

TSN News

Newsletter of the Tsunami Support Network

Co-ordinated by



Volume 1, Issue 5

October 2005

Welcome to TSN News

Welcome to the fifth 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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Support Group Meetings

The second Tsunami Support Group meeting took place on September 17 in London. You can find the key points raised at the meeting on page 2 of this newsletter.

We are helping to arrange further local support group meetings and other events in the coming weeks and months. Currently there are groups in London, Surrey/Hants, the East Midlands and the South West/Wales. Please contact us if you wish to join a group in your area.

A group has previously met in the North. If you are interested in another meeting there, please contact us, or send us your contact details so we can put you in touch with others from the region.

- TSN -

WWW.TSUNAMISUPPORTNETWORK.ORG.UK
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SUPPORT NETWORK ANSWER SERVICE 0845 054 7474

Second Tsunami Support Group Meeting London September 17 2005

Nearly 100 people attended the second Tsunami Support Group meeting in London on 17 September. An opportunity for informal discussions during the morning was followed by announcements by the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS), National Audit Office (NAO), British Red Cross (TSN) & the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)

NAO Review

Claire Fisher of the NAO spoke about their audit of the FCO which began in 2004. Following the tsunami, it was agreed that the NAO should seek the views of individuals affected to obtain their feedback on the support provided. The NAO have asked the Zito Trust to undertake this 'users' review at the start of 2006 and they are keen to hear from as many people affected by the tsunami as possible. You can contact the review team through the Network or direct:
Claire Fisher: Tel: 0207 798 7681
Email: claire.fisher@nao.gsi.gov.uk

Jayne Zito introduced Dr Vivian Norris who will undertake the research for the Trust. Dr Norris stated that the research will be confidential (no requirement to provide contact details), voluntary and will follow agreed ethical standards. Vivian also explained that individuals could decide if they wanted a face-to-face meeting or would prefer to respond in some other way and that the questions would be broad to provide an opportunity for the bereaved and survivors to cover what they considered to be relevant. When asked for assurance that people will be listened to Claire stated that the NAO report is a public document and will go before a Parliamentary Select Committee where the Government Department must explain how it will implement the recommendations or why it will not implement them.

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Autumn Events

Anne Eyre of the TSN then referred to forthcoming autumn events organised by the Tsunami Support Network, namely the Candle Day & meetings in Nottingham (November) and London (December). She also referred to the development of the regional support groups and invited people to contact the Network if they wanted to form additional groups or be put in touch with others in their local area.

First Anniversary

Deirdre Wells of the DCMS spoke about anniversary plans. The DCMS are considering a London-based anniversary activity and are still keen to hear from you on how many people would want to attend an event in London and what they would want that event to be.

Mary Gilbert of the FCO explained that despite great effort, it had not yet been possible to get firm information from either the Sri Lankan or Thai Governments about their plans for first anniversary activities. It did appear likely that the Thai Government were going to organise an event in Khao Lak and open a memorial garden. The FCO have booked non-waterfront hotel rooms for people who wish to go to Thailand and have chartered buses and boats to support the necessary internal travel arrangements. Mary suggested that if bereaved and survivors wanted to go to these countries, they should make early bookings and, for those bereaved families using the FCO support package, they should identify their preferred flight arrangements and contact the FCO. For further details of the package contact Tracey Coleman or Ian Hester at the FCO Aftercare Unit on 0207 008 0665/0886.

Mary told the meeting that the Thai government have offered each survivor and two family

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members of deceased, flight, two nights accommodation and three days meals; but they have not provided more detailed information. The FCO website will provide further information when it is available; this information will also be passed to the Network.

Hardship Fund

Tony Thompson of the British Red Cross explained that there had been progress on developing the Hardship Fund but recent bombings in London and Egypt had identified inequities in the support that is provided and that the British Red Cross was working with the relevant Government Departments to address this. Tony stated that once there is a solution to this issue, contact will be made with the individuals who have approached the British Red Cross.

