



KAT News



Newsletter of the S. E. Region of the YWCA of India
[Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu]

For private circulation only

June 2011

Dear Members,

Welcome to our very first newsletter! In this day & age of Twitter & Face book, should the YWCA be left behind? This e-newsletter aims to connect all the 18 YWCAs in the S. E. Region. It will showcase our programmes, achievements & milestones ... please send in your reports regularly.

This is an excellent platform to share our activities & I am sure there are interesting happenings & success stories that all of us would like to share & for others to read .We request your co-operation in sending your news so that we can all work together as a team to make this endeavor a success.

In the message of the World YWCA General Secretary, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, on the occasion of World YWCA Day, she says that for over 155 years the YWCAs have continuously provided services to our communities. We have lifted the leadership of women, especially young women in raising our voices against violence & advocating for peace with justice. We have sustained our programmes on women's sexual & reproductive health & rights, while demanding an HIV & AIDS response that is centered on issues of women and girls. We have achieved all of this with the support of our volunteers & friends of all generations, in our communities and the world at large." So similarly, the region depends on each association to build up their communities ... which affects the National Office... & India as a whole.

We are in the process of planning a South East Conference in August this year at Ootacamund. We shall send you the details shortly.

*On behalf of all the members of South East Region, I thank Nymphaea for her enthusiasm on this e-newsletter initiative & it is up to all of us in our own Associations to send in our reports/news ... so that **By love, we serve one another!***

With best wishes & warm regards,



Vani Samuel,
*Vice President – South East Region
YWCA of India*

South East Regional Committee for 2010-14

Vice President: Vani Samuel
Board Members: Rachel Deepika Solomon
Nympha Reddy
Nominating Committee Vasantha Kalyani David
Sudha Mathai
MINA Committee Dr. Roopa Ravikumar

Associations in the South East Region

YWCA of Bangalore Cantt / Karnataka	YWCA of Bangalore City / Karnataka
YWCA of Madras / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Coimbatore / Tamilnadu
YWCA of Coonoor / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Hyderabad / Andhra Pradesh
YWCA of Kalliancaud / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Madurai / Tamilnadu
YWCA of Marthandam / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Nagercoil / Tamilnadu
YWCA of Ootacamund / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Palayamkottai / Tamilnadu
YWCA of Salem / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Secunderabad / Andhra Pradesh
YWCA of Thanjavur / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Tiruchirapalli / Tamilnadu
YWCA of Tirupur / Tamilnadu	YWCA of Tuticorin / Tamilnadu

Regional News

Religious Emphasis

- ▼ **Hyderabad:** On the occasion of the **World Day of Prayer** the Hyderabad YWCA gathered together on 04-March-11 from 2 pm to 6:30 pm. They had received many prayer requests from their members, which was upheld in the intercessory sessions.
- ▼ **Secunderabad:** Conducts The Quiet Hour every 1st Thursday of the month where members are the messengers of divine inspiration. For the World Day of Prayer, the Secunderabad YWCA members affirmed that prayer & action are inseparable & both have immeasurable influence in the world. They met on 05-March-2011 at 5.30 pm for a Prayer Service. They had asked for prayer intentions via email & phone.



Community Projects

- ▼ **Hyderabad:**
 - **13-Jan 2011:** Destitute Free Medical Camp was conducted where more than 100 people benefited with medicines. Spectacles were distributed to the needy & destitute feeding was done.
 - **10-Feb-2011:** An awareness programme on *Seasonal Fevers* was conducted. Around 50 people attended the programme. Simultaneously, the destitute free medical Camp was conducted where again 100 people benefited with medical checkup, lab investigations & medicines. A Wheel Chair was given to a disabled girl with the support of OBI (CBN).
 - **10-March-2011:** Doctors gave a health talk during the Destitute Free Medical Camp to the attendees them, in which they briefed on how leafy & green vegetables give vitamins, & increase the hemoglobin, as many among them are suffering with anemia. They also explained on how to avoid stress which is a root cause for B.P & diabetics. 87 patients were treated & were given necessary medicine.
 - **14-April-11:** Regular Destitute Free Medical Camp was conducted. 40 needy people attended the camp. Free medicines, lab investigations, eye checkups were done &



spectacles were distributed.

- **12-May-11:** As the summer heat was so high a talk about dehydration & its prevention by taking ORS was given. 45 patients received medicines & spectacles for the poor vision patients were distributed free of cost.

