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Easter 2020 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Easter cards

We are delighted to be enclosing Easter cards, hand-made by the students in Manvi and Pannur. Even if you don't sponsor a particular child, we thought you might like a card to brighten up your window sill, especially in these unpredictable times. (If you haven't received your card it is because they haven't arrived from India, at the time of going to print we are still waiting for the Kapepaladi cards).

I actually learnt a bit about the rigorous preparation of the recent Christmas cards which you might find interesting, as there are similarities in the preparation of these Easter cards. Some of your Christmas cards were beautifully decorated with jewels stuck on the front. These were bought by the children themselves and not the HM of Kapepaladi school. Sr Philomena gave the children the option of buying the sparkling jewels for 3 rupees each, which many of them wanted to do. When they brought in their 3 Rs, they were given the jewels to stick on your cards!

Also, it has been pointed out how neat the writing is inside the cards - there is a story behind this too. Sister Philomena gives each class teacher some suggestions for the Easter or Christmas greetings. Once the children have chosen their greeting and written this in their



cards, Sister Philomena asks the class teachers to check for spelling or grammatical mistakes. Once the teacher has checked them, Sister Philomena also checks them, and if a mistake hasn't been corrected, the teachers have to ask their children to write out their greeting once again. And then they are re-checked! Only when the sentences are 100% correct does Sister Philomena accept each child's piece of writing. She says it is very good handwriting practice for them, and even if a capital letter is missing, it's

important for the children to perfect their writing! “It is the least we can do” said Sister Philomena humbly, “and the children love making cards for their sponsor parents”.

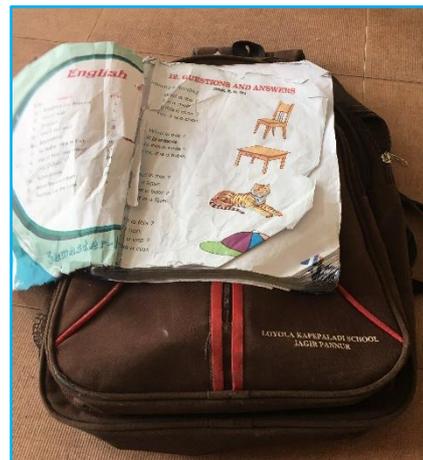
Christmas Appeal



Our Christmas Appeal for warm fleece sweatshirts was really popular as most of the children did not possess any warm clothing for the winter months. The fleeces, with the Kapepaladi school emblem on, were handed out to all the students at the end of the Christmas term.

Thank you so much to

all who contributed towards this Appeal. It was lovely to see some children wearing their jumpers whilst we were there in February, even though to my mind it was lovely and warm then! Whilst on the subject of Christmas Appeals, you may remember that the 2018 Christmas Appeal was for new school bags. It was great to see these in every classroom being put to such good use. In the younger children’s classes, it made me smile as many children were only slightly bigger than their school bags!



Transferring to Manvi school in 9th Std, school fees, and the school Budget for the 2020/2021 academic year



All current 8th Std students at Kapepaladi school, seen here in the photo, will be transferring to the Manvi school campus from June 1st 2020 as they progress to 9th Std for the next academic year. Fr Arun has already reserved a place in the school hostel for all 26 students as most of them live too far away to travel to school daily. When I say all 8th Std students, it might not be all of them as 3 of the girls said that their parents were currently not supportive of this

move to continue their education. The girls didn’t wish to say why, but I would imagine it is because their fathers are traditionally minded and want to marry them off. We talked at length with Sister Philomena and Fr Arun about these particular girls and, even though I’m sure they will be doing this anyway, we asked them to do all they can to persuade the 3 girls’ parents to change their minds and allow their daughters to continue their education.

Some of the students are understandably a little apprehensive about the move, but the majority were looking forward to being part of the bigger school campus at Manvi with all its

additional facilities. They have grown up so fast from the young children they were when they joined Kapepaladi school back in 2012!

