



by Toni Radler and Steve Kayser

**"We must not allow the clock and the calendar to blind us to the fact that each moment of life is a miracle and mystery."**

**— H.G. Wells**

## **9.0**

A number that doesn't look terrifying.

Unless it's the magnitude of an undersea earthquake.

Then it is.

And was.

On December 26, 2004, with the force of approximately 23,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs, or the equivalent of 190 million tons of TNT, a force so powerful it moved the mainland of Sumatra as much as 120 feet, the deadliest tsunami in known history occurred.

(See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:2004\\_Indonesia\\_Tsunami\\_Complete.gif](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:2004_Indonesia_Tsunami_Complete.gif)).

Approximately 300,000 people perished.

One-third of them children.

Children not strong enough to resist the force of nature's fury. Not strong enough to hold on to something, anything, that could save them. Not fast enough to run away.

But a lot of the victims were mothers. Fathers. And behind, they left children. Children that will forever be scarred and known as the "Tsunami Generation." (See <http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/donate/default.aspx?id=591>).

## **Now**

The roar has died down.

The ocean has calmed.

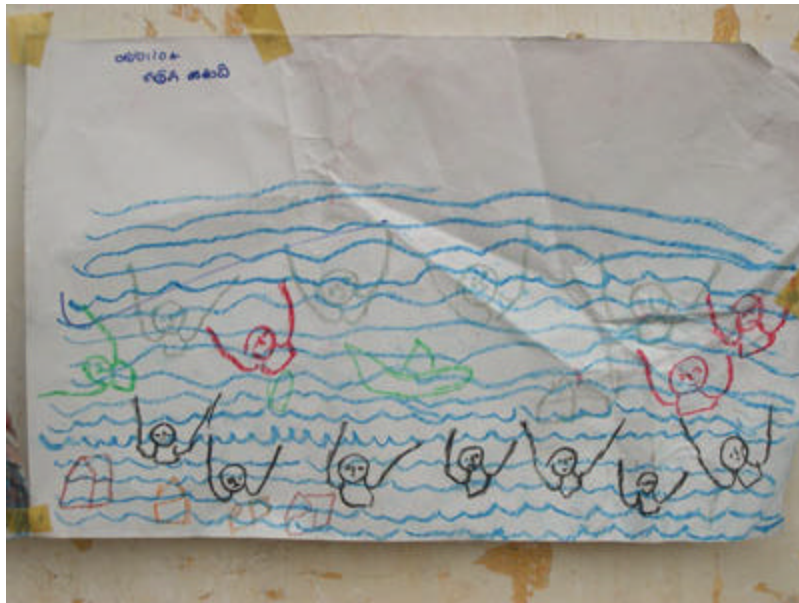
The media has moved on to another story.

The devastation remains. The rebuilding will take years. Most likely decades.

### **But what of the children?**

Witnesses to the deaths of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, grandparents, cousins, and friends? Unimaginable heartbreak and suffering.

### **Through the Eyes of a Child ... It Looked Liked This**



*(Courtesy of Christian Children's Fund Child Centered Spaces - Sri Lanka)*

Children – witnesses to a fury so absolute, it wiped their villages off the face of the earth ... and also caused the earth itself to shake.

### **Through the Eyes of a Child**



*Clearing rubble by hand. It didn't used to be called rubble.  
It used to be called home.*

## **Run for your life!**

A phrase often used metaphorically. But have you ever thought of what it would really be like to run for your life? Your very existence? From a roaring force of nature seldom seen, and even less seldom, survived?

These kids did. And they won the race.





The CCF staff was honored to welcome the former presidents who spent about 25 minutes talking with the children in their Child Centered Space in the Matara District of Sri Lanka. The children showed some of the drawings they had made, many depicting their memories of the huge waves washing away buildings, possessions, and even family members.

### **Urgent Need**

The CCF's most urgent need at the moment is to keep these Child Centered Spaces operating with all of the materials/supplies they need for the children as well as teachers and child protection specialists. Each Child Centered Space costs approximately \$15,000 and they have dozens of them in operation right now in three countries. In India alone, the CCF has 80 and that number may reach 100 depending on the needs.

