



Issue 9 - March 2010

Dear fellow-members of the TS and TOS around the world,

We hope that you are enjoying keeping in touch with what is happening in our international TOS community. Our electronic newsletter aims to bring you information to inspire your service work within and outside the TOS and to help you get to know TOS members outside your country.

In this issue - We recognise the passing of Adele Algeo, a beloved and dedicated TOS member from the USA. We deeply sympathise with the Chilean members of our TOS family as they cope with the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated their country. We also share news of the appeal that the TOS in America is conducting for the people of Haiti. You'll find lots of news from TOS members and groups: an update on the Heart Babies project in Tanzania; information about a booklet written by Argentinian member, María Rosa Martínez, on Florence Nightingale's life of service; and news from TOS Groups in Assam, Northern India, West Bengal and Kenya. You are invited to join a campaign against the treatment of animals on Finland's fur farms and find out about three UN days that could provide a catalyst for service activities. The article is the last of the series by Mirabai Bush about getting started on the path of compassionate action. We finish with a short video that challenges us to think about a possible impact of climate change.

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

Please consider sending photographs of your TOS activities and news items that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. We would welcome your contributions, either through your National TOS Director, President, Coordinator, Correspondent or directly to the editors at: carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com

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What's new on the International TOS website?

We are becoming more aware of the impact that we have on the environment when we discard electronic equipment. The TOS group at Ojai in the USA has taken up the challenge of collecting discarded batteries and their work is described in the new Featured Project. Betty Bland, President of the TS in America, explores the profound importance of our responsible actions and the purity and kindness of our thoughts in the new Featured Article. There are also additions to the TOS photo gallery and the Inspiration section. Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>

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

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**' as the subject line. If you do not want to receive future newsletters you can unsubscribe by sending a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with '**UNSUBSCRIBE TOS e-newsletter**' as the subject line.

With best wishes, Carolyn and Diana

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

We can never obtain peace in the world if we neglect the inner world and don't make peace with ourselves. World peace must develop out of inner peace.

- The Dalai Lama

The TOS honours Adele Algeo

We express our sadness at the passing of John Algeo's beloved wife, Adele Algeo, who died on March 15. Adele was John's most constant and necessary partner in every way in his outstanding work for Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. They travelled for the Society together, they did research together, they collaborated on articles and books.... The touch of Adele's hand can be seen anywhere that John was involved. She also took a great interest in improving the fittings, furnishings and ambience at Olcott, the national centre of the TS in America.

What is unknown is that Adele personally supported the work of the international TOS as well, in a most discreet way. She will be greatly missed as the selfless server she was her whole life long.

The TOS sends prayers for a peaceful journey for Adele, and for John we pray that he may receive the comfort, strength and support he surely needs at this time.



Can we help our brothers and sisters in Chile?

You will have heard about the recent earthquake in Chile and seen pictures of the devastation in the media.

What you may not have heard about is the major damage to the TS centre in Santiago. It was a very beautiful, but very old building with three floors. One of the photos below shows the front entrance, seemingly undamaged. However, the 3rd floor completely collapsed and the second floor partially collapsed. While the ground floor seems almost untouched, it cannot be used without major restoration work to the entire building. This building IS (or was) the TS and TOS centre for Chile.

Thank goodness, all Chilean TS and TOS members are unhurt. However, while they are rebuilding their own homes and communities it is unlikely that they will have the resources to do anything about their TS building.

Would you like to help? The collection point will be the TS in America. There are three ways to donate:

- The old fashioned way — If you have an **American bank account**, just send a cheque to **Theosophical Society in America**
P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, USA (Be sure to write "TS Chile" in the memo line.)
- **On the internet** — Both American residents and international donors can go to this page on the TS-in-America website:
<http://www.theosophical.org/events/news/ChilePlcs/index.php>
Use any major credit card to donate using the TS-in-America's secure PayPal account.
- **By electronic transfer** — International donors can make a transfer directly from their account to the TS-USA account. For instructions on how to do this, contact Jeanne Proulx at **jproulx@theosophical.org** with a copy to the TOS international secretary (**tosinternational@wanadoo.fr**).



The TS Headquarters building in Santiago, Chile



Members of the TS and TOS in Santiago, from left to right: Sergio Rosello, Blanca Gonzalez, Ana Gloria Bustos (General Secretary), Maximiliano Aguilera, Claudio Baettig (Treasurer)



Areas of the TS building damaged in the earthquake



An invitation from the TOS in America to aid Haiti

On the evening of January 12, here in the USA we were just hearing the news about the severity of the earthquake in Haiti. By the next morning we were receiving emails from TOS groups and individual members all around the world wanting to know how they could help. At the outset it was clear that the immediate need was for emergency aid. We encouraged everyone to donate to those providers best equipped to mobilize for massive delivery of emergency supplies and services – the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, CARE, etc.

