

Jenny Latto Gap Year Diary

Each year, CTL will sponsor an Advanced Apprentice to go and volunteer abroad for a 3-6 months Gap Opportunity. Jenny Latto was one lucky learner who successfully gained sponsorship to go and volunteer in an orphanage in India. Follow Jenny on her travels and see if you are inspired to apply for the funding.

Jenny Latto travelled to India to work with children in the outskirts of Chennai organised through GAP Activity Projects. Jenny worked for Prema Vasam, which is a non-profit making trust which aims to provide a home "for the mentally and physically challenged and less fortunate children". Its name means "where love resides". Jenny says "I was really looking forward to going to India and was so excited about what a great opportunity this would be for me. I was looking after disabled children in one of the major cities in India and also going to help teach English to school aged children. I just couldn't wait to go!"



Jenny kept us up to date with her news with a diary: "India is amazing! It is so bright, and not too hot. The people and buildings are so colourful. But what I like best are the roads - they're about 3 normal car widths across but they usually have 4 vehicles travelling alongside one another as there are the auto rickshaws and bikes and motorbikes! Everyone is always using their horn and where there aren't central reservations they drive on the wrong side of the road or wherever there is a space! They drive bumper to bumper and cut across one other so closely! It's very scary but exciting! I can't wait to get to my placement and meet the children!"

The work in Prema Vasam was great! We get up at 7am to help dress the school children, at 8am we feed some of the bed bound children, and at 9am carry them through to the barn. At 9:30am there are prayers and a thought for the day then we eat breakfast! The cook makes us noodles and an omelette instead of the rice cakes that the children normally eat. Then I play with the bed bound children, and help the walkers to walk. After feeding them I have my lunch and then chill out until 4pm when the school children come back, when I play with them and help them with their homework. At the weekends we can go wherever we want!

Two of the children are so sweet - one just can't walk but the other has what they call medium understanding and has 4 limbs affected mildly. Claire, my partner at the orphanage, and I walk them up and down the halls sometimes, which they really enjoy. They point where they want to go and at what they want and are so funny and sweet most of the time!



'Well, I am still enjoying looking after the children in Pre-mavassam. Below, you can see a picture of me with one year old Deva, who is one of three babies here. He walks around everywhere and screams if somebody picks him up as he doesn't like it. I look after children like Fatima

who is very thin and has no muscle tone, her comfiest position is with her feet on her cheeks! She can just about sit up, and would like to stand but has very little control over her limbs. I have been visiting some of the local sights like the temples called the Five Rathas, with some lovely statues. I also went to see Krishna's Butterball, a huge round rock balancing on a hill, it was amazing. I now have four Saris like the one in the picture. I wore a very special one to International Women's Day on the 8th March, and also to the opening of a premature Baby unit.



If you are interested in going on a GAP experience in the future and are currently doing Level 3 at Chiltern, please contact Sarah Darsley on 0118 9566 995 for more information.

Jenny is pictured on the right with Sophie Baker, who Chiltern Training sponsored to take a gap year in 2004. Sophie also went to India, although to a different part. She had a wonderful experience and says she would recommend it to anyone.

