

LOVE LOCAL



Jyoti and Ash Parmar, Erica Snow (Major Donor Executive), Terrence Mallinson (son of Stuart Mallinson who owned and donated The White House to Waltham Forest Council), and Mike Palfreman (chief exec of Haven House).

VISITING INDIA AND HAVEN HOUSE

- a personal update by Ash Parmar

In January 2016, I went on a ten-day trip to India with my father and a group of sixteen other people. This was a spiritual trip for meditation, chanting, yoga, connecting with like-minded people, and offering service to the poor. It was a fantastic trip where I immersed myself in the above, and forgot about life in the Western world for a while. We went to Mumbai, Delhi and Vrindavan (which is where the Food For Life Vrindavan charity is). Along the journey, I saw many poor children on the streets begging, with no warm clothes and often barefoot. This made me realize how special the schools in Vrindavan are, i.e. the charity that we support and are raising the money for. Giving a child education and food are two basic things we take for granted, but so essential for the development and security of children.

One particular highlight for me on the last day before we were coming back was when I was with one of the group – a guy called Neil. He wanted to feed some cows and dogs as a service. It was nice to see him do this. Afterwards, about six poor small children roaming the streets suddenly surrounded us. Giving them some money would have been the obvious thing to do. However, we were next to a man making hot milk. Neil decided to order each child a lovely glass of hot milk served in a clay made glass. The gratitude and appreciation from the children was wonderful to see. It was obvious this much-needed drink would keep them going through the cold night.

Upon returning to London, one of my other desires was to have a personal tour of Haven House Children's Hospice, the other charity that we are raising money for. I realised that it was important for me to see the excellent work being done at this local charity myself. I arranged a two-hour meeting and tour with Charlotte and Erica from Haven House, who kindly showed my wife Jyoti, a couple (friends) and myself around. The hospice is amazingly set up with equipment and

technology to help in the difficult task of looking after children with life-limiting conditions. A few of the sections of the hospice that had a special impact on me were: -

The Holistic Care Centre - home to a range of services designed to 'wrap-around' the family. It provides targeted social and health care support to children, mums, dads, brothers and sisters through music and physiotherapy, social work, and therapeutic yoga.

The Butterfly Suite is where a child can lay at rest and is part of the bereavement service for children that have used Haven House and also for those who have passed away at home or in a hospital. It comprises of a 'climate controlled room' and an adjoining family room.

The Sensory Room - a special room with interactive technology that provides stimulating and exciting multi-sensory and learning experiences for the children.

The tour was eye opening and gave me a feeling of deep gratitude to appreciate the good health for all those fortunate to have this. It also made me appreciate how the lives of parents completely change and the unflinching dedication that mothers have for their children. These experiences in India and at Haven House have confirmed the reasons why I am doing the fundraising...■

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THE DETAILS

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