The devastation in Haiti was so extensive that it was evident no short term solution was possible. At the TOS/USA we began looking for an organization we could support after the initial rush of aid and interest subsided. We wanted someone with history and experience in Haiti who would be there for the long haul. Our search brought a number of focused local organizations to our attention. In the process I remembered a remarkable woman I had met a number of years ago – Gladys Sylvestre Thomas. I had met her at a conference in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where she was speaking about the work she was doing in Haiti. Gladys was born in Haiti, but had moved to the USA. She had married, begun a career, and was raising a family. On a visit to Haiti she was overwhelmed by the great need she witnessed, particularly the suffering of children. Although she did not know exactly what she was going to do, or how, she resolved that she was going to help. Through a series of fortuitous and unlikely events, she began by taking in an orphaned child. This initial effort grew into a formal orphanage. As her work in Haiti grew, she left the USA, moved back to Port au Prince and began working full time in her growing orphanage. It is a story filled with one seeming miracle after another, but over time the scope of her work expanded until at the time of the earthquake her organization, Federation pour les Enfants d'Haiti (FEH) consisted of 3 residential orphanage facilities (for children 2-14 years old; for nursery age children; and for developmentally disabled children), a 50 bed hospital, a school, and a micro lending operation.

FEH is uniquely positioned to serve the people of Port au Prince. First of all, it is run by Haitians for the children of Haiti. Over their years of operation they have formed valuable links with a number of the major world service organizations and NGOs operating in Haiti. These connections enabled them to begin helping immediately after the earthquake. They received supplies of water and medicine which made it possible that two days after the earthquake the hospital built to serve 50 people was aiding 1000. When the harm from the earthquake was assessed, miraculously, all of the FEH structures had escaped serious damage.

We are happy to invite you to support the operation we have selected. Donations for this work can be sent to the TOS/USA where they will be consolidated and sent to FEH. Within the USA, please mail your check to: TOS, PO Box 660, Warrenville, IL 60555 or donate online at www.theoservice.org, specifying "Haiti". From other countries, you can make an electronic transfer directly from your account to the TOS-USA account. For instructions on how to do this, contact Jeanne Proulx at jproulx@theosophical.org with a copy to the TOS international secretary (tosinternational@wanadoo.fr)

Many thanks for your consideration and concern.

Tim Boyd

National President, TOS USA

TOS news from around the world

The TOS in the Assam and Arunachal Region, India

The TOS in India engages in immensely varied activities for those in need. Here are some photos from the Assam and Arunachal Region (situated in the easternmost part of India) – about as far from our TS international HQ as it is possible to get.

Opposite we see members participating in animal welfare work.



Two key TOS workers sit down to tell uplifting stories to the children of a TOS run school and a local orphanage



Blanket distribution after floods



Hearing aid presentation



Wooden chairs made to measure for three handicapped children

TOS in Nairobi, Kenya

The TOS in Kenya has a long tradition of making substantial donations to selected charitable causes in Nairobi. Each year on November 17, Theosophical Society Founders' Day, it donates several tons of foodstuff to homes for orphans, children with HIV/AIDS, impoverished elderly people, etc. It thinks also of the vegetable and animal kingdoms by giving various kinds of support to animal welfare organisations and by undertaking tree planting exercises as part of forest conservation projects. Members believe strongly in the Unity of all that exists!



Mrs Hansaben of Nairobi Lodge presents a cheque for the sponsorship of a student's education.



Mr Anil Abdulla, bookstall manager of Nairobi Lodge, presents a cheque to a sponsored student for his tuition fees



During their lecture tour in May 2009, overseas guest speakers, C.V.K. and Sunita Maithreya, presented a cheque to the Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals on behalf of the TOS in Nairobi. They were accompanied by Narendra Shah (TS Assistant General Secretary) on the left of the photo and General Secretary, Navin Shah, on the right.



Maithreya and Sunita also presented a donation to the Daphne Sheldrick Home, a refuge for orphaned baby elephants.

TOS in Northern India

Extreme cold conditions in Northern India caused unprecedented suffering to the homeless of the Noida community. So the Sanatan Noida TOS Group in Delhi took a personal, hands-on approach to relieving this suffering. Members contributed over Rs 10,000 and purchased good quality quilts. The suppliers, in view of the cause, discounted the price, enabling more quilts to be bought.