▼ Secunderabad:

- **The Balwadi School** in Bolarum has on roll 45 children, with an average of 30-35 regular students from the surrounding two areas. The school has a teacher & a helper appointed & the children are between the ages of 2 to 5 years. They are given a midday snack of banana, porridge & milk. The classes are held from 9 am to 12 noon from Monday to Friday.
- **Tailoring Classes** are held at three centres – YWCA Premises, Adharsh Nagar & Kotha Basthi at Bolarum. The Bolarum classes are held in the govt. community rooms. At the end of 3 months, after an exam, they are given a certificate. They are also made to prepare an album for their reference for their personal use. Once after they finish this course they are encouraged to stitch clothes on the sewing machines provided in the centres for practice. On an average there are 8-10 ladies attending the classes at each centre.
- **Self Help Group:** Ladies make phenyl & washing powder which is sold amongst our members.
- **HIV Support Fund:** This project was started in the latter half of 2008 where the committee decided on sponsoring nutritional supplements to those infected with HIV/AIDS. After recommendations are received, the committee reviews each person's case as per the parameters drawn up. The Community Secretary monitors their progress & once the person CD4 count reaches acceptable levels, the sponsor is stopped. Presently there are 6 beneficiaries & the committee continuously reviews other applications. Members have also donated water filters, which have been given to HIV/AIDS infected persons.



PASI- Public Affairs & Social Issues

▼ Hyderabad:

- **January:** A wife who was neglected by her husband was given shelter & protection at the Centre for 10 days until her husband was convinced to take her home.
- **February:** An orphan girl who was forced by her brother-in-law to marry him was counseled & sheltered at the Centre. She was encouraged & supported to write her 10th open school exams.
- **March:** A woman who was suffering from migraine, fits & depression came to medical camp in which she expressed her problems with the YWCA counselors that her mother in-law beats her. The in-laws & her family were counseled & she is happy now.
- **27-Apr-2011:** As a part of being Neighbour to the Earth, World Earth Day was also celebrated in collaboration with Green Peace India. Guest Speakers from Green Peace India shared on topics like Climate & Energy, Toxic Technology, Forests, Global Warming & Sustainable Agriculture.



▼ Madras:

- **21-Jan-2011:** A Pongal Mela was organized from 3.00 p.m. onwards mainly for the self help groups & others. There were 19 stallholders selling a variety of items such as hot bajji, biryani, pongal, cutlets & other food items; sarees & T. shirts, jewellery, plastic items, cushion covers & cards, plants, etc. Members, IGH guests, Community College students, hostelites & staff came for the mela. The stallholders included, self-help groups referred by Sahodari, mothers of our L. P. Balwadi children, YWCA Projects (Navajeevan, Sahodari & UCDP) & members.
- **02-Feb-2011:** International Leprosy Day is observed on 30-January & as part of the Advocacy Campaign for special days in the year, the PASI & Sahodari committee consisting of Mrs. Padmini Yesuthasen, Mrs. Audrey Dias, Mrs. Grace Muthayya, Mrs. Viji Santosham & Mrs. Usha Christudas, Invitee – Mrs. Sarah Chanda & staff Mrs. Devasena Raj visited

Gremaltes [Greater Madras Leprosy Treatment & Education Scheme] visited Gremaltes, which provides special treatment & care facilities for leprosy patients. Mr. Pius Kalathil, Director, took the ladies on a tour of the hospital. At the men's ward a word of prayer was said by Mrs. Usha Christudas, Mrs. Grace Muthayya talked about the Sahodari Project to them. The patients were asked to introduce themselves & say a few words about their families also. The members interacted with the patients, a game of housie was played & prizes were given. A towel was also given to each patient. Refreshments donated by committee members were served. The patients enjoyed the programme & requested us to visit them again.

