



Fifteenth Meeting

FreeSchools World Literacy Australia

DATE commencing: Friday 5th September 2008 TIME: 9 am
DATE completion: Sunday 7th September 2008 TIME: 9 pm

INTERNET VENUE: FreeSchools Literacy Australia email network
fswl-australia@googlegroups.com

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Rollcall of members and others present and apologies.

There were 9 participants in attendance
Robert Coenraads (President)
Ben Bowler (Vice President)
Ian Esmore (Public Officer)
Delphine Swadling (Secretary)
Donna Cervantes (Committee Member)
Yvonne Hirt (Committee Member)
Kathleen Swadling (Committee Member)
Sue Tennant
Saskia Raevouri

2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Fourteenth meeting were sent to each member of the committee and were accepted by the committee
Moved by Donna Cervantes and Seconded by Ben Bowler

3. Reports from the Committee.

The Committee received the President's Report

PRESIDENTS REPORT

This month we have received sad news of the loss of Erica Light from our committee. Most of us met Erica for the first time at the Sydney Conference in 2006 after which time she became involved with the FreeSchools World Literacy as a member of our steering group. Although she will be missed by her family, and all of us, I am sure that she will be continuing on her God-ward journey and striving for her goals on a higher spiritual plane.

I would like to welcome Joanna Townsend to our group. You will have all been following the news that Jo and her mother Judy will be accompanying Sue on her visit to the northern Thailand Schools this coming January. Jo works at Channel 9 News and after learning all about our story first hand, she will be in an ideal position to present it to all who are willing to listen.

Our message is a powerful one and highly attractive to all who hear about it. I was surprised myself at the immensely positive response I had at a recent presentation to our local church elder group and how quickly I was invited to speak to other groups. I asked only for everyone's attention and their ideas on how to move forward in Australia and unexpectedly came away with \$225 for the project.

Jo, please feel free to contact me at any time, to chat about the FSWL project and how I might be of assistance to you. I cannot express just how pleased we are to have you working with us on the FreeSchools Project.

Thanks again to all of the committee and visitors for taking the time to participate this weekend.

Kind regards,

Dr. Robert Coenraads
President
FreeSchools World Literacy - Australia

4. Progress in Thailand. &

5. Progress in India

Sue: You can say we have 72 FreeSchools at the moment, counting Rev. Amos' schools south of Delhi and in Uttar Pradesh and the two new teachers now hired in Thailand. The way we're counting the schools is a FreeSchool per teacher for the Adopt-A-School program.. In India, Sr. Crescence has divided some of the schools into Junior and Senior schools. We count them as separate schools now. Classes average around 50 students. These schools are highly supervised, less so in Thailand. So in India, our Adopt-A-School program costs \$1500/year and supports the teacher, teacher training, almost-daily supervision, writing materials, workbooks, textbooks, nutritious snacks, and some needed clothing. Because the Thai and Indian schools are different, I am working this fall on a fundraising initiative for the Thai schools exclusively, targeting corporations. I haven't worked out the cost of adopting a Thai school but it will likely come in around twice as much as an Indian FreeSchool. But the need is huge because Hill Tribes are the most trafficked group in Thailand and the Mirror Foundation are anxious to expand the FreeSchools. I hope your letter to Thai Airlines wins you free airfare to Thailand and a visit to the FreeSchools. We need more people to have first-hand experience in the field. Fingers are crossed!

Robert: Yes, we must keep our fingers crossed and keep on trying for sponsorship in its various forms! Thanks for the Schools update which can form part of a brief presentation at our coming Urantia Conference in October. Have you heard anything from Sister Crescence since the news of flooding in Bihar State?

Sue: I've called the Banuchapar Bettiah convent almost every day this week but no one is answering the phone. I am very worried. I'll be there in just over 3 weeks with Anu Amos, but if the flooding is bad, we may not be able to visit the schools. As soon as I know more, I'll let you know.

Ian: The flooding in the region is terrible challenge for the country compounding what are already immense hurdles. The need for global assistance seems totally overwhelming. At the same time there are so many new projects commenced by enterprising Developed World groups trying to rise above the humanitarian cry for help. For FSWL to keep moving with the flow will

require focus, purpose, commitment and networking. So many good intentions of individuals and groups fall to the wayside in struggling to implement their vision.

Re letter to Thai Airlines: Initially I thought your idea a bit over the top. However on reading your outreach it is a great bit of inspiration the way you have expressed the request. If at all this goes further, please put a word in for an extra seat down the back for an assistant notetaker-recorder. I come with Video Camcorder, camera and laptop. 168cm high, however do not take up much space. Only 69 kg and versatile!

Saskia: Episode #15, Life In and Around Bettiah, is posted, showing the type of environment the FreeSchools children grow up in. Since I am going on the road for two weeks, I am posting the remaining chapters in the FreeSchools 2007 pictorial travelogue:

16. More Bettiah FreeSchools
17. The Work of Sr. Elise
18. A Very Progressive Village
19. Escape to Patna

Robert: Please take a look at Saskia's FreeSchools journey on her website www.squarecircles.com

6. General Business.

The following discussion took place during the meeting and is recorded here:

FSWL Charitable Status

Robert: I was asked at the recent Church presentation about the charitable status of FSWL, and explained that the application was in process. Our FSWL-Australia committee meetings and minutes, and presentations such as this, are vital to us becoming seen as legitimate and responsible. How is it all tracking from your end, and do you need any help from my end on the process?

Ian: Re ATO progress. I have lodged ABR process and trying to sort out some of the data. Awaiting a response from ATO. Expect to have this finalised in the coming one or two weeks. Then proceed to the final step. Not sure of timeline however hope to have done by end of this year. The committee should plan for an AGM soon. Ideally within 3 months of financial year (October) Require to lodge reports to Consumer Affairs Dept following that.