The quilts were distributed in the most personal way possible. Having identified where people were sleeping unsheltered by the road side, members visited the sites at night and physically covered the shivering people with the quilts. Isn't this a wonderful example of compassionate action reflecting true altruistic theosophical ideals?



TOS in West Bengal, India



A group photo of the East Zone TS/TOS Conference. Sitting, from the left: Justice Shyamal Sen, Former Governor of West Bengal; Dr Radha Burnier, International President, TS/TOS; B. L. Bhattacharyya, National Director, TOS India; S. Sundaram, General Secretary, Indian TS.



Radha Burnier, giving a wheelchair to a handicapped person in Kolkata, with B. L. Bhattacharyya and Shaikh Md. Zaki, President, TOS, West Bengal



The local TOS groups provided aid at the Aila Relief Camp, following devastating floods in the area

Good news from Tanzania on the Heart Babies Project

Deepa Kapur, TOS National Co-ordinator for Tanzania, reports that on 28th February 2010, 11 more heart children were sent to India for open heart surgery. The youngest child was 11 months old.

Bro. Dubal (our TS Assistant General Secretary for Tanzania) and Bro. P.S. Patel (the group's most senior member) went to the send-off function to present 11 teddy bears and US\$550 to the children and their mothers. (\$50 is provided per child for incidental expenses related to the travel.)

The children were delighted to receive their teddies and kept playing with them. The mothers were most relieved to have some cash on hand for small expenses along the way! Money donated by other groups is used for the cost of surgery and airfares, so these mothers literally have to rely on contributions made personally to them in order to buy small items for the journey.

Dr Kanabar gave a speech and mentioned TOS Dar es Salaam as one of the philanthropic contributors. Dr Kanabar is a pioneer of the project which started in 1979. He is also Chairman of Regency Medical Centre Hospital, where the children were taken for medical examinations before the send-off party.

"We had excellent publicity from television, newspaper and radio journalists. The news item was flashed on all local TV channels, so it certainly made the wider public aware of the work of the TOS," said Deepa.

"Our thanks go to TOS Italy for the beautifully knitted teddies and to TOS New Zealand and TOS England for their donations. We also thank Diana Dunningham Chapotin, our International Secretary, for bringing us together in a worldwide link of TOS members for this need-based project."

"In addition to our personally presented donations to families, it costs US\$55,000 to send 11 babies and children for medical treatment, including surgery, one month's stay in India and the return airfare," explained Deepa. "We have 7,000 children waiting in a queue to go to India for surgery. There's lots of work to be done here!"

Well done, TOS Tanzania and all involved.



Bro. Patel presents a teddy to one of the children while Bro. Dubal photographs the event.



Mothers and children receiving their teddies and spending money for the journey from the ever-smiling TOS member, Bro Dubal.



Journalists photographing the presentations and send-off party for the 'heart babies'.



Lions Club members who sponsor the project with a very special donor, Mr Sabodo, who contributed a major amount towards the cost of surgery. Mr Sabodo is behind the table in a white shirt; Dr Kanabar is beside him in a maroon shirt, speaking to the press.



Mothers and children at the presentation before their journey to India for the children's heart surgery.

Florence Nightingale, Nursing as Service - a new booklet by a TOS member

Everyone knows of Florence Nightingale, the English nurse, writer and statistician (1820-1910) who did so much to establish the modern nursing profession that she is considered the 'first nurse'. Few of us, however, have thought of exploring her life in connection with service and the selfless attitude needed on the spiritual path.

Three years ago, María Rosa Martínez, a member of the TOS in San Rafael, Argentina, decided to write a booklet about 'The Lady of the Lamp', focusing on the ideal of service in her life. The printing of the booklet, entitled *Florence Nightingale, Nursing as Service*, was funded by the Annie Besant branch of the TS. At the end of the text, Annie Besant's life as an example of service is referred to and the fact that she founded the Theosophical Order of Service is mentioned.

María Rosa makes a short PowerPoint presentation to staff in those hospitals around San Rafael that are interested. She also talks to trainee nurses during their graduation ceremony, highlighting the theme of service and referring to the lives of Florence Nightingale and Annie Besant. The booklet, which summarises the presentation, is given to the nurses as a gift. Its back cover text says:



Abridgement for nurses, in the hope that they find in its pages inspiration for being better human beings and for discovering within, the selfless spirit of Service needed to be better nurses.



