



1200 PAIRS OF SHOES!

What can you buy someone who has everything for Christmas? A question I am often asked.

My answer? Give a present that will help someone in need to make their life better.

I have an idea for you to think about! The 1,200 children from the slums of Secunderabad, India who attend the Sri Sai Vidyarthi High School, come from poverty-stricken families. School uniforms, which cost £6, are essential and worn by all children as it gives them an identity. Many struggle to afford this. If families are unable to pay, help maybe given by school or sponsors. For them, shoes are a luxury, not a necessity and as a result some children were walking about either flip flops or worn out handed down shoes. The Principal, Dr Prasad, was very concerned about the health of children's feet and having seen the issue at first hand I offered to help.

What could be a better present for a child than a new pair of well-fitting school shoes? An appeal went out to Rotary clubs, friends and family asking if they would pay for shoes which cost on average just £2.50 a pair and once again their generosity was overwhelming. I hoped to be able to help some but did not expect to be able to provide new shoes for the whole school.

In December 2022 I was able to send funds to pay the supplier for 1,200 pairs of black school shoes in various sizes. I stayed in the school for two weeks earlier this year and was proud to be able to give some of the children new shoes. Those who have shoes will have theirs replaced when needed. It's wonderful to see the students walking round the school in comfort with smiles on their faces.

When the new school year begins no child will have to be barefoot or wearing old handed down shoes which are either too big or too small. These photographs show how much it means to them and I thank you all sincerely on their behalf for your support.

Val Leivers 26 March 2023

