#### Issue 13 - December 2010

Welcome to all our regular - and new - readers of TOS in-touch.online. This two monthly electronic newsletter reports on the richly varied service work of Theosophists around the world, notably in association with the Theosophical Order of Service, which was started by Annie Besant in 1908. It offers ideas that we hope may inspire and energise you in your own personal or group service initiatives.

The format of the newsletter varies. If you haven't been following the work of the TOS, this is an ideal opportunity to catch up because in this issue the International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, summarizes our doings over the past year, adding photos and comments as she goes along.

This month's update to the International TOS website launches our *For Members* section where you'll find updated material to help start new groups. You'll also find news about the success of the Kern Foundation's matching grant initiative to support the Golden Link College in the Philippines and information about the New Zealand and Australian TOS groups' project to send books to the College for its new library. The new article, *Love and Service: Twin Stars of Brotherhood*, is a talk delivered at the Tenth World Congress of the Theosophical Society held in Rome in 2010. Its author is Mr S. Sundaram, the General Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, based in Varanasi, India.

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet.

#### Navigating the pages

Each page of this report is numbered and on each page there is a navigation bar at top and bottom, where you can click on **Next** or **Previous** or on any page number, like **p4**, to go to that page. The impossible choices, because that's the page you are already on, are greyed.

So sit back and enjoy Diana's survey of this year's TOS activities around the world.

#### Diana looks back over 2010

Some people perceive Theosophists as library denizens and Lodge limpets - too busy researching and delivering talks *about* brotherhood to get out and *do* something truly brotherly in the community. This impression may be erroneous. See what you think for yourselves after reading this round-up of the latest activities of the TOS.

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#### Would you like to receive this on-line newsletter automatically?

- 1. To sign up, you only have to send a message telling us which country you live in to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.
  - But please do not do this if you are already on our mailing list.
- 2. If you do not want to receive future newsletters just send a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Unsubscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.
  - But note that some TS centres forward this newsletter to their members. Hence if you received it that way we cannot unsubscribe you as you are not on our list. So check the sender's address at the top of your emailed newsletter, and reply to there if you want to unsubscribe.
- 3. If you want to send us some comment or contribution, just hit Reply or send to tos.intouch@gmail.com with an appropriate Subject title and your message.



- Mother Theresa

With best wishes,

Carolyn, Diana and Geoffrey

Carolyn Harrod is the National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia, Geoffrey Harrod is the International TOS Webmaster and Diana Dunningham Chapotin is the International Secretary of the TOS.

TOS International website: http://international.theoservice.org

Every act of love is a work of peace, no matter how small.

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### Diana looks back over 2010

Some people perceive Theosophists as library denizens and Lodge limpets - too busy researching and delivering talks *about* brotherhood to get out and *do* something truly brotherly in the community. This impression may be erroneous. See what you think for yourselves after reading this round-up of the latest activities of the TOS.

# 1. Current collaborative projects

Theosophists sponsor the education of countless needy children around the globe, either as private citizens or through the TOS.

### **New Zealand / Philippines**

Consider this recent example of creative sponsorship. Members of the TOS in New Zealand have just finished setting up a small endowment fund the interest from which pays for the education of a child at the Golden Link College, a theosophically oriented establishment from kindergarten to tertiary level in the Philippines. Now our fellow New Zealand members can turn their attention to other endeavours, content in the knowledge that there will always be enough secure capital to pay for the education of a child at Golden Link.

The endowment fund created by the TOS in NZ is called *The Geoffrey Hodson Memorial Scholarship Fund* after the well known theosophical author who was a president of the TOS in New Zealand and the founding president of the NZ Vegetarian Society. Mr Hodson lectured many times in the Philippines and was very fond of the TS members there. Perhaps you and your fellow members have known a special person you would like to see remembered through a scholarship fund?



