

## **THE GOLD COAST BULLETIN**

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### **Hug guru spreads message of love**

**By Rebecca Saunders**

HUNDREDS of people yesterday lined up for a hug and blessing from Indian spiritual leader Ammachi.

The Divine Mother, as she is known, was at the Tallebudgera Recreation Camp where she has conducted a three-day workshop as part of a 10-day national spiritual tour.

Her message, which she has been delivering for the past 12 years on tours around the world, is to bring love and compassion into the lives of everyone.

In India she is compared to the late Mother Teresa and claims to have cured people of terminal illnesses during the 12 million hugs, kisses and talks she has shared with people.

The elderly, teenagers and parents with children yesterday formed two lines down the hall, listening to songs by Indian performers as they waited for a hug during what she called the darshan.

Loose-fitting which clothing was the uniform of the day out of respect to the guru.

James Taylor, a mathematics teacher from Byron Bay who made the rip to the Coast for the free weekend workshop of medication and speeches, enjoyed the hugging experience.

"It was very nice. You can't really describe it," said Mr Taylor.

"It brings some people to tears. I'm more a sympathetic supporter, rather than a follower. And there is no hard sell her, no pressure to by anything."

Mr Taylor said Australians were fortunate there were only a few hundred people present yesterday rather than the 10,000 to 20,000 people who visit her in India.

Ammachi, whose full name is Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, has established orphanages, schools and housing programs for the poor.

Her most recent project is an 800-bed hospital in India that is free to the poor.

**(Courtesy of The Gold Coast Bulletin)**