



SLEEPING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

7,000 Bedkits to Mumbai • January 31 to February 21, 2006



A Country of Villages

Ted Swanston — Etobicoke, Ontario

Mahatma Gandhi once described India as a country of 100,000 villages. Kalamb is one such village in Maharashtra state and is probably typical of a rural village in India. The population is about 3,000 comprising a mixed community of Hindu, Muslim, and Adivasis, or tribal people. Kalamb is administered through a council known as the *Gram Panchayat*. Elections are held every five years. The village head is known as the *Sarpanch*.

The main problem in Kalamb is water shortage, particularly during the hot summer months from February to June before the blessed monsoon's arrival. The main occupation is rice farming but this is only possible during the rainy monsoon season from July to September. Three rice crops per year are theoretically possible, but severe drought limits farming to one crop due to lack of irrigation. The rice grown is for the family's own consumption — rarely is there any left over to sell.



Other occupations are working in the brick kilns, supplying bricks for house construction, and making hand-made earthen pots on a hand-operated potter's wheel. Outside of the monsoon season, many adults are forced to move out to nearby towns to try and get odd jobs. Average family income in the village is around 10,000 rupees per year (about \$265 CDN). As we drove past mile after mile of scorched earth, seeing the outline of lifeless rice paddies, we could only wonder how these rural people mustered the courage to go on year after year under such difficult conditions.

It was wonderful to see the smiles of the 200 children from Kalamb as they received their bedkits. We heard that all of these children attend school. Hopefully their bedkits will not only help each child get a good night's sleep, but also give them hope for an education and a better life.

Our SCAW team saw other villages on this trip and heard similar descriptions concerning life in rural areas. We visited residential boarding schools, where students sit on a stone floor to listen to their teachers, and at night sleep on those same floors. These students are able to attend school thanks to government grants

that cover the cost of food, school uniforms, and supplies for the children.

Another theme we heard repeatedly on this year's distribution was the damage caused by severe flooding in July 2005 in western India. Readers may recall hearing in the news that over 960 mm of rain (over 3 feet



of water) fell in one day in Mumbai. In fact, this heavy rain fell throughout much of western India, and was the heaviest in more than 100 years. These rains caused severe damage and washed away entire villages. Several Rotary clubs selected areas affected by this devastation for distributing bedkits.

The severe rainfall in July 2005 caused river levels to rise dangerously. In one rural area near Belgaum in Karnataka state, utility operators had no choice but to open a dam to avoid its destruction by surging waters. This released torrents of water that devastated downstream areas for miles. Villages, people and animals were caught in the surge. Complete villages were submerged, with extensive loss of human and animal life and destruction of crops.



Rotary chose to do this year's distribution in one area where four villages were particularly devastated by this flooding. Marks on a building showed where water levels had risen twenty-four feet at the flood peak. Waters have since receded, and we were told that reconstruction efforts continue to restore the most basic of services in these villages. Time did not permit us to visit the villages directly affected by this flooding. But rest assured that six hundred very needy children are tonight sleeping comfortably thanks to the bedkits that SCAW donors made possible. *(Continued next page)*

Mumbai Bedkit

- Sleeping Mat
- Cotton blanket
- Wool blanket
- Bed sheet
- Pillow and pillow cover
- Towel
- Clothing (two sets)
- Sweater
- Underwear (for girls)
- Raincoat
- School bag
- Lunch box
- Water bottle
- Clip board
- School supplies (compass, pens, note books, crayons, erasers)
- Packing bag

Mumbai Distribution

Total Bedkits 7,000

Overseas Over 60
Partners Rotary Clubs

Locations 26
Visited

Cities Visited Mumbai,
Pune,
Belgaum,
Hubli,
Dahanu

Distance Approx.
Travelled 3,000 km

Murray's Dream

Murray Dryden had a dream of distributing one million bedkits in memory of his wife Margaret. Since Murray's death in 2004, 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 year. After the Mumbai distribution, we reached 811,850 bedkits.

This was my third trip to Mumbai, following visits in 2004 and 2005. It has been a privilege working and developing friendships with our overseas volunteers there, each of them so committed to helping the children of India. SCAW's partners in Rotary in Maharashtra and Karnataka states are selecting more and more rural areas to distribute bedkits, continuing a trend we saw last year. SCAW supports this trend since the rural poor, representing much of India's population, receive few if any social services.

I want to thank team members Diane Blair, Edie Haslauer, and David Kiddle for all their efforts and support during our trip. And thank you again donors, for continuing to make the dream and vision of Murray and Margaret Dryden a reality, and allowing 7,000 children to know that they are loved.

Impressions of India

David Kiddle — Milton, Ontario

India is an old country, full of old grey hills like greying old bones. The lifeless trees stand forlorn and dust-covered, waiting for the rain that will come one day — not next week, not next month, but three months away. The poor rice farmers patiently wait. Everybody waits. Every day seems hotter than the last. By ten o'clock the sun is already hot and the sky is like brass.



We are the only show in town. They've never seen this before. If there were a newspaper we'd be in it.

We drive off along the wandering road again, lurching over rocks. We may see somebody walking: perhaps a man in a clean white shirt and pressed pants, or an elegant woman carrying water pots on her head. More often we see a bent old woman carrying a load of sticks. We drive on through village after village, no particular feature or pattern ... just one more village.

We may see men breaking rocks with sledge hammers — pile after pile to be broken. But it's work, and somebody gets paid for it. On a more modern road, where a \$250,000 paving machine is at work, we wonder how the rock breakers and the expensive machine can exist side by side. We see ditches being dug by machines — a mile away, people are digging the same trench by hand: hauling out 200-pound rocks.