Geoffrey Hodson





In the back centre, we see Mr Hodson seated with some Philippino members around him. Can you guess who the young man in the brown shirt is, front left? Yes, it is the current Chairman of the Golden Link College, Vicente Hao Chin, Jnr. Vic was in his mid or late twenties when this photo was taken.

Diana Rose Orilla, aged 7, the first Geoffrey Hodson Memorial scholar. She is a cheerful, self-confident and active girl. Class adviser, Mary Charlyn Valdez, says this about Diana: "She is helpful in the classroom and helps maintain classroom cleanliness without being asked; she voluntarily helps her classmates if they don't understand a lesson; she loves reading and borrows books from her teacher, and on the following day tells stories to her teacher from the book she has read at home."

#### **Pakistan**

Another example of educational work supported across-the-seas is the literacy home-schooling offered to children and young women by the TOS in Karachi,

Pakistan. The TOS in Australia raises funds to pay for six home-schools and the TOS in New Zealand funds two more.











The TOS in Pakistan chooses to do its principal work in the area of education, believing that this is the way in which long term change can best be effected.



Aman (in grey) and Fareeda Amir (in red) are seen here with the national coordinator of the TOS in New Zealand, Renee Sell, her husband Richard and daughter, Lara. Fareeda is the honorary secretary of the TOS in Pakistan and Aman is its treasurer.

Fareeda and Aman face huge challenges in keeping the TOS functioning safely and efficiently in Karachi. It is only their courage and a lifetime of experience in a number of domains that make it possible. Along with their colleagues, they are the **TOS's unsung heroes!** Behind these words lies a long and sobering story. In a future issue of this newsletter, we will tell you more of what is involved in keeping running twelve literacy home-schools, a Montessori School, an educational sponsorship programme, medical relief and financial help for the elderly in Pakistan. **Our loving prayers are with the staff - always.** 

# "Teddies for Tragedy"

A third project attracting international participation is "Teddies for Tragedy". This work has gone quite wild this year! Hundreds of teddy bears were knitted by members and friends in Milan, Forlì and Rome, Italy for the TOS in Tanzania for heart surgery babies, children with leprosy and for the mentally handicapped, for the TOS in Nairobi for the children's cancer ward of the Kenyatta Hospital and for the TOS in Zambia for young patients in Kitwe Central Hospital. A new team of knitters has started in Glasgow, Scotland, this time to comfort babies in Haiti. Since the UK TOS's involvement with the scheme, about 9,000 teddies have been shipped abroad from Britain alone!





Members of the Italian TOS knitting team



Cynthia Trasi, the Secretary of the TOS in England. She is thanking the Italian members for their first big batch of teddies.



Atma Trasi, the Coordinator of the TOS in England with the first teddy bear he ever knitted in 2007. How many has he knitted since then?



Members of the Tanzanian delegation at the TS World Congress in Rome in July. They took a batch of teddies home. Note Khyati, the young girl in yellow on the far right. We see her next back in Tanzania....



Malaika Kapur (second right) & Khyati Dubal, present toys to six-month-old Barack Rwegasira at the airport in Dar es Salaam before his departure with his mother for surgery in India. (Photo by Evance Ng'ingo)





Ebrony Peteli and Jayu L. Sampat brought a bag of teddies home from the TS Congress to distribute to children at Kitwe Central Hospital in Zambia.

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# 2. More current collaborative projects

#### The Kern Foundation

How many of you have heard of the Kern Foundation of the USA? Most of you, doubtless. Did you know that for the past three years the Trust has offered a matching grant to the American TOS in aid of the Golden Link College in the Philippines? The TOS in America, aided by the TOS in New Zealand, France, England, Uganda, Australia and Canada, has again managed to reach its target for the matching grant. The grant, with additional local funding, has permitted the construction this year of a four-storey building that houses a new hall, canteen, library, additional classrooms and activity areas. The additional building became necessary because of the opening of tertiary courses.



