

TSN News

Newsletter of the Tsunami Support Network

Co-ordinated by



Volume 1, Issue 3

July 2005

Welcome to TSN News

Welcome to the third newsletter of the Tsunami Support Network. This has been set up to help provide opportunities for support for people in the UK affected by the South East Asian Earthquake and Tsunami.

As well as our website (<http://www.tsunamisupportnetwork.org.uk>) and ongoing telephone support (0845 054 7474), we hope this newsletter will enable readers to obtain and contribute information, share common experiences and benefit from mutual support. Do contact us if you wish to know more.

About the TSN

The Tsunami Support Network is being coordinated by the British Red Cross which is working closely with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) & the Dept for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). The DCMS is coordinating aftercare for those affected by the Tsunami.

How to Join the Network

If you wish to receive further newsletters or other general information from us you can register either on our website or call us on the support line number (0845 054 7474). Please pass on our contact details to anyone who you feel might benefit from our activities.

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Second Tsunami Support Group Meeting

A second full meeting of the Support Group is planned for Saturday September 17th; invitations are being issued. This will provide a further opportunity for people directly affected by the Disaster to meet each other. A number of people who were unable to accept our invitation in May have expressed an interest in attending this. There will also be an opportunity to discuss the Support Group committee as well as meet members of the National Audit Office Review Team (see page 5 for more details). More information will also be available about the autumn programme of events we are organising.

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WWW.TSUNAMISUPPORTNETWORK.ORG.UK
EMAIL: TSUNAMISUPPORTNETWORK@REDCROSS.ORG.UK
SUPPORT NETWORK ANSWER SERVICE 0845 054 7474

Support Group Committee

A number of people have expressed an interest in being on the main Support Group committee which we are helping to set up. At the moment the Network helps to organise and arrange activities of the Support Group. Eventually our aim at the Network is to hand over the administration and decision-making activities of the Support Group to its own committee. There are examples of how such groups and committee have been structured following past disasters, but each one tends to differ and we are keen that everyone affected by the tsunami should have a say in how the Tsunami Support Group committee should be set up and run.

In order to start this process, we would like to help identify those individuals who may be interested in being part of a committee and circulate their details to all on the Network. At the meeting on September 17 we will invite discussions about taking this forward and forming an official committee.

The sorts of roles and skills that would be helpful to have on the committee include: coordinating meetings/events, taking minutes at meetings, administering contact lists, dealing with the media/spokeperson, managing funds/treasurer, chairperson (some groups rotate this role) and other general organisational skills.

If you think you might be interested in offering your skills and energies, we would be grateful if you could send a short paragraph with your name, how/where you were affected by the tsunami and suggestions of what you can offer the committee.

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This should be sent to:

tsunamisupportnetwork@redcross.org.uk.

Postal address: Tsunami Support Network,
Dept of E R & R, British Red Cross
44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL.

For more details on what being on a committee might involve you may find it helpful to look at the information on 'Setting up Family Support Groups' produced by Disaster Action. Please go to:

http://www.disasteraction.org.uk/support/da_guid_e07.htm.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss informally what being on the committee might involve Disaster Action can be contacted on 01483 799 066 or you can call us here at the Network on 0845 054 7474.

Local Support Groups

A number of local support groups are starting up throughout the UK. So far there have been group meetings in London (one for survivors and one for those bereaved), and other meetings are planned in the South West/Wales, Surrey/Hants/Berkshire, The North/Scotland, & East Midlands. Please contact us if you wish to be involved in a local group.

Winston's Wish Discussion Forum

Winston's Wish, an organisation for grieving children and families, has set up a discussion forum for children who have lost someone in a disaster.

To access this forum, please go to www.winstonswish.org.uk and click on 'young people' and then 'talk'. Although it is experiencing slight problems at the moment, the forum should be fully up and running in the next few weeks.

Planning for the First Anniversary

The Government is anxious to support those affected by the tsunami whatever they wish to do to mark this important event. They have asked for your views on whether/when there should be a formal service and/or whether people will wish to mark this privately. Please let us have your views so that we may feed this back into the planning discussions. You can either call us (Tel: 0845 054 7474) or write to us at: www.tsunamisupportnetwork.org.uk.

Our postal address: Tsunami Support Network
Dept of E R & R, British Red Cross Society,
44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL.

Autumn Events

We are planning a programme of events for the autumn to enable people to hear talks and discuss particular issues of concern arising from the tsunami. Suggested topics include: Coping with the Disaster; Supporting bereaved children/issues for parents and Reconstruction in the affected areas/volunteering.

These meetings will also provide further opportunities for people to meet socially. Please let us know if you have other suggestions for topics/speakers. We will keep in touch as the programme develops.

Wristbands

A number of you have expressed an interest in the Tsunami wristbands. After a slight delay, the wristbands will now be available in the next four weeks.

The British Red Cross is funding the wristbands which are available free to those on the Network. A maximum order of 5 is allowed per person. Please let us know how many you require by phone on 0845 054 7474 or email at orzepczynska@redcross.org.uk

Candle Project Groupday for Children

The Candle Project based at St Christopher's Hospice in London is offering a groupday for parents and children on Saturday October 15.

St Christopher's Hospice has been caring for the bereaved relatives of patients for nearly 40 years. The St Christopher's Candle project extends that care to all children and families bereaved by death, not just those families of patients, and has been running groupdays for bereaved children young people and families since 1998. They have a team of professionally trained staff and volunteers with a lot of experience, as they have run over 20 group events each year. Most of the families they work with have been bereaved by a sudden and unexpected death, such as an accident or sudden illness.