Still the sun beats down; every day the same. We say, "Are we there yet?" But we are never really there; we are just passing through. We will leave soon and forget about this place. They, with their goats and cows, will remain — waiting for rain that will eventually fall.

One day we get to the shore of the Arabian Sea. The water is flat and grey, almost lifeless. It seems that even this sea waits for the monsoon. No waves crash on the shore. The sea is waiting and watching just like the people. No gulls wheel and call; no pelicans dive into the warm water. Stillness prevails "and no birds sing."

One day we are in the city. We see more in one hour than we've seen in three weeks but this is unusual. We don't do Taj Mahals and Red Forts. We do byways and back roads. It's quieter and we like it that way.



Rotary — Our Overseas Partner

Edie Haslauer — Perkinsfield, Ontario

Rotary is a worldwide organization that provides humanitarian service. It is made up of business and professional leaders who encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace around the world. Rotary has about 1.2 million members with 31,000 clubs in about 166 different countries.

On this SCAW distribution, Rotary and SCAW had the opportunity once again for **teamwork**. Rotary and SCAW have been working together for 35 years to deliver bedkits to the children of India. In my opinion, it is a true blessing to see the dynamics of teamwork between Rotary and SCAW.

* **Namaste**
Namaste, (pronounced "namastay") is a greeting and a blessing spoken with palms pressed together near the heart while bowing to the person being addressed. One holds one's head up during this greeting to make eye contact. This greeting often occurs when our team arrives at a distribution site and we are meeting the volunteers, the children, their parents, and others for the first time. The person greeted in this way responds with the same greeting.



We arrive at the school to be met by five hundred children: five hundred pairs of soft brown eyes watching our every move as we set up.

The children are nervous. Some have never seen white people up close. Big white faces, large white hands, hold frail brown limbs, some so thin we feel they would break if we grip them too tightly. We sometimes coax a smile and five hundred **namastes* later we are finished. The people of the village still hang around.

Having had the opportunity to spend time with various Rotarians from over sixty clubs in India and sharing stories about the work that goes into preparing for a SCAW distribution, I saw this teamwork in action.



When you read the task list you begin to have an appreciation of how much time, planning, organizing and effort the Rotarians dedicate to the SCAW project. They work extremely hard to follow the exact guidelines set by SCAW. Rotarians are extremely kind and dedicated individuals. The SCAW project is only one of the many community and international service projects that each Rotary club makes possible and completes successfully on a yearly basis.

I feel genuinely privileged to have met and worked with all the Rotarians that took part in the SCAW project. There are no words to describe the gratitude and respect I have for each and every one involved. SCAW distributions in India are successful because of the teamwork between SCAW and Rotary.

The inspired teamwork that began 35 years ago in Pune, India between Murray Dryden and Shamaldas Parekh continues today. Thank you, Rotary.

Facts About India

Estimated Approaching Population 1.1 billion
2005 Income per Capita 19,600 rupees [500 CDN]

SCAW Fast Facts

Total Bedkits 811,850
Future Distributions Philippines, April
 Uganda, June
 Sri Lanka, July
 Tanzania, August

The Rotary clubs involved in the SCAW project spend one year preparing for a distribution. A SCAW committee is formed and a chairperson along with 6-12 committee members are assigned to the SCAW project. Each member is assigned various tasks to facilitate the SCAW distribution.

Rotary tasks for a SCAW Distribution:

SCAW Bedkit Items

- Select the companies that will manufacture the items for the bedkits
- Coordinate dates, times, and location for delivery of all the items for the bedkits
- Inventory the bedkit items
- Store and secure bedkit items until the date of SCAW distribution (Costs covered by Rotary.)

Children Selection

- Identify areas that have suffered devastation, extreme situations, and/or natural disasters
- Select the towns and/or schools that have critical needs for basic necessities
- Identify children ages 6-12, with a 50/50 split of boys and girls, following all SCAW guidelines
- Personally interview and screen children to find the neediest and most deserving ones

SCAW Distribution Day

- Provide a secure area for SCAW distribution
- Coordinate volunteers for day of distribution
- Provide transportation for children to get home safely with bedkits
- Meet and work with SCAW volunteers to facilitate successful day of distribution



Helping Children Grow

Dave Dryden — Oakville, Ontario

While on this year's Kenya distribution, the SCAW team attended a Rotary Club meeting in Nairobi. I was sitting beside Dr. David Githang'a, a pediatrician/cardiologist and commented on the small size of some of the children that we had been seeing. David explained that children require considerable body energy to facilitate growth. Unfortunately, many Kenyan children don't get enough food to provide this necessary body energy.

In addition, many children sleep "cold" — without sufficient blankets — further depleting their body's energy.

That made me realize we were helping children grow — another benefit of the SCAW bedkit.



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.

**Photo Credits:**

Mumbai Distribution:

Ted Swanston,
Eddie Haslauer,
Diane Blair



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

SCAW Board of Directors

Laura Harper, Clarence Deyoung,
Dave Dryden

SCAW Administrative Coordinator

Linda Webb

SCAW Contact Information

Sleeping Children Around the World
28 Pinehurst Crescent
Toronto, ON M9A 3A5
Canada

Phone: 416-231-1841

Fax: 416-231-0120

Toll Free: 1-866-321-1841

Email: info@scaw.org

Web: www.scaw.org

RCC#: 13163 4396 RR 0001

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- **Sam's Club** for donating the Mumbai photofinishing at cost.
- **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 Mumbai Travelling Team
(Left to Right) Edie Haslauer, David Kiddle, Ted Swanston, Diane Blair.

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.