The Kern Foundation was established in 1959 by the eminent Theosophist, Herbert A. Kern Sr. Its basic objective is "to aid the spiritual enlightenment of as many people as practical by exposing them to the theosophical philosophy". At the time of creating the Foundation, Mr. Kern felt that one of the ways his aims could best be accomplished was by assisting theosophical organisations with special emphasis on dissemination of theosophical ideas through the written word and educational endeavors. We have only to think of Quest Books as one of the many projects made possible with the Foundation's help.



Here we see Herbert's older son John with his wife Anne. John has been an advisor to the Corporate Trustee since the Foundation's inception. Fifty-one years of devoted service for John and many more to come, we hope. It is through John's good offices that we receive the matching grant. The Foundation has made an exception in approving the Golden Link College in the Philippines as a project for the TOS in America. He says, "As a U.S.A. private foundation, we must focus on grants within this country. Thus the TOS matching grant program is a stretch but is a part of our wish to help energize the TOS in the American Section, and thus through it the world." In helping to develop grant programmes, there never was a more enthusiastic and yet measured, diplomatic yet firm, innovative yet prudent ambassador!

There is something very encouraging about receiving a matching grant. It shows confidence in the capacity of the staff at the Golden Link College to construct a theosophically-oriented educational establishment. Further, the grant has helped forge the international identity of the TOS. For the first time we have a project for which consistent international cooperation is needed over an extended period. Real efforts are required to coordinate the collection of donations to reach our target each year. This helps bond us. The TOS is very grateful to the Kern Foundation and particularly to John.

### **Books for Golden Link College**







The TOS in Australia and New Zealand have helped supply books for the library at the aforementioned Golden Link College. This year, dynamic NZ workers, Maureen and Alf Paterson, have sent a second container of books and other goods useful for the Golden Link School. A third one has been started. Each container holds more than 11,000 books so we are talking about a 'weighty' project here!

# **Eye testing in India**

The eye check programme facilitated by Dr Sunita and C.V.K. Maithreya of the TOS, Chennai in collaboration with Udhi Hospitals has picked up pace considerably this year. Over ten thousand needy school children and adult slum dwellers have been screened since the project started in September 2007. Glasses and cataract operations have been provided to those in need at no cost. About 75 workers on the Theosophical Society's Adyar Estate and others in the area were also screened this year. This work has drawn interest and support from groups in India, Italy, Australia, France, England and Canada.





Dr Nagaraj and Mr Amudanathan of TOS, Chennai have particularly worked hard on this project. Here we see them overseeing eye checks at the Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu, Ayanavaram Branch.

# **Heart Surgery Babies**

The TOS in Italy, Australia and England have sent donations this year to the TOS in Tanzania for the travel expenses of the babies flown by the Lions Club to India for heart surgery, where they receive world class treatment at a tenth of the cost in Western countries.



Deepa Kapur, Correspondent of the TOS in Tanzania, with a young heart patient



All this collaboration and fraternal support from country to country is encouraging. Compared with well-known aid organisations, the gifts and donations sent to TOS projects in economically disadvantaged countries are very modest. They are worth a lot more, however, in terms of the brotherly links they represent. Members take a lively interest in each other's work and bonds of friendship are formed. The TOS maintains a policy of channelling donations directly to its projects and not deducting a penny for administrative overheads. This helps in no small measure to inspire trust.

#### Hands-on

You may say that that it is easier to sign a cheque for a humanitarian cause than to roll up one's sleeves and do something oneself. In fact our members do roll up their sleeves! Donations don't just drop out of the blue sky. Hundreds of Theosophists are involved in hands on fundraising work. Here are just a few examples.



Cornelia Crowther holds sale tables regularly at TS events. We see her here (left) helped by Sandra Kelly. Cornelia also organises classical music concerts at TS HQ in London to raise money for the TOS.



Rustom Pomeroy and Annabel Thwaite donate their talents in magnificent recitals.



John Sell of Auckland, New Zealand designs inspirational theosophical bookmarks for sale.