- **18-Mar-2011:** A programme for special children *Pet Pals-Storytelling using origami* was organized at 10.30 a.m. The participants were 24 children from Asha, Bala Vihar & Opportunity School. Ms. Lata Subramaniam conducted a wonderful interactive session of story-telling through origami & taught the children how they can imaginatively think of a story to remember the sequence of folds. She taught them to make a penguin, a heart & a tortoise. It would be very useful for the L. P. Balwadi & RDP Nursery School teachers & the others to try to emulate Ms. Subramaniam & tell simple stories with simple origami designs to develop the memory power of even normal kids. Ms. R. Sridevi from C. P. R. Environment Education Centre gave a presentation on taking care of pets & the environment. The Children enjoyed & participated with enthusiasm in both the presentations. Each child was happy to receive an origami book & a participatory certificate.
- **27-Apr-2011:** A seminar on *Emerging Trends in Counseling* to understand the importance of timely counseling, various strategies used to handle the clients, innovative methods & how it is applied to children, sexual minorities, addicts & depression was organized by Sahodari Project to empower the counselors from various NGOs in Chennai to refresh their knowledge, skills & involvement in counseling. The speakers for the seminar were Arundati Swamy, Family & Student Counselor, Magdalene Jeyarathnam, Director East West Centre for Counseling & Training, Jacqueline David, Counselor, TT Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation, & Dr. Shanthi Nambi- Psychiatrist & Senior Civil Surgeon, Madras Medical College & Institute of Mental Health. The seminar was well attended by participants representing 22 NGOs in Chennai, the President & few Board Members, Sahodari Committee Members & staff of Sahodari Project.

▼ **Pallayamkottai:**

30-March-2011: An Awareness Program on Global Warming was held for the members & residents of YWCA Elim Hall at 8 pm so that the maximum no. of working women could attend the meeting. Mr. Kathiravan, Associate Prof., Dept. of Economics, St. John's College, Palayamkottai, spoke on the three R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. The participants greatly benefited from this program.

▼ **Secunderabad:**

A new project called *The Saikeel Project* was initiated in March. They will collect used bicycles, which are probably of little use to their owners & coordinate with other NGOs in the city that these used cycles are put to use. In May two scooters were handed over to the Bala Bhavan Home, a project of an NGO - Navajeevan of the Don Bosco Community.

International & National Programmes

▼ **Hyderabad:**

- **26-Jan-2011:** On *Republic Day*, the President Ms. Beulah Peter hoisted the flag, message was given by Ms. Rejani Advocate of High Court Chennai, who visited Hyderabad at that time. Hostel residents & members attended the programme.
- **08-March-2011:** On *International Women's Day*, a workshop was conducted on the theme *Stress & Families*. Dr. Sunil Sam David, a Vellore graduate who worked in UK for three years on Stress management, gave a presentation. He also explained how to overcome the stress & the importance of food habits. Ms. Salonica shared about International Women's Day & the role of women in the society.
- **27-April-2011:** World YWCA Day was celebrated. All the members gathered for breakfast to celebrate women's leadership & acknowledge our part in a global movement of women working for justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom & care for the environment. The



theme was followed, Women Creating a Safe World. President, Ms. Beulah Peter, shared some thoughts on How to create a safe World & also on Increasing Rape Cases.

▼ **Secunderabad:**

- **26-Jan-2011:** After hoisting of the Indian Flag by President, Sandra Jacob, few patriotic words by Hon. General Secretary, Stella Amarjyothy, the group went for a picnic to the Carmel Campus of TENT [Training in Evangelism Needs & Technology] at Ghatkesar. This is an indigenous ministry founded in 1985 to equip grassroots workers with a two fold emphasis.



- **08-March-2011:** The members visited the beneficiaries of the HIV Support Project to instill in them a feeling of encouragement to see themselves as survivors capable of taking control of their own lives & those of their children. The *Adharna* Project of Global Organization Development is at Alwal, Secunderabad. Our Member, Janet David, had

a interactive session with the ladies encouraging them to see their beauty & worthiness within themselves. She asked them to look into a mirror, love that person in the reflection & not feel inferior to anybody. Board Members, Neomi Nayak & Sheela Mathews, conducted games thereafter. A Rangoli Group Competition was conducted for the beneficiaries. The monthly nutritional supplements was distributed after which there was a lunch celebration.