Future of the Network

After lunch Moya Wood-Heath and Anne Eyre of the Tsunami Support Network introduced discussions about the future of the Network and the establishment of a committee of TSN members. So far six people had expressed interest in being members of the committee; others were invited to volunteer (after the meeting another 8 people came forward so there are now 14 people interested). Committee members could have a range of skills including: organisational skills; talking to the media; accounting skills; or managing a database. Once people have confirmed their interest the next task will be to arrange a meeting to agree Terms of Reference etc

Pamela Dix of Disaster Action explained that, as a charity of bereaved people/survivors from disasters since 1990, their member had a lot of experience in setting-up and managing groups/committees. She offered support from Disaster Action in developing the committee and highlighted some key lessons learnt from previous support group committees:

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- It is important for the group(s) committee to have a clear sense of purpose, as the reason for being is very important for the future of the group
- She emphasised the need for clear lines of communication within the group/committee
- She pointed out that some groups have very formal structures whilst others are more loosely connected

Moya Wood-Heath summarised what had been agreed during the meeting:

- Members need to make their views clear, to Anne or Ola if they wish to join regional groups
- Members should contact Anne or Ola if they are interested in being part of the committee or have ideas for future events or the development of the website
- Anne will organise a meeting for those who wish to be members of the committee, to consider: membership; constitution; and how they communicate
- A summary of today's meeting will be included in the next newsletter.

Autumn Events

A talk on '**Psychological Responses to Traumatic Events**' is taking place in Nottingham on the 12th November.

Also a '**Reconstruction in the Areas affected by the Tsunami**' talk is being arranged on 10th December.

More details about these events can be found attached with the newsletter. If you are interested in attending either of these, please let us know by returning the reply slips to us by the given deadlines to: Ola Rzepczynska, British Red Cross, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL.

My Working Life: Alan Jones

I am a marketing consultant, health policy analyst and a journalist specialising in healthcare reform and its impact on the industry within which I spent some 20 years of my working life. Before that I was a college lecturer for ten years and now run workshops on the changing NHS. I suppose I am what the management guru Charles Handy would call a Portfolio Man. But how did I get to be here? Well life's a funny thing isn't it – you blink and you the child is now middle-aged. I still see some of my university friends and some have now retired. We had our children late so I have continued working. And in another blink they have grown up too. And life seems to be going along just dandy. We had two lovely daughters but now we only have one. And in one more blink, life is no longer just fine. Our eldest daughter left our lives on Boxing Day last year. Our beloved 23-year Charlotte, at the beginning of her journey through adulthood, died on the island of Ko Racha Yai in Thailand when the cataclysmic Tsunami waves struck early on the morning of the 26th December 2004. Her death has left us with broken lives and broken hearts. But her passing has brought something new to Portfolio man.

I would like to tell you a little of our lost love. Char's love of adventure and travel started early when at school she climbed Kilimanjaro. She bungi jumped and she and I learnt to scuba dive together. She had such a zest for life and was hungry for the world. She wanted a gap year and we had to let her go. Charlotte was doing what she loved most when she died. She was beautiful, vivacious, talented, highly intelligent, caring, brave and very special. A bright iridescent white light in our lives has now been extinguished. But we do feel blessed that she was with us, if only for such a brief while. She enriched our lives. She will be forever in our hearts.

As the first anniversary of the terrible disaster approaches, these remain sad days for us. We

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are still in shock and find life without Char so difficult. But in her memory we will prevail. We want people never to forget her. So we have created a special place for people to visit and think of Char at peace and to meditate in tranquility at a local Buddhist Monastery. Here we have planted a tree and created a small garden. Char's friends have already built a memorial statue to her on the island where she died.