Carla Nobis of the TS in Italy shows one of the many fine items of handiwork she makes for sale.





Elizabeth Sell of Auckland, New Zealand paints for the TOS.



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# 3. More international projects



A nine-member committee has been formed this year to encourage TOS members in their support of United Nations projects at local, national and international levels. Its first task will be the preparation of a brochure looking at the historical work of the TS and TOS in support of the United Nations and its precursor, the League of Nations.

Lorraine Christensen from Canada is coordinating our UN committee.





Fernando Pérez Martin is the TOS's Spanish language coordinator.

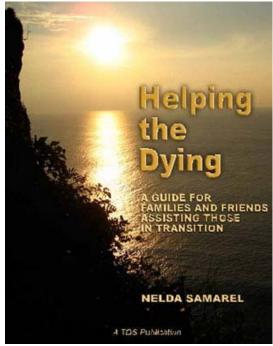
The new UN committee will complement the work of Fernando Pérez Martin already begun. Over the past two years, he has published 20 issues of an electronic newsletter in Spanish presenting ideas to the members for supporting the work of the UN.

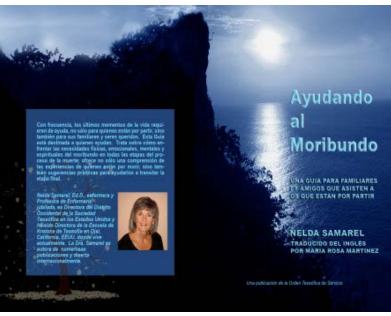


Golden Link School children celebrate UN Day each year.

### 'Helping the dying' book

The TOS in the Philippines has kindly published for distribution by the international TOS a 40-page booklet by Nelda Samarel entitled Helping the Dying. A copy was given as a gift to participants at the World Congress of the TS in Rome. It is now being distributed throughout the world via TOS national coordinators.





A Spanish edition has been electronically designed by Riza Balino of the Philippines and will be printed and distributed soon by the TOS in Argentina.

## **Guidelines for new groups**

A 19-page document revised by Ananya Rajan of the USA containing guidelines and essential background information for the starting of new groups has been posted on the website this year.

#### GUIDELINES FOR NEW GROUPS

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your interest in the work of the TOS. As you may already know, the Theosophical Order of Service was founded by Annie Besant in February 1908, six months after she was elected International President of the Theosophical Society. For over one hundred years, it has made an important contribution to the Theosophical Society in its work of uplifting society. Described as 'a union of those who love in the service of all that suffers', an early expression of its aims was:

To minimise the sum of misery in the world;

To forget oneself in working for others;

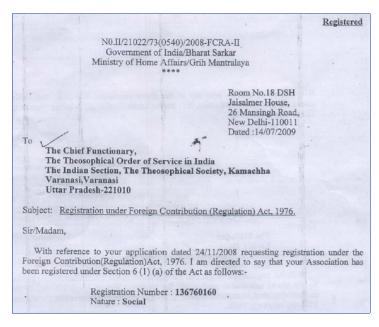
To eliminate selfishness and substitute love as the rule of the world;

To live to the highest that is within us.

Right: Ananya Rajan, an ever-willing member of the international TOS team.

### **Endowment fund**

Members overseas are starting to donate to the Endowment Fund of the TOS in India now that it is registered under the Foreign Currency Registration Act and is allowed to receive support from overseas. The object is to build up the Fund's protected principal in order to increase income from the interest for the work of the well over 100 active TOS groups around the country.



Endowment funds generally attract little support. People prefer to donate to a specific concrete project. However, Theosophists are as capable as any of seeing the importance of long-term planning so in 2011 we will invite support for the Indian TOS's Endowment Fund, so vital for the work of the many isolated groups out in the field.

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# 4. High points of the TOS year

# **Rome Congress**

The International Congress of the TS held in Rome in July offered an excellent opportunity for TOS workers to meet.