María Rosa Martínez

Start right where you are

by Mirabai Bush

In this issue, we publish a further extract from Mirabai Bush's advice in *Compassion in Action: Setting Out On the Path of Service* (Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush, NY :Bell Tower, 1992). Her series of essays is prefaced with the following remarks:

Once we begin to understand the path of action, we still have many practical steps to take in finding our way into appropriate service. We have to begin somewhere. And often the beginnings are confusing or difficult. Here is a guide into the world of service, a little help on the path, some suggestions to ease the entry, a handbook for compassion in action.

Everything in our lives has brought us to exactly where we are. When we don't already know what is calling us to act, all we need to do is look and listen right where we are — it will probably be near. Maybe not geographically near, because our neighbourhoods are not only physical, but it will be near.

As you read this, there is something that needs to be done. Suffering can be reduced and help can be offered. Just look around.

In every community, there are calls for help. If you are interested in working to relieve hunger, for example, any small effort will be appreciated by the people who work in the various shelters and soup kitchens in your region. You can work as an accountant or proposal writer to raise funds. You can fix broken trucks or use your own vehicle to collect food. You can glean usable products from donated damaged goods, working alongside others in a warehouse. You can package bread and muffins. You can answer phones. You can type letters or pack bags of groceries. You can play the piano in a soup kitchen, cook a meal, or put together menus from the ingredients at hand. You can make sure your company, your neighbourhood market, or your local bakeries and restaurants recycle their leftover food, and, if they don't, you can salvage it yourself. These are just a few of the possibilities, and these just relate to hunger. Look around you.

Many people find opportunities for service arising from their work and professions. Work is what we do every day; it is often what is most familiar to us. We may find that our professional talents can be used to help outside. Each of us knows what is calling and how we can answer.

A few years ago, Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, the now well-known makers of an American ice cream, creamy Vermont, were becoming aware of the disappearance of the rain forests but were kept busy by their rapidly growing company. At the same time, Jason Clay, the executive director of Cultural Survival, was working on an agroforestry scheme; he hoped to introduce First World consumers to products that could be grown under the rain forest canopy in 'extractive reserves', parts of the rain forest that could be farmed and thereby preserved. They met one night — the ice cream makers and the foundation head — and the idea of Rainforest Crunch was born. This cashew and Brazil nut brittle uses large quantities of nuts, which provide the forest people with three to ten times what they usually earn. And 40 percent of the profits from the confectionery goes to rain forest preservation organisations.

Ben and Jerry have found a way to support endangered Amazonia right where they are — within the framework of their business. And, as is the way of creative ventures, it has continued to grow. As the nuts are prepared for the crunch, they give off 'nut dust' at the rate of hundreds of pounds per week. Ben and Jerry began storing the dust, knowing it has nutritional value but not knowing what to do with it. Just as it threatened to overwhelm them ('Corporate Execs Buried in Nut Dust'), they conceived of the Rainforest Crunch Cookie, which could use the dust as flour. They had already proved that people will buy and eat sweets for a good cause, so they knew they had a market. And, to maximise the good effects, they connected with Bernie Glassman, abbot of the Zen Community of New York. The Zen Community had responded to the plight of the homeless in its area by creating a holistic programme that included job training at Greystone Bakery. Ben and Jerry's idea was perfect — the Rainforest Crunch Cookies could not only give livelihood to Brazilian cooperatives and raise money for other rain forest preservation work but could generate jobs and training for homeless mothers in New York. A stroke of compassionate genius. And it all happened right where everyone already was — at work.

Shocking report on farmed fur animals in Finland

How far can we believe fur producers who claim that they look after the welfare of farmed animals? Not at all, it appears, in the case of Finnish fur farms.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has released a report and video documenting the inhumane treatment of foxes and minks. According to the investigators, "Foxes and minks are trapped in cages so small that animals often go insane, resort to cannibalism and chew off their own tails in an effort to escape the pain."

How can you help?

- PETA invites concerned readers to write to the Finnish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. You'll find a sample letter on their website.
- Spread the word that no thinking and compassionate person would wear fur or fur-trimmed clothing. The video convincingly shows why!

See the video and report on the PETA UK website:

<http://action.peta.org.uk/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=5&ea.campaign.id=5917&c=pukfpa>



UN International Days for community activities

The United Nations was built on spiritual principles and universal values such as peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, justice, respect, good neighbourliness, freedom, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

In our last newsletter we featured two International Days that could provide opportunities for partnership activities within our communities: ***Earth Day on April 22 and International Day of Families on May 15, 2010.***

We feature three more International Days in this issue.