We also want to 'build' a living tribute to our wonderful daughter. Char sponsored a girl in Rumania whilst at Bristol University and we have decided that it would be fitting to do the same for a young Thai girl and sponsor her education up to 18. So we have created a fund and have been very active of late in raising money for the fund. This has now become another part of my life. I ran one half marathon for the fund earlier this year and am about to run another. These are so special because Char ran these races with me in 2004, her first half marathons. **Char's Fund** will be the means by which we will build this lasting 'living' memorial to our daughter. The process will begin over Christmas 2005 when we will make a pilgrimage to where she died. Through 2006 we hope to have something in place and when we hope the fund will have reached some £20,000.

Char was also deeply loved by her very many friends from the various parts of her all too short a life. Some local friends recently organised a rock festival in her memory and which raised £1000. And this month, some of Char's University of Bristol friends organised a plaque to be mounted and unveiled on the outside of her last flat. The inscription says, 'One force of nature overcome by another'.

It is still difficult to try and understand what has happened to us. We miss Char so terribly. But

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we do know that many millions were affected by this particular catastrophe and would like to give something back to the affected area in Char's name. We will continue to raise money for the Fund. Portfolio Man will continue to be busy for some time yet to come.

Alan is running the Windsor Half Marathon on Sunday 25th September in Windsor Great Park – his favourite run. He has now retired from full Marathons having completed both London and Paris! He would be very pleased to accept any pledges for Char's Fund at:
alan.jones28@virgin.net

This article appeared in an abbreviated version in the *Health Service Journal* on the 8th September 2005.

The Art of CARE

The Art of CARE postcard auction took place on Friday 30th September at Ocean Terminal, Leith, Edinburgh.

The auction, in memory of Robin Needham, who worked for CARE International for 25 years was organised by Daisy Bell – Robin's niece, Marianna Chidley, Mary Ramsden, Cori Burnett and Tio Burnett, raised over £70,000 - an **astonishing** feat. Postcards from many celebrities and artists were up for auction. The biggest sellers were: a David Hockney postcard, which sold for over £7,000 and a Chapman Brothers postcard, which sold for £4,800!

Huge **congratulations** to all involved! The money raised will go to specific villages destroyed by the tsunami.

If you would like to know more about the auction go to: www.artofcare.co.uk

Fundraising Events

At the Tsunami Support Network we are keen to know about the fundraising events and memorial funds that many of you have set up with the raised money going towards the rebuilding of various disaster areas.

Please let us know if you would like us to include what you are doing for our future newsletters.

Fundraising for the Survivor Camp at Bang Niang, Khao Lak

Steve McQueenie and his partner Nicola were swept away when their bungalow was hit at Nang Thong beach in Khao Lak. They were separated, injured and helped up the mountain by local people many of whom had lost everything. They have just revisited the devastation that is Khao Lak and spent time in the survivor camp at Bang Niang.

The people there need our help just as Steve and Nicola needed theirs 6 months ago. On the 13th of October 2005 the couple are climbing the third highest active volcano in the world "El Teide" to raise funds that will go directly to the survivors of the Tsunami who had no choice but to stay behind and attempt to rebuild their lives.

Steve and Nicola will return to Khao Lak again later in the year to assist as best they can. If anyone wishes to sponsor their climb or can offer any help then please contact them at: smcq1968@yahoo.co.uk as every single pound raised will make a difference.

If you are interested in reading 'Khao Lak Revisited', Steve's account from his visit in June, do let us know at the Network and we will send you a copy.

Koh Phi Phi August 2005

Mr & Mrs Gray went to Phi Phi in August to help with the clear up operation and have sent us the following report:

We first visited Phi Phi four years ago, although our son had been back a couple of times in the interim and knew that there had been a fair amount of development since then.