A very successful fund-raising sale was organised at the Congress, where hundreds of handicraft items made by the Italian members were displayed. The international TOS sent a letter of thanks to the Italian Section for its outstanding work.



This year, Luigi Marsi retired as director of the TOS in Italy after many years of loyal service. We wish you a happy "retirement", Gigi!

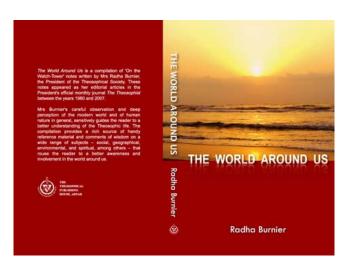


Rosella Milani Fanzio, principal volunteer at the TS Congress fundraising sale, has just become the new director of the TOS in Italy. Welcome, Rosella!



Speaking of changes of responsibility, we welcome Blanka Blaj Borštnar to the post of Correspondent for the TOS in Slovenia. Blanka replaces Breda Žagar.

#### Radha Burnier's new book



The launching in late 2009 of Radha Burnier's latest book, The World Around Us, was hailed by the TOS, containing as it does numerous sections of particular interest to its members: brotherhood, ethics, morality, rights and responsibilities, women, inhumanity and violence, and Nature. Radha's bracing On the Watch-Tower commentaries on social problems are often reproduced in TOS publications and their collection in The World Around Us is warmly welcomed.

### **TOS Website**

The TOS's regularly updated website and its two-monthly electronic newsletter, **TOS in-touch.online** continue to prove invaluable tools in reaching Theosophists around the world. They are seen by far more members than was the printed publication, **The Service Link**, and cost very little to produce. Their aim is to provide information and inspiration for all seeking to serve.







The TOS's website and electronic newsletter are edited by Carolyn and Geoff Harrod and the international secretary.

In the newsletter, photographic reports are regularly shared on the work of hitherto little known yet dedicated Indian TOS groups. For example - that country's indefatigable, peripatetic National Director, **Mr B. L. Bhattacharyya**, regularly sends encouraging news of new groups and projects: the dental care programme of the Delhi region; the 'save a thalasemic child' programme of the Mahabharat TOS group of Orissa; the relief work of the Mathurapur TOS group for the victims of May 2009's cyclone Aila; the construction of two (soon three) new schools in the Aila-affected Sunderbon area; the animal welfare work of the Assam region... Mr Bhattacharyya makes mention of the especially fine work this year of the Mayfare, Chennai, Rajasthan and Karnataka TOS groups. More on some of these activities in our next newsletter...Actually, a whole year of newsletters wouldn't suffice to recount the work of the scores of TOS groups within India!

#### **East Africa**

Communication with TOS groups in East Africa continues to improve: members in Zambia, Kenya and Tanzania are now sharing news regularly of their service work. An excellent theosophically-oriented public speaking competition for eight high schools in Mufulira, Zambia has been run for 17 years without members outside East Africa knowing anything about it until now! Its principal organiser, Ebrony Peteli, has been approved as a TOS Correspondent by the General Secretary of the TS in East Africa, Mr Navin Shah.

It will be remembered that the Kenya Post Office issued a stamp commemorating the Centenary of the TOS in 2008. The TOS in Nairobi, in addition to its regular humanitarian work in the areas of animal welfare and the education of the needy, decided this year to support the Corporate Social Responsibility programme of the Postal Corporation of Kenya. The TOS donated to its Water Project which helps bring water to communities in harsh environments like the arid and semi-arid parts of Kenya. The TOS in Nairobi tries to ensure that its work embraces all the kingdoms of nature so this new work in the area of the environment is particularly welcomed by its members.





### **Lumen School**

Another high point of the year was the opening in June of a theosophically-oriented school in a poor farming district of Bago City in Central Philippines. **Lumen School** is being assisted by **Golden Link College** in the training of teachers and design of the curriculum. The transmission of theosophical values is a high priority.











