was in colourful prints with children's designs.
- Mosquito Net 6'3"x5'10" with a 10" fall, double top taping and pleated corners: These came in many colours and are essential in this part of the world due to the prevalence of Dengue Fever and Malaria.
- Woolen Blanket 80"x50": This item weighed 950 gm and would certainly provide a lot of warmth.
- Stainless Steel Plate, Bowl, and Cup: These are essential items for the daily diet of a child in India.
- Clothing for Boys: Two sets of a short sleeved shirt and pair of shorts with pockets and zipper. The shirts were made of beautifully coloured plaid cotton and the shorts of navy, black, beige or grey. They were sized small, medium or large and often were packed with both pieces matching very well. The boys looked excellent in the outfits and were clearly pleased with their new garb.
- Clothing for Girls: Two cotton dresses in a great variety of colours and two pairs of underpants to match. The girls looked wonderful in their new outfits and they were of the style that we often saw girls on the streets wearing.



- Shoes: Each child received one pair of slip on shoes made from a material that was durable for the dusty damp conditions where they lived.
- Cotton Towel 58"x28": The size is included to let you know that this was a towel of significant size which could be used for bathing or as a light cover.
- Woolen Shawl 66"x33": These were made of light weight wool and in colours that were warm (e.g., green with maroon border). One could see people wearing these early morning or at nightfall and the size was significant enough that it could be used by the child for many years.
- T-Shirt: The cotton shirts were brightly-coloured with a big variety of children's characters portrayed.



- School Bag 16"x11.5" x3.5": These backpacks were durable with an outside pocket and the children knew exactly what to do with them.
- Tiffin Box 500 cc and Water Bottle 700 ml: These would carry the child's lunch (*tiffin*) and a drink to school.
- School Supplies: Exercise Book 52 pages, Pen, 6" Ruler, and Eraser.

In summary: Think again about how meaningful our donation of \$30 is to these children of families in India where the family income is less than 2000 Rupees (\$60CDN) per month. When we saw the big smiles and heard the grateful "Thank you" from the children, we knew that the small part that we were doing was worthwhile.

### Team Work: Incredible

Jeanne Culp — Port Perry, Ontario

Incredible India! Incredible Kolkata! Incredible Experience! Our team was five in number and there were five different positions to fill at each distribution site: Digital Dude, Liner Upper, Sitter Downer, Bean Counter, and Bag Person.

**Digital Dude:** Tom, our team leader, was appointed our official photographer and his *foto finger* grew stronger as the distributions continued. The rest of the team was responsible for a different position each day.

**Liner Upper:** This position entailed getting the children in groups of 30, then groups of 3 — 2 boys and 1 girl or 2 girls and 1 boy — talking to them, teaching them to high five, smiling with them, and trying to get them to relax to be ready to have their picture taken.



**Sitter Downer:** This person sat the 3 children on little stools behind the bedkits and label holders to have their picture snapped then removed the label from the holder, handed the label to the child and pointed them to the next position, **Bean Counter** who took the label from the child and notified Digital Dude when a group of 30 children had been completed. **Bag Person** was responsible for handing the bedkit to each child and saying something like "Sweet dreams from your friends in Canada." A memorable day for me was one of my turns as the Bag Lady. Thank you, donors, for giving me an opportunity to have this incredible experience.

One day, when we were tidying up our distribution site, a beautiful young lady about 18 years of age came running over to Carol and me and asked if she could hug and kiss us. Not knowing why, we said, "Sure."

As she kissed and hugged us she said, "You do not know how much you have done for the children and

### Travelling Volunteers

At their own expense and without benefit of a tax receipt, travelling volunteers help with the SCAW distributions. Should you be interested in travelling with SCAW, please contact us for details about our next travelling volunteer information workshop in April.

their families in my village. I just want to thank you so much.”

Through our tears we told her the bedkits were from special people in Canada — you, the donors — and we would pass her thanks on to you.



This was just one of many incredible experiences I was able to have because of you, the donors; the fantastic organization by the Rotary Club of Dum Dum, and the Rotary Clubs at all the different distribution sites; the Rotary members

and their helpers for their assistance at the sites and the Rotary wives for helping the children change into their new outfits.

Because of your generosity, 6,000 children in the Kolkata area are having a good night's sleep and a better day at school. *Shukhriya dhanyavaad.* (Thank you.)

### A Home Visit

Doug Cumming — Owen Sound, Ontario

As a first time member of a SCAW distribution team, I was very impressed by the experience. Our team had a rather hectic schedule of delivery over ten days with one day of rest in the middle. On our final day, during which we delivered 876 bedkits, our trip back to Kolkata City Centre included a detour that took us to the home of a family whose primary child had received a SCAW bedkit last year.

Our arrival at the end of a narrow circuitous route into a humble housing division — complete with all five members of our team and a local Rotarian from the Dum Dum Club — engendered great interest in the neighbourhood.

The family had not been advised of our coming, a fact that added authenticity to the visit. But we were warmly received into the family's small frame home where we saw many of the items from the bedkit completely intact. In fact, there was a younger sibling sleeping on the mattress under the bedkit blanket and mosquito net at the time of our visit.