Ian: Thank you very much for the extensive minutes report. It is a great job Robert. All of which add to the chapters of FSWL progress. I think you could say the meeting procedure and documentation for committee function is satisfactory considering it was a fairly new process for most in this setup. One of the topics for the next meeting should be the format for an AGM. There may be items to discuss beforehand in-between meetings, as if there is any motions for vote consideration, then according to constitution we could have to give advance notice. Also an AGM usually considers the business of confirming the previous AGM minutes and renewal of committee officer-member nominations. These should-could be sought beforehand without prejudicing nominations on the day/weekend. It may be reasonable to think about roles beforehand with no big surprises. Also if we do nominate for example some time around the Canberra conference, that plans are made for others to participate who may not be able to be present physically.

Robert: Thanks for doing a fabulous job with the ATO paperwork, Ian. We could hold our AGM (Annual General Meeting) to coincide with our next monthly meeting (3-5 October), as everyone is used to being available at those times. I will ring you at some stage to go through the

nuts and bolts of the meeting structure, and the data needed for the reports to Consumer Affairs Dept. I will be away next week in Brisbane for a geology conference. Thanks also for your offer to work on the website - the page looks great. It would be good if we could attach the Annual Newsletter 2008. That should do the trick. It will then allow those who wish to drill down for all of the details to be able to do so. We could perhaps also append some of the reports and photos that have been coming out of Thailand in due course, but there is no need for rush or stress. Many thanks and kind regards.

Robert: We could perhaps do the majority of the procedural work online where all can attend electronically. We could then have a short public meeting and presentation at an appropriate time at the conference?

Ian: Good News!!! Application Confirmation. Your application for an Australian Business Number (ABN) has been successful

Your Name: FreeSchools World Literacy inc.

Your ABN is: 13233167644

ABN Status: Active from 16/09/2008

Robert: Thank you for your efforts, Ian. We are moving closer to charitable status.

FSWL Australian Website and Communications

Ian: Re Web Site: Over the next couple of weeks I will be able to do some work on this if no one has already started. There seemed to be some information already done which I don't have a copy of. PowerPoint presentation was one I remembered that may be useful.

FSWL Publicity

Robert: The presentation of the FSWL project to the congregation of the Uniting Church, Frenchs Forest on Friday evening went very nicely indeed. This is the church that our family often attend, so they all knew me, and my thoughts were to canvass ideas about various types of fundraising activities from their vastly experienced elder group. I used the PowerPoint presentation and showed the FSWL video while Francheska (my daughter) spoke about the scholarships program and her Indian pen pals, Samridhi and Sonal. Merindi's husband, Bernie, ensured that the entire evening all went smoothly by providing his laptop for use. There was a supper provided at the end and much interesting discussion ensued. Although it was not my intention to solicit donations directly from our church members (as they are already highly active donors to a number of projects), we raised over \$200 for FreeSchools that evening, with the Reverend being particularly moved by the presentation and personally donating \$100.

Church members who are also part of Lions, Probus and Rotary clubs decided to arrange it so I can speak to their clubs at their meetings as an avenue to increasing awareness of FSWL (which nobody had heard of before) and as a means of fundraising.

It is clear that one of our most effective means of fundraising and increasing awareness about the aims and goals of FSWL is, in fact, to give regular presentations wherever possible, and to keep our eyes out for such opportunities.

Kathleen: Well done Robert!

Sue: Congratulations Robert!! Good work. Word-of-mouth always increases awareness and often ends up with some unexpected financial support. Rotary has made a commitment to world literacy and there are clubs everywhere. Please see attachment WORLD LITERACY IN ACTION. Report and Resource Guide Compiled by Literacy Resource Group 2005 - 2006

Rotary International WORLD LITERACY IN ACTION ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT CARL-WILHELM STENHAMMER 2005-2006.

Sue: If you are going to get other opportunities to spread awareness, I wonder if you might make a pitch for funding two new FreeSchool teachers in Thailand. Mirror is looking for just less than \$200/month to hire two more needed FreeSchools teachers.

Paul Garrioch, our contact with Mirror writes,

"Khun Jadad is very interested in being able to open 2 more Free Schools in Fang. Is it possible? The situations he is trying to address are:

1. At the Orange Farms at Huay Nam Yen, there are more and more workers coming in to work, bringing their families. They are mainly Shan (Thai Yai) and Burmese. Many are illegal with no rights or legal protection. Typically their families live and work on the farm and the children receive no education. Due to their situation they are not easily coaxed into the schools even if they are available for them. Jadad would like to get a teacher to go to them and teach the children at night. This way they will be getting some education and the kids will be learning Thai and getting used to learning. Hopefully over time they can be brought into mainstream schooling.

2. In the government school at Pa Gor village which is next to the Myanmar border, many Burmese children cross the border to go to school. There are now too many children and not enough teachers. But it is important that we try to help them get an education. Can FreeSchools help by supplying an extra teacher here? It seems the kids can't get an education in Burma, and as they live so close to the border, they are typically the sort who fall victim to exploitation or human trafficking. By getting them a basic education and more Thai language skills, they will be in a much stronger position to protect themselves, ask for help when needed and avoid future problems.

It could be done for an extra 6000 Baht per month. What are your thoughts on all that?"

I wonder if FSWL-Australia might consider taking on this fund-raising challenge?

7. Set date and time for COM meeting. Close meeting

Meetings of the Committee of FSWL Australia will be held on the first Friday of each month. The next official meeting will also be the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for our Committee of Management and will be from Friday 3rd October to Friday 10th of October 2008.

The Committee is thanked for its involvement

END OF MINUTES

APPENDIX REPORTS

The FSWL Committee - Australian Contact Details

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