

50,000 Ways to Change the World in India

by Bruce Braun

*"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember;
involve me and I'll understand."*

This ancient Chinese proverb reflects the idea behind the Michigan District's annual "Hearts For Jesus" drive, which emphasizes the impact children in Lutheran Schools and congregations can have to help improve the lives of children around the globe. Since its inception over 30 years ago, more than \$1 million has been distributed to improve the lives of children by sharing the Gospel message and improving their lives through educational opportunities, health care, and sharing of hope. Our goal this year is to raise \$50,000 to change the world for children in India.

This year, Early Childhood Centers, Sunday schools, VBS', and congregations are invited to join the 11,000 students in our 87 Lutheran elementary schools who will raise funds to support Bethania for Kids, which was founded in Ann Arbor but is used daily by God to bring the message of hope found in Jesus Christ to children in India. Bethania began in 1987 when a small group of Christians in India and the U.S. were moved with compassion to reach out with God's love to a few destitute children. God has blessed this ministry from those humble beginnings to now include:

- *Seven orphanages serving more than 300 children in four cities;
- *Nine Bethania Kids Centers serving 600 children in eight locations;
- *Two Centers for Children with Disabilities serving 60 children;
- *One Adult Home for Men with Disabilities serving seven men;
- *One Pottery Business, which has produced over 200,000 pieces of fine pottery to support the mission; and
- *100 staff currently serving in India.



The Bethania Board members are spread out across the

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nation, many of which are in Michigan. They have developed a packet of materials to help children understand the goal of Bethania with the idea of involving schools and families in the Bethania Mission, which is: "Bethania is a Christian mission bringing wholeness and hope to poor, abandoned and disabled children, equipping them to share God's love."

David Granner, based in Ann Arbor, shared a powerful DVD with schools and a personal testimony with principals about the impact our gifts can make on changing lives of children in India. David has walked the dusty streets, smelled odors not found in our country, and witnessed the power the Gospel message has on introducing lost children to their Savior.

During the month of February, Lutheran elementary schools across the state will be collecting funds for this ministry. You are invited to join us by praying for this year's effort. You are also invited to support your Lutheran School in collecting offerings (of which 100 percent go to the ministry because Board members cover all administrative expenses), or to contact the School Ministry Department at 888.225.2111 and request a packet for your Sunday school, VBS, or small group Bible Study. The packet includes powerful DVDs that describe the challenges of ministry in India but also illustrate the hope spread by Bethania for Kids. If you would like more information, visit www.bethaniakids.org.

Mother Teresa said, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love." You are invited to join Lutheran children in sharing Christ's love through the 2009 Hearts for Jesus Offering.