**You can help the survivors of the Asian tsunami by making a donation to CCF's Child Alert Emergency Fund.**  
**(<http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/donate/appeal.aspx>)**  
**Anyone can contribute by calling the toll-free number (1-800-776-6767) in Richmond, VA from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day.**

When the people are finally able to return to their homes and villages, the **Child Alert Emergency Fund Southeast Asia** (<http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/donate/appeal.aspx>) will be the fund that will help them rebuild their lives - hopefully better and than they were before the tsunami.

Initially, CCF was able to provide emergency relief to the victims of the tsunami, including essential food, bedding, milk, and cooking utensils as well as other non-food items. So many people had lost all of their possessions.

It will take a long time to rebuild - not only the homes and businesses, but also the very fabric of family life. CCF will be there - committed to help the children and their families.

**"We know that all humans are of one family, and that we are all brothers and sisters. But, this is somewhat abstract. The Christian Children's Fund sees, understands and feels this idea much more concretely, and that's why the CCF works so closely and so intimately to aid and assist children everywhere. The CCF Tsunami Relief effort is just one more example of the charitable and loving care for which the Christian Children's Fund has been so well respected and trusted all over the world."**

**— Cincom CEO and Founder, Tom Nies**

**([http://www.cincom.com/global/eng/news-room/executives/profile\\_of\\_leadership.html](http://www.cincom.com/global/eng/news-room/executives/profile_of_leadership.html))**

### **Child Centered Spaces**

CCF is well known for its Child Centered Spaces and specialized programs for children in response to natural and manmade disasters. In their Child Centered Spaces in Sri Lanka, where so much of the eastern coastline of the country was damaged by the tsunami, CCF is working with children like 9-year-old Shehan and 11-year-old Dulani.

### **Relief to Recovery**

As they enter the next phase of relief into recovery, CCF is focusing on the children and, as they always do, listening to their needs. Shehan saw his home submerged by the tsunami as it carried away all of his schoolbooks and clothes.



**Shehan**

Now he is busy drawing pictures, using the art paper and colored pencils that CCF had provided at one of their Child Centered Spaces in Sri Lanka. His sole request was for assistance to continue with his studies.

CCF has been helping Dulani, a young girl who still has sadness in her eyes. She lost her younger brother and sister to the gigantic waves that hit the coast of Sri Lanka. She was able to save her own life by running up on a rock. A fifth grade student, Dulani is hoping that school will open again soon, even though all of her schoolbooks were swallowed by the waves.



**Dulani**

Both of these children, along with many others, are getting help from the Child Centered Spaces that CCF has been able to set up in Sri Lanka in an effort to help these children and families who have lost so much try to recover. These are just two of the children that CCF is serving who have been victimized by a catastrophe of unprecedented proportions. With the kind help of friends like you, CCF can continue to assist the tsunami survivors to help them rebuild their lives.



**Overcoming Fear**

CCF took these children out to play games and dance on the beach. Several of the kids and their parents have been afraid to go back to the beach, so this was an exercise to help them overcome that fear.

**“You give but little when you give of your possessions.**

**It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”**

**— Kahil Gibran**

The statement above is especially relevant and true of the fine people of the CCF.

**Help.**

(<http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/donate/default.aspx?id=>)

**Hope.**

(<http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/donate/donate.aspx>)

**Happiness.**

(<http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/sponsor/default.aspx>)

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**Many thanks to:**



**Toni Radler**, a former reporter, and CCF's Director of Communications. She has recently returned from Sri Lanka where she worked with CCF's Emergency Response Team assisting tsunami survivors.

**Contact Information**

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And

**Betty Forbes**, Vice-President, Christian Children's Fund

Betty is always helpful, funny, and a joy to talk with. She was instrumental in providing us with information, pictures, and insights. I took a special picture of her last time I saw her but she insisted she would brain me if I used it. And since she is one of two people that think the "*Shoot the Donkey*" columns I write are useful (the other being me), I decided to honor her wishes. *Thanks Betty!*

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