Arriving at Phi Phi in August 2005 the first impression from the boat was that it looked *ok*, if somewhat lacking in vegetation. However, once we left the boat we soon began to realise the extent of the devastation. There was no trace of either of the bungalow resorts we had stayed in on our first visit, nor of the Jungle Bar, which had been our regular "sundowner" bar. The distance between the two bays seemed *much* smaller as there are hardly any trees left. The middle section of each beach is clean, but each end is awash with debris, which is added to each time the tide comes in. Volunteers collect and bag up debris, but these bags then pile up, waiting to be taken away by boat- although there is no money to pay for such boats.

Clothing, shoes, DVDs, wallets, toiletries, china, pieces of buildings and trees etc are all still being washed up or recovered from the sea bed by volunteer divers and snorkellers who go out each day. Progress is slow due to the lack of funds- it was reported that most of the aid money has been spent on Phuket, with very little being allocated to Phi Phi. Tools are basic and in short supply. There is a noticeable shortage of people – both locals and visitors. Many shops are operating, but there are also many closed- one can only assume that their owners did not survive. Even the hospital has not yet been totally rebuilt, although it is open for business-without windows in some of the wards. Several cats are around, but we only saw 2 dogs while we were there. Towards the end of each bay there was

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less total destruction and bars are running normally again.

We stayed in the Phi Phi Cabana Hotel where only the second floor is useable, and even that showed signs of the looters who came from the mainland soon after the tsunami. Rebuilding is progressing on the island but cannot be done without tools and materials. The people are still smiling and still welcoming. Phi Phi needs visitors-to spend money and to assist with the clearance operation.

Karon Gray

Khao Lak

At the last support group meeting, some of those who were bereaved and/or survivors from the disaster in Khao Lak made contact to talk about their experiences. If anyone would like to be in touch with others connected with Khao Lak, please let us know and we will share your contact details.

Email us at:

tsunamisupportnetwork@redcross.org.uk

Reconstruction Issues

Ten months on from the Boxing Day tsunami, the British Red Cross is focusing on helping people rebuild their homes and livelihoods. We are working with local communities to assess their needs, and plan to spend at least £60 million in the region over the next three years.

As well as helping local people rebuild their homes, we will give financial support to fishermen, farmers and traders to help restart their businesses, which is key to the region's recovery. To help prepare communities for the future, we are looking at ways to help them prevent loss of life and livelihood should another natural disaster occur.

Reconstruction Issues: Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's fishing industry was ripped apart by the tsunami which destroyed thousands of boats and with them people's livelihoods. The main focus to date has been on repairing and replacing the smaller boats of poorer, individual fishermen.

However, having examined the plight of the fishing community, the British Red Cross is reaching out to a broader number of people in an innovative programme. K. Parameswaran is one boat owner who will benefit directly from the scheme.

"I came back because I had to, because I am so poor. Fishing is my job and I have no other work to do," he said, resting on the stretch of beach that is his fishing ground, just north of Batticaloa, on the east coast of Sri Lanka.

The fishing industry is one of the largest employers in Batticaloa, but last year's tsunami affected almost all of the district's coastline and destroyed or seriously damaged 2,000 boats.

The larger beach seine boats and their associated 'pardu' (a government assigned fishing area) have traditionally been owned by relatively better-off men, yet many more lives are dependent upon them. A beach seine boat can offer regular work to as many as 30 people, whereas a smaller craft will employ a maximum of five people.

Now, the British Red Cross, together with other Red Cross societies and Oxfam, is working to tackle the issue of replacing these larger boats so that not only the needs of K. Parameswaran, but also those of the workers and their families that depend on his boat, can be met.

More than one hundred 'beach seine' boats in Batticaloa were lost or damaged, leaving a similar number of crews with an uncertain future. The British Red Cross and its partner agencies

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are talking to K. Parameswaran and other owners in the district to agree how profits from replacement boats and kit can be shared more equally with the workers.

Already the owners have identified a variety of ways to make the industry fairer for all. Suggestions include the owners paying back the entire cost of the boat and equipment, about £4,500 including safety equipment, not to the Red Cross, but to the workers over the course of five years. Other owners prefer to change the profit-sharing from the usual fifty-fifty split to forty percent, for the owner, sixty per cent for the workers, or even a more generous twenty-five seventy-five split.

