

# For a picture perfect world

By Malati Kallapur  
Times News Network

JUST as terror strikes the global psyche with frightening regularity, a group of enthusiastic optimists at Children's Love Castles Trust are working on ideas to promote peace and prevent war in fundamental ways. This they plan to achieve by opening new vistas for communication among children across the world and creating mutual understanding and empathy.

Bhagya Rangachar, who founded the trust five years ago, spent three decades in the US as a software professional before returning to her home town and dedicating herself to help underprivileged children build their future. The trust aims at providing these children with incentives like mid-day meals and scholarships that would prompt them to study and learn. The trust has adopted five schools around Bangalore and has built an after-school learning centre near Jakkur. They also conduct summer camps and workshops on health and hygiene.

Their new programme is ambitious. It strives to connect Indian school children with their peers in other countries, thereby laying the foundation for a lasting relationship between them. They plan to provide children with a simple tool like a camera and let them come up with picture stories which will be exchanged among them, and let them become pen pals through email, thus establishing a common ground.

"This helps in developing picture peace friendships and experiences to provide a global interconnected perspective in the minds of the participants. Children who have got connected like this will grow up to be understanding and empathetic and

are less likely to wage war," says Bhagya.

"We let children use their imagination, vision, their way of seeing things, and come up with their own stories," says volunteer

Muthunathan, who works as a copy writer with a software company.

The trust runs with the help of volunteers with only essential employees, thus cutting down on overhead costs. "It's a lot of fun, and by watching us work with children, the community also comes

required to sustain their programmes come mainly from corporate or individual support. "It takes Rs 120 to feed a child nutritiously balanced food per month. So anybody can come forward to bear the cost. We have a

kitchen, which dishes up mid-day meal for children," Bhagya explains.

Organisations like Talisma, Cisco, Siemen's, Schoolnet, Derek D'Souja of Dotcom Software, Nirmal George of Comptel, J Amaran of Prism Software, Himatsingka Sayde,

## Good Cause

The people behind CLT



forward to take part," says another volunteer, Neha Contractor, a theatre person.

They already have experience in putting together children from different economic strata in Bangalore. "For all our summer camps we have brought together children from government and private schools. Student volunteers from Aditi International and Vidyaniketan in Hebbal have worked with our children at Jakkur," says Bhagya.

The money or infrastructure

Ramaiah Hospital and Chittrakala Parishat students have helped the trust in various ways.

Networking is on to involve Indian students' associations abroad, and many of them have already provided links to CLT website ([www.childrenslovecastles.org](http://www.childrenslovecastles.org)) enabling exchange of ideas and furthering the movement. When last heard, CLT volunteers confirmed participation of children from the US, Canada, Japan and Nigeria in the picture-peace dialogue. Phone: 3349801, 3462503.