June 5 World Environment Day

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and World Environment Day picks up this theme of:

Many Species. One Planet. One Future.

We humans are one in 15 million species that inhabit our planet, according to scientists. Yet humans are among only a handful of species whose populations are growing, while most animals and plants are becoming rarer and fewer.

A total of 17,291 species are known to be threatened with extinction – from little-known plants and insects to birds and mammals.

Why is this happening at such a pace? Scientists tell us that it is the result of human activities. With our present approach to development, we have caused the clearing of much of the original forest, drained half of the world's wetlands, depleted three-quarters of all fish stocks, and emitted enough heat-trapping gases to keep our planet warming for centuries to come. Our activities are making species extinctions occur at up to 1000 times the natural rate.

Find out more about the risks of losing our planet's biodiversity on the World Environment Day website <http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/theme.asp>

Join your fellow TOS members, friends and neighbours to review your environmental footprint. (That's all the things you use from the environment for food, energy, shelter, clothing, transport, etc.) We can take four important steps right now to reduce our personal impact on the environment. We can:

- **reduce consumption**
- **reduce or eliminate the meat in our diets**
- **reduce energy use**
- **reduce water use.**



...and plant a tree

June 20 UN World Refugee Day

Did you know that according to UN figures, some 50 million people around the world might be described as victims of forced displacement? Nearly two-thirds of the world's refugees are in the Middle East and Africa.

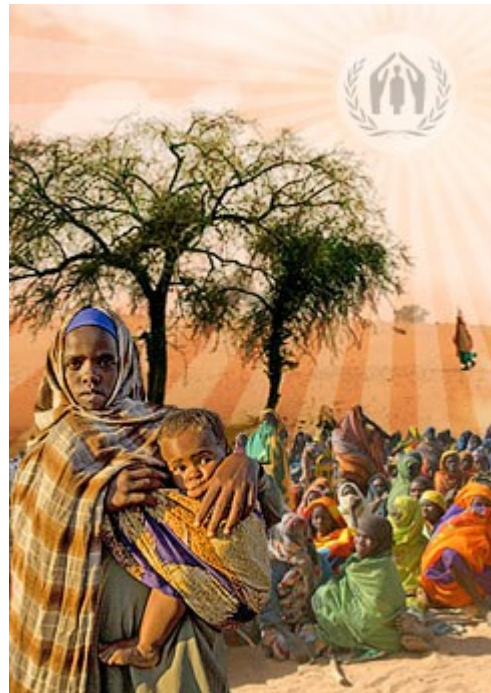
Some refugees have left their own country to escape from persecution, armed conflict or violence. Others have been uprooted from their local area but remain within the borders of their own country. While refugees who cross borders are usually recognised and assisted by international humanitarian aid, those large numbers of people who stay within their country often do not receive any form of international protection or assistance.

The United Nations refugee organisation, UNHCR, is mandated by the UN to lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems.

Check out the UN news page for the latest stories at:
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/subject.asp?SubjectID=3>

Celebrating World Refugee Day can inspire us to become better informed about areas of need and the issues involved in effective humanitarian response. For instance, women, men, girls and boys experience war and displacement differently: they have different priorities, responsibilities and protection needs.

Our involvement in World Refugee Day can take many forms. For example, we can partner with other groups to raise awareness of the needs of refugees; we can conduct events to raise funds for refugee programs; and if refugees have been relocated into our communities, we can offer our help and friendship.



July 17 World Day for International Justice

This day commemorates the adoption of the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, the Rome Statute, on July 17, 1998. This Court provides an accountability process for the most serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

World Day for International Justice calls upon all countries to fully support the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to honour their international obligations to prosecute alleged perpetrators of torture and other human rights violations.

As well as investigating and prosecuting alleged acts of violence against the most basic human rights, the ICC plays a strong advocacy and communications role. Its recent activities include creating provisions for the protection of women's rights, promoting the rights of victims of torture and advocacy for the plight of child



soldiers. As a result of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, an Optional Protocol came into force prohibiting the recruitment of children under 18 into armed groups and government armies and their direct participation in hostilities.

Find out more by visiting the ICC website:

<http://www.iccnw.org/index.php?mod=home>

You'll find information in English, French and Spanish.

World Day for International Justice provides TOS members with an opportunity to partner with groups such as Amnesty International. We can also promote awareness of human rights issues particularly those related to civil war, genocide and religious conflicts. We can organise candlelight vigils and meditation circles for peace.