At just 24, K. Parameswaran had worked hard to own his own boat and felt confident he could support his wife and their two young sons. Having learnt fishing at the age of nine from his father, he had his own sea canoe. He saved money for a few years and borrowed the rest until he was eventually able to buy his own beach seine boat. For the last five years, his boat helped his workers and their families try to make ends meet. This lifeline was taken away from them on 26 December last year. K. Parameswaran remembers being on the beach when the tsunami struck.

"I was preparing the nets, calling the workers and getting ready to go," he said. "The current seemed quite fast so we hesitated, then suddenly the water rose and we saw a tidal wave coming. We dropped everything and ran."

For four months, K. Parameswaran and his crew did not go back out to sea. There were radio warnings of another tsunami. There was also the risk of further damaging their already compromised equipment. The beach had been cleared but not the sea - logs and other debris

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still threatened to rip through nets.

With no other source of income to turn to, by May they had repaired the boat, mended the remaining nets and started fishing once again. With few other options of earning a living, most of the crew has returned to work the same boat.

Hopes rest on new equipment and a good season ahead to help K. Parameswaran, his men and their families recover the losses of the tsunami. The first five pilot boats for those who lost everything will hopefully be working by the time the season starts in September.

The next step for the British Red Cross will be to find ways to make the lives of Batticaloa's fishermen and their families more sustainable. The long-term aim is to assist communities to develop opportunities for people to find different ways of earning a living, so the young have other options open to them and the elderly can live the more comfortable life they deserve.

Cape Pakarang Boatyard - Getting Thai Fishermen Fishing Again

The Cape Pakarang Boatyard is dedicated to building fishing boats in the Tsunami stricken area of Khao Lak. Staffed mainly by local Thai's the Boatyard works with the fishermen to give them back livelihoods that were lost on December 26th.

You can make a difference by making a donation. You can even fund a whole boat and have a name or logo painted onto it - raising money for a boat is a great project for companies and schools as well as private individuals.

Please contact Tio Burnett Ainsworth at tiddlesburnett@yahoo.com or Cori Burnett at coriburnett@hotmail.com for more information.

Sri Lanka: Cash for Work Scheme

Babynona has benefited from a British Red Cross cash for work scheme, which has helped her restart her business. The scheme in Matara, southern Sri Lanka paid Babynona and others to clear debris from the village and the seashore.

In Matara, many women like Babynona work on the seashore making coconut husks into rope, mats and other products. The tsunami swept away the coastland and machinery for this important local industry.

Since the tsunami, Babynona, 60, has been living in her daughter's house. It's a tight squeeze with 13 other family members also living there.

The tsunami flattened Babynona's house and she lost most of her things, including her rope-making equipment and her son's fishing boat and kit. Babynona worked on the cash for work scheme clearing debris from the shore. "On the first day, I felt tired but on the second I started to enjoy the work and we all had fun!" she said.

Babynona has used her wages from the scheme to restart her rope-making. She said: "Words are not enough to explain the good that has come from this project. I felt really down at heart before and life had come to a standstill but with the money I've earned, I can resume my life."

The joint British Red Cross/Sri Lanka Red Cross cash for work programme targets vulnerable families affected by the tsunami in Matara, southern Sri Lanka.

In return for daily wages of 400 rupees per five-hour day (approximately £2 – this is in line with average wages in Sri Lanka), local people have been carrying out vital tasks to pave the way for reconstruction and recovery.

Clean Up The World Campaign

'80% of the polluting waste that washes up on our beaches, poisons our water and kills marine life comes from the land. Half the worlds population live near the sea but keeping our sea and oceans clean, our drinking water drinkable and our environment beautiful is a responsibility we all share'
Ian Kieran AO Chairman, Clean Up the World.

