

The following article was submitted by Mrs. Anthea Muller for the 'Souvenir' in August 2003 she was again elected committee member and is Coordinator-Welfare Programme.

REMINISCENCES
by Anthea Muller

In July 1998 I felt honoured when the late Mr Harold Speldewinde, then President, proposed my name and the general committee unanimously elected me to the new position of Social Welfare consultant Dutch Burgher Union. The position involved overlooking the needy of our community, including the sponsorship of children for the purpose of education. At the time 37 children were assisted.

Besides the children, needy older folk were paid a quarterly allowance. Many of these 'pensioners' were solely dependent on this allowance. I cannot but emphasize that this programme would not have been possible if not for the magnanimous financial support afforded the DBU by the Eighty Club of Melbourne.

The untiring efforts put in, so readily, by the committee and members of the ECM to raise funds by organizing Lunches, Dances and other activities need to be applauded. I have personally on two occasions participated in the social activities of the Eighty Club of Melbourne, and seen for myself the onerous task the committee have set themselves.

I take this opportunity to wish the Committee and Members of the Eighty Club of Melbourne my heartiest congratulations and best wishes on their Twenty first Anniversary. It is a great pleasure for me to be associated with this prestigious club. May they have strength to continue in the spirit of loving and giving as they have in the past.

Charity at Work December 1998

"I visited Mrs X at home in Y. They are living in very poor conditions, with no electricity, water service or toilet facilities. We spent time with the family and discussed how to assist them. Their first priority seems to be repair of the roof, which is leaking badly. A friend of mine has provided them with dry rations and will do so every month. The family sleeps on mats on the bare cement floor. I have been visiting numerous homes. It is hard to believe there are so many poor Burgher families. But, one thing I have learnt - they never grumble, and smile through the adverse and poor conditions they survive in.

On Saturday, 7 November I organized two clinics at the DBU to coincide with Pension Day. The Medical Clinic was run by Dr Malcolm Jansze, and the Eye Clinic, by Dr Harsha Edirisinghe. I had 53 attending the medical clinic and 47 the eye clinic. I contacted various pharmaceutical companies who readily gave me donations of medicines. So I was able to hand out bottles of Cytaccon, Vitamin B 12 syrup, of Osteo calcium Syrup and Dettol, as well as cakes of Lifebuoy and Sunlight soap. At the Eye Clinic they were handed out spectacles, after examination and testing by Dr Edirisinghe. The Medical Clinic will be an ongoing project as Malcolm Jansze too enjoyed examining and treating our folk. He said he would assist me once a quarter.

In addition, the DBU launched a Scholarship Fund on 22 October - Founder's Day - and I identified four kids, two girls and two boys to benefit from this fund. On Saturday whilst the clinics were in progress, Harold and Vernon had a small function to inaugurate this fund, and paid the kids their monies. Refreshments were supplied for them as well.

The Seminar 'Helping You to Help Yourself' organized on the 26 September was also a success. I have recommended four boys to the Mount Lavinia Hotel, and they will be called for interviews shortly. I got 'A' into Siedles Cineradio as he was keen on doing work in electronics, and have just managed to get computer training for 'B' who is 19 years old and has sat for his Advanced Level examination. This training is being given by a friend of mine, Russel Mortimer, who has a fully computerized office in Colombo."

Anthea Muller, Social Welfare Consultant of the DBU when Harold Speldewinde was president took a keen interest in the welfare beneficiaries as well as the sponsored children. Her caring attitude and the efficient manner in which she fulfilled her role is apparent in this report written by her to the ECM committee. Pamela Forster.