



## 2011 BUDS TO BLOSSOMS PROJECT BLOG

### 27 October 2011:

Lotus Child is counting down the hours until our volunteers depart from Ireland to travel to Calcutta on the Buds to Blossoms Project. For many it is their first trip to Calcutta where they see first hand the poverty and meet the children who battle to survive on the streets of Calcutta. Our volunteers are there to make a difference and they will spend next week working hard with the Chaulgola community building a school for the local children. Through education, Lotus Child hopes to alter the course of these children's lives and save them from trafficking or a life on the streets of Calcutta. Without our volunteers and supporters, it would not be possible for Lotus Child to help these children and we are very grateful for your support. Many thanks again. To our volunteers - safe travelling and see you all in the airport.

### 28 October 2011:

The Lotus volunteers have reached Frankfurt, the first leg of their journey to Calcutta. The spirits are high! We'll keep you posted on our progress.

### 29 October 2011:

The lotus child volunteers have arrived in Delhi!! We're anxiously awaiting the flight to Calcutta and our first destination, the railway school and slum visit...

### 30 October 2011:

Day 1 of the Buds to Blossoms Project- 18 nervous and excited volunteers were greeted on site by Chaulgola community who were eagerly awaiting our arrival! Safety hats on, instructions received from the site foreman and our 18 volunteers set to work! Jobs ranged from mixing cement, plastering, breaking blocks to levelling the ground while the children of the community spectated in awe!! The volunteers put in a spectacular performance today and our progress was immense. We are on track for completing our project on time! As the sun set this eve the volunteers made their way to the bus tired and blistered but very happy! It is early to bed tonight and early to rise for day 2. Good night from Calcutta.

### 31 October 2011:

Day 2 - after eggs on toast we all boarded the bus to make our way to the site. The traffic was mental and we are not talking M50 style, there are no rules of the road out here! We arrive on site and straight to work. The temperatures soared as the volunteers guzzled water. The work was even more demanding-breaking bricks, mixing cement and heavy lifting are the order of the day while a small group set to work laying paths. What we were happy to see was that the community were starting to warm to us and some even helped out! After a very physically demanding day on site we made our way home, sore and aching but with a real sense of satisfaction, we are making great progress and the children of Chaulgola will soon have their school.

### 1 November 2011:

Day 3 - After a sing song last night compliments of Noel, Ray, Barry and Kieran the Lotus Child volunteers got on the bus full of enthusiasm this morning even though most people were stiff and tired after day 1 and 2. Our first stop was a Sampurna railway school and the volunteers were greeted by the smiling faces of the little boys and girls who are fortunate to attend this school which is run by our partners in Calcutta. The volunteers joined in as the kids sang 'twinkle twinkle little star' and 'baa baa blacksheep'! After our short visit it was back on the bus and we made our way to the site. Everyone gave it 100% today and thanks to a big team effort we completed the plastering of the interior walls of the school and the floors in record time. We were all delighted heading home this evening and are really looking forward tomorrow. One of the girls was talking to the Chaulgola teacher who has basic English and the community are thrilled that we have arrived to help them. As a result of your generous support and the commitment of our volunteers, the kids from the Chaulgola community will attend school later this week - they cannot wait!. Lotus Child

### 2 November 2011:

Day 4 - After another entertaining night compliments to our 2 volunteers, ray and Barry who are our resident comedians, the volunteers boarded the bus a little sleepy eyed. We have sorted the music on board the bus so we made our way to site singing along to the likes of Otis Redding, Paulo Nutini and even Johnny Logan has made it to India! The Chaulgola community are excited to see us arrive and they are now lending a helping hand during our cement relays. Two ladies arrived in the afternoon with coconuts, they cut them open and the volunteers were treated to refreshing coconut water. Anne-marie and Noreen lifted the spirits in the afternoon with their super rendition of Big Spender while John belted out Oh Ro Se do bheatha bhaile. The volunteers worked hard and at a very fast pace trying to get as much done as possible in advance of our last day on site. The school floor is now complete, the front is plastered and we started clearing the front of the school. The school is taking great shape and the end is in sight for the volunteers and the Chaulgola community will soon have their school. Roll on tomorrow.

### 3 November 2011:

Day 5 - it was our last day on site and the volunteers were very excited that today the Lotus Child Buds to Blossoms School would be finished and the beautiful children in the Chaulgola community were going to get their school. We arrived on site and we got straight to work as we had a tight schedule for the morning. The final walls were plastered, the last trays of cement were mixed, the area around the school was cleared and preparations got underway for the afternoons event. From early morning the community started arriving, kids were dressed in their Sunday best and an air of excitement surrounded the site. The balloons were blown up, the streamers were hung and Ray and Kevin marked out the race tracks for the sports day while Aoibhin met with the kids and taught them colours. The volunteers then got the kids up and dancing to the hokey pokey, rock the boat, reach for the stars, London's bridge and old McDonald. The Chaulgola community were treated to Lotus Child's version of Riverdance. Our own John Burke was a super Michael Flattley and the girls showed their Irish dancing talents much to the delight of our audience. The sports day got underway and the kids had marble and spoon races, three legged races and the grasshopper race. It was a fantastic sports day and the kids surrounded us with their smiling faces. It was now lunchtime and the mats were laid for the kids. They all sat in rows and waited excitedly for their lunch. The volunteers handed out plastic plates and went around with water for the kids to wash their hands. They then served the children their lunch which consisted of rice, dal, chicken curry and potatoes. After lunch, the volunteers, lead by Barry and Ray on guitars, sang for the kids who clapped along. The moment had arrived- the red ribbon was cut and the lotus child volunteers had achieved their goal, the Buds to Blossoms school is now open and 150 children will attend our school. We witnessed the kids enter their classroom for the first time which was incredible and we presented them with their school bag and games which we had bought for the school. Before we knew it, it was home time and leaving the site there were mixed emotions, the volunteers were absolutely thrilled with the school but it was emotional as we said goodbye to the community and the kids who had touched our hearts. Through hard work and determination the volunteers succeeded in providing the Chaulgola community with a school and resource centre. They



worked amazingly as a team and each and every volunteer gave it their all. We thank you, our volunteers and supporters for making this happen.



**Lotus Child  
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