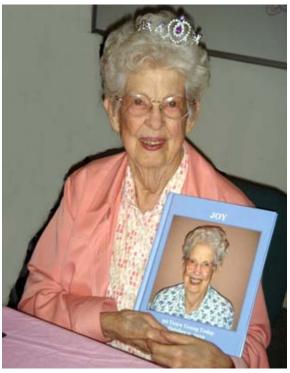
Ruth Minerva Cruz, Administrator of Lumen School

# Joy Mills' Birthday

A final high point of the year was the 90th birthday on October 9 of our most senior and longstanding TOS member, Joy Mills. Joy was 'crowned' for the day.



Participating in the Ojai service team must keep one young! Notice Joy second from left in front here.



At her party, Joy received a wonderful "book" filled with birthday greetings from hundreds of her friends around the world.



Joy with close friend, Krotona's librarian, Lakshmi Narayan



Maria Rosa and Ernesto Martinez Garcia from Argentina were at Joy's party.



Joy with long time Ojai friend, Marjorie Emerson

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# 5. The TOS's relationship with the TS

Bearing in mind that 'charity begins at home', the TOS encourages its groups to give practical support to the TS itself. This year, the TOS in Chennai facilitated the installation of a water purification unit on the TS estate at Adyar, since ground water relied upon till then had become less suitable for drinking. The plant was inaugurated by the International President in early June. TOS groups also regularly donate to the excellent longstanding work of the Olcott Education Society (OES) at Adyar. The TOS in Canada, for example, is enthusiastic in its support for the Besant Animal Welfare Dispensary, one of the four entities making up the OES.



The reverse osmosis plant ensuring pure water for the residents and visitors at Adyar.



Chennai TOS President, CVK Maithreya, offers the first glass of purified water to the President.



A vehicle donated by the Environmental Society of Madras travels within a radius of 100 kms of Adyar to villages where there are no veterinary facilities.

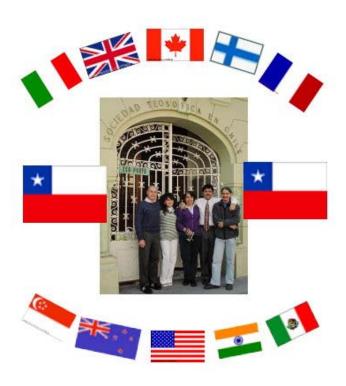


The TOS in Canada is faithful in its donations to the dispensary.

### **Chile Earthquake**

In the same spirit of solidarity, the TOS supported the TS in America in its kind offer to channel donations to help the TS in Chile repair its building in Santiago after last February's earthquake.

Support flowed in from Canada, England, Finland, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand and Singapore. A touching donation came from the TOS in Mumbai. Normally Theosophists in Western countries contribute to the work within economically disadvantaged countries. This time, our Indian sisters and brothers were also able to help a TS Section overseas.



# **Working Bees for TS**

The TOS in Brisbane, Australia organises an annual working bee at Springbrook, a Theosophical Retreat Centre in Queensland.



# **Theosophical Funeral Services**

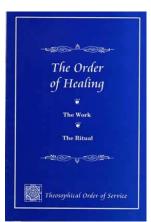
As a response to requests from TS members for theosophically oriented funeral services, the TOS has started collecting suitable models which will be made available in electronic form to Theosophists throughout the world.

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## 6. Conclusion

The TOS is honoured to help the TS show the application of theosophical teachings to the challenges faced by humanity and is encouraged by the efforts and dedication of its members. The theosophical philosophy and its accompanying spiritual practice nourish them and help sustain the TOS's most popular and widespread activities, the healing ritual designed by Geoffrey Hodson and meditation for world peace.







Five groups perform the healing ritual in Spain and a sixth group is being formed.



For those of you for whom December 25 is a special day: Merry Christmas!

The international TOS wishes one and all of you a Happy New Year.



# Fraternally, Diana

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