



Life on the streets

The risk of promising a better way

We take a risk every time we show interest in the lives of people in need. Somehow the news is spreading that we want to help—especially where the next generation is in danger. And we believe that is right and good. But a lot of desperate people refuse to take ‘No’ for an answer. We cannot blame them. We believe God has given us a commission to care.

May is the month when schools in Pakistan take new admissions, add extra classes, open their doors to a flood of eager applicants. It is the month when new teachers have to be hired, new uniforms are required, children need new textbooks. We have taken a colossal risk in promising to contribute if we possibly can. We feel we have no other choice.



Raising our standards



Walking the dusty streets

There is nothing that so brings us in touch with raw reality as walking through the heart of a run-down slum or visiting a broken family in a simple home. Jesus was 'moved with compassion when he saw...'

In March and April when Kerstin and I visited Pakistan, we were accompanied by several friends who wanted to see, feel and meet the people and the places we have talked about so much in these newsletters—the people our Starfish Asia Fund is helping.

On this page we give some of their impressions. We are especially grateful for the professional insights of Steve Curran into the quality of education in SAF-supported schools. We will work to implement his recommendations.

And we are deeply grateful for Steve Tamburello's willingness to expand and promote Starfish Asia in the USA. This was his first visit to Pakistan and it surely changed his life.

Mike Wakely



Stephen Curran is the Director of Accelerated Education Tuition and Managing Director of Accelerated Education Publications Ltd in the UK. He has many years of teaching experience and is a writer of educational textbooks.

I had the great privilege of paying visits to many schools funded by Starfish Asia over my Easter break. It was both inspiring and humbling to see teachers and children working in the most difficult of conditions. Resources are stretched

Steve Curran was touched by the story of one boy who attends the Brick Kiln school. His name is Shan. He joined the school in February and in just two months his life has been transformed. This is his story.

Shan is 12 years old and lives in filthy conditions under little more than a tarpaulin in the Brick Kiln village. His family is deep in debt so they have no alternative but to make bricks. This is back-breaking and dangerous labour and Shan frequently finishes his work late in the evening. Shan's father is a drug addict and his mother is unwell. Shan also works from 5 a.m. for two hours each day washing and cleaning for a family just to earn a few more rupees.

Shan watched from a distance when the Miracle School opened in his village. He was desperate to attend but was too shy to take the initiative. One day Angela Michael

to the limit and class numbers are high, but amazing things are achieved with the children. All the children come from very poor homes, many are orphans and yet they smile continuously and do everything with great enthusiasm.

Much has been done to achieve a good working environment, and my suggestions focus on four areas:

- *Upgrading the décor in each classroom.*

- *Ensuring all children have good text and exercise books.*
- *Providing school furniture for every classroom*
- *Providing opportunities for teachers to have further training in classroom strategies.*

I visited ten projects and it is evident the work is continually growing. I hope to return to Pakistan soon to conduct more surveys of the work of Starfish Asia and help further improve educational standards.

"Every child should have a book!"

The children who work on the brick kilns are among the poorest of the poor. The Miracle Ministries school in this community outside Lahore only opened in January. The 150 children still do not all have desks—but now they all have books!



Shan the story of a boy



out a hand to pat his head the tears rolled down his cheeks. He was desperate to go to school and find some hope for the future.

I met Shan at the school. I could see in his eyes how moved he was when Angela called him forward to shake my hand. I too was deeply moved to see how much it meant to this child to be given a chance to receive an education.

Shan is still very quiet and reserved, but for the first time in his life he is beginning to play with other children. He is one little boy for whom a whole new world has opened up.

from the Miracle School staff approached and asked if he would like to attend. Shan was speechless, unable to respond. As Angela reached



Life at the Brick Kilns is full of danger. These two children were playing close to the kiln, where their parents work. A spark from the furnace flew into the boy's eye—he will recover. The little girl's face was badly burned by flames from the kiln and she will be permanently disfigured. Both now attend the Brick Kiln school.



Steve Tamburello Starfish Asia (USA)

God is radically changing my life. A friend introduced me to Mike Wakely and asked if I would pray about helping the work of Starfish Asia.

Mike invited me to come see for myself the work in Pakistan. God moved my heart in a significant way. He opened my eyes to see how little hope there is in the faces of so many people, especially the children. This is comprehensive poverty—academic, spiritual, moral, economic, medical... it seems endless... I was overwhelmed.

God can provide hope and life through our help. God has moved me to develop Starfish Asia USA. Like Mike, I will take no compensation for this work. God has led me to pray for the people of Pakistan, and to give my time and my money.

Would you pray too? Ask God how you can support His mighty work in Pakistan. You can make a difference too, one life at a time.

The world of children with special needs

There is little or no provision in Pakistan for children with learning difficulties or other handicaps. Polio has not been eradicated in Pakistan and many face a life of hardship and prejudice due to physical or mental challenges. Society often treats the disadvantaged with contempt or embarrassment. The Starfish Asia Fund is supporting several Pakistani Christians who are going the extra mile to bring dignity and hope to children with special needs.

▶ Thirty children come every day to the 'School for Special Children' run by Arshad and Nighat in Sharaqpur, a small town to the west of Lahore. For the children's parents it is an oasis of hope in face of a bleak struggle to know how to bring up a child who is 'different' yet 'special'. The School welcomes Muslims and Christians and is supported by the Starfish Asia Fund.