With this comment in mind Kamala beach is a safer, cleaner place to visit, following the 6th annual beach cleanup campaign organized by students from British Curriculum International school (BCIS), which took place on Saturday 17th September.

Clean up the World is a community-based environmental project aimed at making the world a cleaner, healthier place to live in. This year it involved around 40 million people in 120 countries. The BCIS students organized Phuket's cleanup project as part of their Community Action Service (CAS) programme. They focused their campaign on Kamala Beach this year as it has been neglected in the post Tsunami clean up and it was effecting the local environment. The clean-up started at 10am and lasted around 2 hours.

The 300 students and staff from BCIS were joined by over 150 local people from Phuket, including local Orbajor workers. The British Embassy, dive crews and staff from Phuket Fantasea joined the cleanup right along the beach. Kamala has over 5km of beach and it was great to see local people, hotel staff and students from BCIS making a difference together.

Another student who helped clean up on the beach said, " the atmosphere on the beach was great there were people young and old, helping out. The weather was a nightmare and we were soaked as it was one of the worst storms of the year and the tide was really high."

In total, they collected over 300 large black bin bags full of rubbish. These along with other

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debris weighed in at a hefty 40 tons and filled 3 rubbish trucks. Lights, concrete, metal, Plastic umbrellas, chairs, tyres, car parts, strip lights, fishing nets, old sun beds, shoes, glass, and string are just some of the objects found during the cleanup event, which was part of the worldwide Clean Up The World Campaign.

This event has made local people aware of the rubbish and this clean up has helped the local community take care of their own environment. There is still a lot to do in Kamala but BCIS hopes that the event has made people realise we are still going to have to work together for a long time to recover Phuket's beaches to their former glory.

Claire Lester, the CAS coordinator and a teacher at BCIS, was delighted the event had once again been a huge success. "On behalf of the CAS students here at BCIS, I would like to thank everyone who helped on the day by picking up rubbish, our sponsors Phuket Fantasea and the Orbajor who provided bin bags and collected the rubbish in the trucks. CAS students will continue to clean up the beaches in Phuket and continue to make the community aware of the hazards of not disposing of litter properly. Lets hope that we can work together as a community to keep Phuket clean."

Many thanks to Claire Lester for sharing this article with us from the British International School Phuket website. To see this article and more articles/photos on activities please go to: <http://www.bcis.ac.th/>

The Sustainable Trust

Return to Sri Lanka- December 2005

We are now fundraising for a small project near Hikkaduwa, in South West Sri Lanka, where two of us narrowly escaped the Boxing Day Tsunami.

We are aiming for £4,000 to provide new coir processing machinery and a small factory to employ 70 people, suffering from extreme poverty, lack of education the destruction of their homes last year.

In accordance with our ideals of sustainable development, this is a natural product, which goes to waste if not used. We will oversee the project ourselves, at our own expense in the 3 months we are there.

A local community leader in Colombo, Executive Director of the Centre for Environment & Development is prepared to donate \$1,000 to a co-operative venture, and can provide the required expertise and training. He suggests rolling the project out to other local communities in the future.

Coir is used for cultivation, construction, packaging, sanitation systems, water purification and irrigation. We are also interested in the construction aspect. Boards and poles have been made from the green husks, and if produced commercially, could have a positive impact on global deforestation.

Contact us for more details.

Pip Richards 01209 831 718

www.sustrust.co.uk

<http://www.sustrust.co.uk>

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BBC Radio 4 – The Choice

BBC Radio 4's award winning series *The Choice* is looking for a Tsunami account to mark the first anniversary.

Now in its 8th series, *The Choice* is presented by journalist Michael Buerk. The interviews focus on a difficult choice someone has had to make in their lives. If you have a Tsunami account to tell that involves a choice and you would not mind talking about it on Radio 4, please contact:

Kathryn Blennerhassett
kathryn.blennerhassett@bbc.co.uk
Tel:0161 244 3565

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.