

# Helping People

## One Drop At A Time



### Field Report From India

November 19, 1005

Dear Friends,

It is Thursday evening, about a week since we last sent you an update. Our presentation at the Rotary Club of Bangalore Cubbon Park last Friday went very well. The club is interested in placing filters in the slums of Bangalore. They can guarantee us at least 50 filters as a start (about one per member). We are also attending a district Rotary meeting on Saturday afternoon and evening but will not have the opportunity to speak about our program. If we can get some promotional material by then we can hang up posters and distribute pamphlets. We are working on it.

We have made one filter a day since Monday and they get better each day. We have ordered two additional molds so we can make three filters per day. The new molds will be ready on Monday. We set up a washing station to wash the filter media (sand and gravel) and acquired all the tools necessary to complete and install the filters. Tomorrow morning we will complete our first installation and demonstration model in the workshop (they take a few days for the concrete to cure). Many interested people from Kolar and surrounding towns have been visiting the workshop to see what we are doing. We believe this will be a home run.

The next step for our project is to identify users and get these filters into the hands of people who lack clean drinking water. Hopefully before we leave we will get to see a few filters going to those who need them. If not, we feel confident that we have laid the ground work for a very successful water filter project. The workshop is humming with activity and our process for manufacturing the filters is getting more refined every day. We also feel gratified that we are employing people in a town where the unemployment rate is between 50 to 60 percent. Ironically one of the two people running the workshop is Raja, the son of Mike's cook from his Peace Corps days, Mani, who passed away in December.

We have had many experiences at meetings and presentations but today we were in for a special treat. We went to a local Methodist school where a group including the Kolar Rotary Club was presenting a program for 17 and 18 year old women to inform them about legal issues. We first met with the president of the school and several of the presenters, two of which were important judges in the state. While we were exchanging pleasantries a cream colored Ambassador (an Indian made car) arrived and everyone jumped up and ran outside to greet one of the state ministers, a big VIP. He entered the room, occupied the president's chair at

# giving

U.S. dollars go a long way  
in India.....for example:

<b>Adopt A Family:</b> (Donation of one water filter to a needy family who is unable to purchase a filter)	\$ 25
<b>Adopt A School:</b> (Donation of two water filters to a school accompanied by a clean water education program)	\$ 100
<b>Adopt A Village Partnership:</b> (Donation of up to 60 filters to a needy village, subsidy of up to 30 filters purchased by villagers, soap & educational program for village children, community steward for one year)	\$ 2,500

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the front of the room, and proceeded to tell everyone about the program. We adjourned to the library and were served a meal of spiced rice, vadas (a fried vegetable fritter), a bar of sweet confection, and tea or coffee. Of course we had already eaten breakfast, so they insisted we try a smaller portion anyways. Promptly at 9:30 we marched into a lecture hall with 800 attentive students who were clapping as we made our way to the dais. As part of the introduction of the participants we were given flower garlands along with the other VIPs. The program was long but the students seemed very interested. The judges spoke about the law and answered every written question that was passed to them by the students. One of the officials passed Mike a note asking him to read a transliteration of the local language, Kannada, to the crowd. It was a greeting to the women. Mike spoke a few words of Kannada and also told them in English why we are here. After the program we marched out and had a photo session with all of the honored guests and then the staff of the school. We were instantly swarmed by the students, young and old, for our autographs. It was mayhem as each girl shoved their notebooks, address books, and pieces of paper in our faces. It was wild!

We attended an Indian wedding reception and pre-reception dinner last weekend (one of Haroon's relatives). Since it was a Muslim wedding we had to split up because men eat on one floor and women on another. Haroon's daughter-in-law, Farina, took Cathy under her wing and was so kind. Some of the women were decked out in jewels and bedazzling saris laden with gold and silver thread. Other women dressed in traditional burkas and were covered in black from head to toe. When the cameras were near they hid their faces from view. The camera man was especially interested in filming Cathy eating dinner with her right hand, as is the Indian custom.

Surprisingly with all the bad press about getting sick in India we both have been very healthy. Bottled water made by either Pepsi (Aquafina) or Coke (Kinley) is available everywhere and they call it "mineral water" even though it is devoid of minerals. A one liter bottles costs 12 rupees (about 25 cents) at our restaurant. It is probably much less at a grocery store. We avoid fresh vegetables and fruits unless they are easily peelable and we do the peeling! Hot food is usually cooked thoroughly so that's what we eat. Avoiding street vendor food is a must!

At the beginning of our trip the weather was a little cloudy with scattered showers every day. There has been almost no rain for the past six years but this year the ponds and rivers and water storage tanks are overflowing with a generous monsoon season. The past week or so has been absolutely gorgeous. The sky is clear and blue, the sun is shining, and the temperatures are probably somewhere in the 70's. Delightful.

Next week will be a busy one. Monday we take delivery of our two new molds and we'll need to test them out. We have also requested that an engineer from the DHAN Foundation come to our workshop to help implement this project by training our staff and spending time in some villages explaining how to interest the local people in the water filters. He will spend a couple of days with us and we are looking forward to his company. We consider him a true friend. Thursday we are due back in Bangalore for a huge Thanksgiving feast at Haroon's restaurant, The Only Place. Friday morning we will give a presentation at a high school in Bangalore and Friday night we will give a repeat presentation at the Rotary Club of Bangalore Mid-Town. Sunday we are due back in Kolar to attend a church service where we will have an opportunity to talk about our water filter project. We will let no stone go unturned.

That's all for now. We will try to send out one more e-mail next weekend before we return home.

Cathy and Mike

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Taste The Healthy Difference