The mother expressed sincere gratitude to us for the gift to her child and told us through our interpreter that her child had improved academically since receiving this gift.

Tapan, our Rotarian guide for this visit, explained to a group of interested neighbours and passersby the scope of the SCAW project and who we were, which resulted in admiring looks of thanks. Many people followed us down the street back to our waiting van, and some outgoing older teens/young adults practiced their English with me. Near our van was a car colourfully decorated with flowers and streamers in preparation for a pending wedding in the community.



As we departed, all the smiling faces and waving hands reinforced for me the value of the worthwhile project we had just completed.

### Our Overseas Hosts

Carol Nass — Brechin, Ontario

*SCAW is able to keep administrative costs down thanks in large part to the cooperation of overseas volunteers. We are grateful for their participation in our mutual endeavour to ensure a good night's sleep for so many children.*

*They look after buying the items and assembling the bedkits. They look after choosing the children who will receive the bedkits. They look after our travelling volunteers during the distribution and sometimes after, as Carol describes.*

Upon completion of the Kolkata distribution, the Rotary Club of Dum Dum proposed a trip to Gangtok, Sikkim for the team. Although quite tired from our intensive distribution days, we were all looking forward to a few days of sightseeing and relaxation. Garg, a Rotary member extraordinaire, accompanied us.

Our adventure started at the train station in Kolkata. Rotarians, Gautam and Arun met us there for a special send-off and thoughtfully provided each one with a boxed lunch. Since we were travelling at night, Garg had arranged for us to have berths. Some of us had never slept on a train before.

The train left the station at 10:00 p.m. and by 11:10 we were all ready for bed. Surprisingly, we slept well. We awoke around 7:00 am but it felt so cozy, we lay in bed for an extra hour. The train arrived in Siliguri at 10:15. A car and driver met us at the station and took us to the Cinderella Hotel for lunch. One of the great things about Incredible India is the food! Our favourites were *uttapam* (Indian pizza) and *dosa* — and, oh yes, the beer is not bad either.

After lunch, we proceeded to Gangtok in the Himalayas. The road was narrow, tortuous, full of potholes and void of guardrails — in other words, scary. However, the scenery was spectacular, the sun bright, and the air clean.

*(Continued next page)*

### Dreamers

Murray Dryden believed that *dreamers* were as important as *doers*. In his book, **With God, Nothing is Impossible** he writes: "... we should not discount the importance of *dreamers* because they were often the forerunners of the *doing* population. Thousands would have 'thrown in the towel' had they not been able to dream."

### Murray's Book

In 1986, when he was 75 years old, Murray Dryden wrote **With God, Nothing is Impossible**. Those of us who have been inspired by Murray's dedication to needy children reprinted Murray's book after his death in 2004. To find out how to buy a copy, go to our web site [www.scaw.org](http://www.scaw.org) or contact us by phone, mail, or email. Proceeds from the sale will help provide bedkits for children in developing countries.

**Photo Credits:**

*Bedkit contents:*

Dum Dum Rotary Club

*Kolkata Distribution:*

Loreen and Doug Cumming

The next day, we visited the Rumtek and Lingto Monasteries. We were all intrigued by the Good Luck Canisters (pictured above) which are round and about the size of a three-litre pail of ice cream. They are made of copper and suspended on a spindle. Each one contains a roll of papers on which are written mantras or prayers. For good luck you have to turn each canister with your right hand. There were 235 of them. The team turned the canisters each one of us thinking how we were already so lucky — to be in such a beautiful place where we could see Mount Everest from our hotel window.

Upon our return to the hotel, Garg told us a friend of his had invited us to his home for a drink. We took a taxi to his home which was on a hill. It is very embarrassing to confess that the taxi could not make the hill with us in it so we all had to bail out and walk.

Our host was most gracious. He offered us a local beverage called *Chang*: millet fermented in a wooden tumbler with hot water poured over it. The longer you let it steep, the stronger it becomes. It is not supposed to give a hangover but some might disagree. Our host was the former Ambassador to Mongolia and his mother was the niece of the last King of Sikkim. The following day, we visited the Enchy Monastery, the Tibetology Institute, and a photography show. Shopping was also on the agenda.

Our time in Gangtok was very special to all of us. We had worked hard. We had worked well. We had had time to appreciate each other, our Rotary host and Incredible India. Thank you Garg!



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

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**Thank you for your contribution to the Kolkata Distribution**

- **Anonymous donors** for providing a myriad of gifts
- **Blacks at Humbertown** for doing the Kolkata 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 Kolkata Travelling Team**

(Left to Right) Carol Nass, Doug Cumming, Jeanne Culp, Tom Chudleigh, Loreen Cumming.

**How you can help**

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 fundraisers.

For information about volunteering opportunities with SCAW or to make a donation, go to our web site [www.scaw.org](http://www.scaw.org) or contact us by phone, mail, or email for a copy of our **Information Leaflet** or **Donor Form**.