▶ The Starfish Asia Fund has supported Pastor Iqbal's CGA School for Special Children in Lahore for several years. Twelve children stay in the home. Naveed from the Home has qualified in tailoring and has opened his own shop.

▶ Prof. Kaleem Dean teaches Urdu in a Christian College in Lahore. He and his family have recently opened the

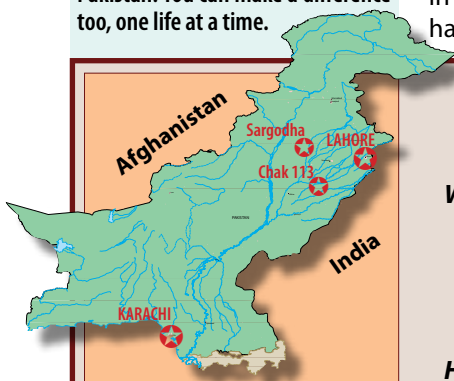


Mercy Mission for Physically Challenged People in Lahore. The day school provides help for 15 children with special needs. Starfish Asia provided money for wheelchairs and a contribution towards running costs.

Ananias Home for Blind Girls. Mrs. Khalida Nelson is mother and protector of the 20 girls in the Home.



▶ The Starfish Asia Fund continues to provide 90% of the running costs of the



PAKISTAN

160 million people of whom 97% are Muslim. Approximately 3 million Christians enjoy freedom under the law, though as a minority they often face discrimination.

Official literacy: 52%
Primary school enrolment
Boys: 50%
Girls: 40%
Christians: even lower
Below poverty line: 24%

Why & How?

Why does Starfish Asia only work in Pakistan?

- Christians in Pakistan are a minority community, often under pressure, marginalised and suffering from prejudice and discrimination.
- Due to our experience and background we know Pakistan well and have a network of reliable people through whom we can channel help.

How does Starfish Asia choose whom to help?

We always provide our help through national Christians. We do not initiate, oversee or control projects, but provide resources to reliable and godly Pakistanis who are already engaged in service to the poor in their community. Our focus is therefore as much on the people we work with as the projects we support.

Why do you only help Christians?

Our main aim is to help Pakistani Christians to gain dignity, education and hope for their future, because they are an oft-neglected community. However, we do not restrict our help to Christians—several projects that we support also provide help to the poor from other communities.

How much money do you deduct to cover administration and fund-raising?

We are a small charity and have low overheads. We pay no rents or administration salaries and almost no travel expenses. Our main overhead costs are in communication and publicity—in the 2005-6 financial year less than 7%.

Our growing family



Professor and Mrs Kaleem Dean lead a ministry known as the Community Advance Programme (CAP) that runs several projects to help the poor in the Youhannabad area of Lahore.

They run a High School with more than 300 students. The Starfish Asia Fund gives a partial grant for the Primary section that was launched in February 2006. We also give some support to the 'Mercy Mission' for Special Children (mentioned on the previous page) also run by CAP.

The School atmosphere is cheerful, the building brightly painted and very well organised, but resources are stretched to the limit. Classes



We are not able to stand still. We know we need to consolidate, to improve the standards of our partners' current projects, to make sure that what we are doing we do well. And still the requests come to us for help. Here is a glance at some recent additions to our family.

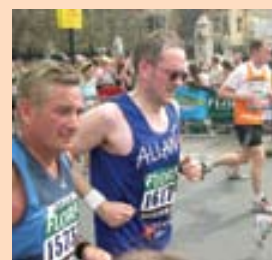
are crowded into small spaces divided by curtains. Many children are still sitting on the floor (*see pictures below*). One class meets in the courtyard—very difficult in the hot weather. The rented building is far too small.

The Starfish Asia Fund is committed to Kaleem and his vision and hopes to help more. As is so often the case, a fine work is being done with very limited resources.



For several years the Starfish Asia Fund has paid for about 50 children to attend Mr Ghauri's school in Youhannabad.

The school however was very small and ill-equipped. In order to improve the standard of education, we have helped Mr. Ghauri to rent a larger building and to provide furniture and school books for the children. 150 children now receive free education at the Ghauri Wisdom High School.



London Marathon success!

Allan Grant enters the final stretch of his 26.2 mile marathon race across London on April 22. Congratulations, Allan! He raised about £2,500 in sponsorships for Starfish Asia. Many thanks to all who supported him.



Saving Starfish
a 15-minute introduction to the world of the Starfish Asia Fund
Please send for a free copy



Starfish Asia Fund is a member of the Fundraising Standards Board

*We know we cannot help everyone, but we have got to help some!
A little goes a long way to turn despair into hope.
Will you help us to make that difference?*

PLEASE CONTACT US!

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- Please send me the free 15-minute DVD - *Saving Starfish*
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or email: mike@starfishasia.com

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As I walked on the beach one morning, I saw a young man picking up starfish from the sand and flinging them back into the sea. "If I don't save them, they will die in the noonday sun," he said.

"But there are thousands of starfish on this beach. What difference does it make to save just a few?"

He looked down at the starfish in his hand and flung it to safety in the waves. "It makes a big difference to this one."

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