The 8th Std students' move to Manvi will see an increase in school fees by approximately £60 per year. Here the school fees have always been greater than at Kapepaladi school, firstly because the teachers' salaries' increase as the students go further up the school and start to prepare for public exams, and secondly there are greater educational facilities needed, especially in subjects such as Science. You may remember that last year we negotiated a 'stay' on the fees at Kapepaladi school for this current academic year. This 'stay' cannot apply this year, either at Kapepaladi school or at Manvi as in all walks of life, running costs go up rather than down. The next academic year sees an increase in the Budget for Kapepaladi school of around 10%, which is due mainly to necessary increases in the teachers' salaries and for the re-painting of the school.

Ella's account of her visit to Mustoor in the mobile ambulance, with Sister Leena from the Pannur Health Centre



'So, I got taken with Sister Leena in the Jeep, alias ambulance, an old vehicle, along the very pot-holed straight country roads to Mustoor. On the way we identified the healthy-looking cotton fields, paddy fields and the unhealthy-looking sorghum (millet) fields, which due to a very dry year were not even cultivated but had been left to die unharvested. We also had to slow down twice to let a couple of herds of goats pass and a wooden trailer pulled by two white water buffalo. After 45

minutes of bumping along, we arrived behind the Temple, where it was indicated by the elderly local villager that we should lay our mat. Our driver then removed the 2 medical trunks from the back of the Jeep and positioned them at right angles on the mat. They were not only carrying medical equipment but also used to sit on.

As soon as we started to walk around the village the kids came to see us, interested by the foreign woman, and as I love being surrounded by all these smiling faces I started singing English numbers, and was delighted as they all started copying. We then arrived at a huge stone, covered in part in orange/yellow dust and it turned out to be where they crushed their turmeric. Then an older man approached our parade of now about 20, and wished to show us his harvest of... well it was a small brown seed, smaller than a pea, and I nodded and enthused despite not knowing what it is. After a short walk around the village, I had already attracted an enormous amount of attention and followers. So rather than ruin Sister Leena's medical clinic, I stood away from her and her area of consultation consisting of the mat and the 2 metal trunks. So I provided the village entertainment singing 'head, shoulders, knees and toes', followed by 'guess my age!' for the elder boys and men in repeated response to their 'how old ma'am?' and 'how old are you?' I completed my spectacle with the necessary selfies. I returned to find Sr Leena had finished.'



During this mobile ambulance visit to Mustoor, Sr Leena checked the blood pressures of around 10 patients, mostly elderly women, who are on long-term treatment for Hypertension. One of her patients was a woman diagnosed with polyps in the bladder and cysts in her right kidney. She showed Sr Leena her medical reports and requested further explanation about her condition and Sr Leena's suggestions for further treatment.

We are very happy to continue supporting the Sisters as they carry out their wonderful work caring for the very poorest people. They do this not only at the Pannur Health Centre, but also with special clinics at Kapepaladi school and with their mobile clinics in the villages.

I am going to sign off now, although there is still so much more to share with you, but 4 pages is probably more than enough for one Newsletter!



The photo on the left is of Ella with 2 of her 3 sponsored children, sisters Radhika and Mallika – Mallika is currently the youngest child in the school. On the right is me outside one of the children's



houses on one of our many visits to the children's villages. More about these visits, the Tailoring Centres, Manvi school, and more (!) in the next Newsletter.

All that remains for us to say is wishing you a very Happy and Healthy Easter, and as always thank you so much for all your support for these wonderful children.

With warmest wishes, Dinah and Peter

p.s. We have just heard some great news about two formerly sponsored Manvi students, Akshatha and Noble Raj. Both have been offered jobs as University Lecturers - Akshatha is returning to Manvi College where she took her Degree 5 years ago, and Noble Raj is heading to another University in a city called Gulbarga. Both these students graduated from Manvi College in 2018 and have just completed their 2-year's Master's Degree at St Aloysius College, Mangalore. We wish them all the very best in their new posts.



p.p.s And finally..... when we are told about such great achievements, it reminds me of a talk we gave to a Wine Society, about the Dalits and the work of Supporting Dalit Children. Previously we had been asked to make up a title for our talk for a Speakers' Directory, and we chose 'From Dust To Diamonds'. The Wine Society had seen this title and asked us to speak to them one evening. We turned up to find a group of very polite and interested men, however, quite soon after arriving, one of them asked 'so how did you get involved with the diamond business then?' 😊