- **27-Apr-2011:** As this year's World YWCA Day came on Easter, it was celebrated the following Wednesday. The Religious Emphasis Committee Chairperson, Dolly John, shared a few words after which she opened the celebration with a word of prayer asking the Lord to continue to bless & guide our Association in all the projects & programmes conducted. Hon. Gen. Secretary, Stella Amarjyothy, shared about the World YWCA Day & Round the World Breakfast emphasizing that the World YWCA Day brings us together as a movement to celebrate & reflect on our contribution to creating safe & secure communities. President, Sandra Jacob, shared about Women creating a safe world in the words of the World GS, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, asking us to honour every woman. We should acknowledge the skills, knowledge & commitment that shape & nurture our daily work. Dr. Revathy Ramaswamy, Gynaecologist & Laparoscopic Surgeon, conducted a good interactive session on woman health issues like bleeding, hysterectomy & menopause for the various age groups. PIYA Committee Member, Lourentina Sushma, shared about her Training on NGO management at the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra & Internship at the YWCA National Office. She thanked the Board & members for all their encouragement. She also shared her vision for the YWCA of Secunderabad. Her exuberant enthusiasm was contagious & the members supported her about her ideas. This year the members had a potluck of sandwiches.



Sitting Under the Tree: Safe spaces for young women [Hendrica Okondo]

Extracted from December 2010 Common Concern, Issue 145



Often young women in rural Africa have nowhere to go except under trees. This space is a significant and sacred space in Africa, as it is where our wise men exercise their power. It is also a space that was forbidden to women and children in my village because the shade of the trees provided cool resting areas for poisonous snakes, and only men were allowed to carry the sticks which kill snakes.

This significance was once announced to me by fellow tribesmen in my animal anatomy class. While we were meant to be dissecting a fish, the

men questioned the value of educating women, basing their arguments on their perception that educated women disrespected their husbands, brought shame on their communities, and could not kill a snake. “Ha ha,” laughed the women at this nonsense, reminding the men that this was an independent Kenya in the 20th century and you don’t need a stick to kill a snake! A snake can be charmed into the lab, de-fanged, emptied of its poison, and taken to the Snake Park where tourists pay to see it.

Some men were furious and swore not to marry us. Others laughed and said that we had taken their words literally, and soon after that I became an activist. This alarmed my mother, for she believed that no man would marry me. She was wrong however, for later I would meet a man from my village that was willing to let me kill the snake of disempowerment. This was a man who, like my father before him, trusted me with the clan sticks and allowed me to sit under the tree.

The symbolism of this story returns to me when I visit African YWCAs. The space under the tree can be safe or unsafe depending on who else is there. YWCAs in 28 African countries strive to make safe spaces by providing accurate information on sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV - subjects that are often forbidden to young women by culture and religion.


In the patriarchal communities that these women live in, systematic discrimination and exclusion from the decision making processes is a way of life. Young women are often denied rights and their mobility is restricted. While parents, religious leaders and the community at large mean well, this discrimination stems from the normalization of patriarchal structures that define women and girls as inferior and are derived from stereotypes of subservient social roles, like the requirement to greet all men, no matter their age, on your knees.

In many cultures women are ignored, controlled and silenced as a form of consolidating male authority over them. This denial of young women’s right to self-empowerment is a gross violation of their human rights. We have a duty and an obligation to provide young women with safe spaces to exercise their power, their need for knowledge and to protect the integrity of their bodies.

The YWCA provides skills and training opportunities for leadership that enable women to set the agenda at the family, community, national and global levels. Young women need that space under the tree, both physically and metaphorically. It is a place for dialogue and for exploration of the different forms of empowerment and self determination. Young women have healthy expectations. They don't want to die while giving birth, they don't want to be violated; if born positive they want to live positive, they want to have access to quality education and to participate and overcome occupational segregation. Young women want safe spaces that enable them to exercise their rights to make informed decisions no matter what the context.

I am happy to work for the YWCA because we strive to make the space under the tree safe for young women to access information and services that will help them understand their sexuality and reduce unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. But, we also need to educate young men to respect women's self determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and health.

Hendrica Okondo, from Kenya, is the Global Manager for SRHR [Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights] and HIV and a focal point for Africa.

 <p>WOMEN CREATING A SAFE WORLD World YWCA Zurich 2011</p> <p>click here</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT July 12-13, 2011</p> <p>WORLD YWCA COUNCIL July 10-16, 2011</p>	<h2>Fund Raising - World Council</h2>
<p>The National Office must have already contacted you regarding fund-raising. We will appreciate that each Association in our region donates towards supporting the National projects that will be initiated as a result of the follow-up from Council, where the National Office of the YWCA of India will be offering 4 specific issue-based training workshops. Your cheques/drafts may be issued in the name of YWCA of India & sent to the National Office by 20-June-2011. Please inform or copy Vani Samuel, Vice President of the South East Region, regarding your donation.</p>	