These groups would be specifically for people bereaved in the tsunami. The day will involve times for parents and carers and children to be separate, with young people doing activities in different groups according to age, and times to be together as a family. Many children and young people have commented after such events that the most helpful bit is being with others and realising that there are others in the same position as them. Parents and carers have also welcomed the opportunity to have some time for themselves, and to talk about the issues for their children with others who can understand and help. The aims of the day are:

- To give young people and families the chance to meet others in the same situation as themselves. Grief can be a very isolating experience.
- To help young people learn some new ways to express their feelings, and to give them and their parents or carers a chance to do so.

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- To provide families an opportunity to share and talk about memories of the people who died

To register your interest in attending this groupday please contact us at the Network giving the names (and ages for children) of those attending. For more information or other general queries about the day itself please contact any of the staff of the Candle Project as soon as possible through the main number of St Christopher's Hospice on 0208 768 4500 or via email on www.stchristophers.org.uk

The project leader is Frances Kraus; other members of the team are Patsy Way and Isobel Bremner.

Children's Social Meeting

Denise Magson and Jackie Weston have suggested a social meeting for the children/young adults who lost a parent in the tsunami. They are keen to give the young people and opportunity to meet socially and so that they might keep in touch with each other should they so wish.

The suggestion is that they will arrange a meal in London at the Rainforest Cafe - 20-24 Shaftesbury Ave, London (www.therainforestcafe.co.uk) in the autumn.

If you are interested please let us know at the Network and we will pass on your names/contact details to Denise & Jackie.

Tsunami Tree Website

Tinge Krishnan, writes about the 'Tsunami Tree' website she has started:-

www.tsunamitree.com is a new website for survivors and volunteers, providing expression, support and co-ordination. It has a 'volunteers re-united' and 'survivors re-united' section so that people who worked together, helped or were helped or simply shared experiences from the tsunami can find each other. The plan is to create a similar engine to 'friends re-united'.

We are in contact with trauma counsellors and earthquake experts who are available to answer questions. The site also intends to provide some advocacy for needs of survivors etc. What do people out there want from our website? Please contact us so we can help address your needs.

We need volunteers who can translate Thai, Tamil, Singhalese, Bahasa so that the site can have a truly multi-lingual forum. We also need IT people on an ongoing basis to provide technical support and assist with expansion. If you are interested please let us know.

We are aiming also to produce a 'rough guide' to on-the-ground NGOs. This will help people identify who they can send direct aid to and will also identify reputable NGOs for people who want to volunteer. I'm sure you are all aware of the reports on the internet about volunteer scams!

If you are involved with any tsunami related projects please contact us at the site so you can be included. Also let us know of any needs and issues arising for you wherever you are so we can get some help. We at 'tsunami tree' would also like to acknowledge the work of the Red Cross website and the tsunamistories website. Good stuff.

Let's share knowledge, experience and skills... the resources exist!

National Audit Office Review

**Tell us what you think -
Government Departments are keen to learn
lessons from survivors**

The National Audit Office (NAO), an independent public sector watchdog responsible for reviewing the work of all Government departments and agencies, writes:

We make sure that not only do we provide value for money, but our strategies and work practices are refined and developed by learning from experience. We are about to begin a review of the services provided to the families and survivors affected by the Asian tsunami. The Zito Trust, a highly respected organisation with great experience in dealing with victims of sudden or violent death, will work with us to undertake the review.

Since Boxing Day 2004, many of you will have had contact with numerous Government departments and agencies – the Foreign Office, the Red Cross, the Department of Culture Media and Sport, Health Service and many others. What was the contact like? What could be done better if another large scale tragedy should strike? This is not just a paper exercise and your experiences will help the departments and agencies learn valuable lessons for the future.

The work will be based on an initial approach by letter to all UK bereaved families asking them if they would like to share their experiences with us. We will also contact a sample of survivors and others affected by the tsunami. If you would like to take part in this review, or would like more information about it from the NAO or The Zito Trust, our contact details are at the end of the article, or you can reach us through the Network.

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For more information please contact:
Claire Fisher, National Audit Office, 020 7798
7681 claire.fisher@nao.gsi.gov.uk

Michael Howlett, The Zito Trust, 01497 820011
zitotrust@btinternet.com

Contributing to TSN News

Some people find it helpful to write about their experiences and feelings. If you might be interested in writing articles, stories, poems or letters for this newsletter, please write to us. We are happy to receive anything up to 500 words and will discuss drafts with you.

Revisiting Khao Lak

Steve McQueenie, a survivor from Khao Lak, revisited Thailand in June he has written a moving account of his visit and is happy to share it with anyone interested in reading about it. If you are interested in reading 'Khao Lak revisited' let us know at the Network and we will send you a copy.

Origen Financial Services

Origen Financial Services are offering free advice for people with financial difficulties arising from the tsunami. They are experienced in giving assistance on family financial planning, debt advice and assistance in settling claims with insurance companies. Origen has already offered support to families affected by the tsunami and invites those with queries to get in touch.

They can be contacted on 020 7405 8535

Website: www.origenfs.co.uk

Guidance on Dealing with the Media

We have available a leaflet offering guidance on dealing with the media. This has been prepared by representatives from the DCMS - the Department of Media, Culture and Sport - and Tom Clarke, who acted as media representative for the September 11th Family Support Group in the UK.

Please contact the Tsunami Support Network if you would like a copy of this leaflet on

0845 054 7474 or email us at

tsunamisupportnetwork@redcross.org.uk

Talking to the Media

The media occasionally contacts us with requests for interviews with people affected by the tsunami. If you might be interested in this please contact us.