



www.supportingdalitchildren.com Tel 07909 705125

September 2021 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

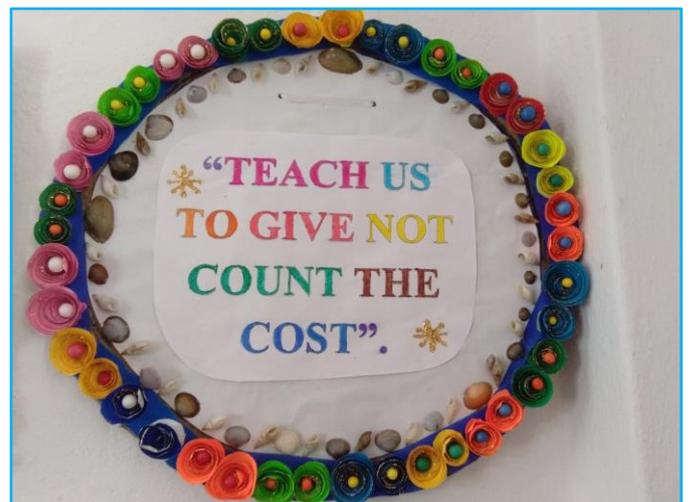
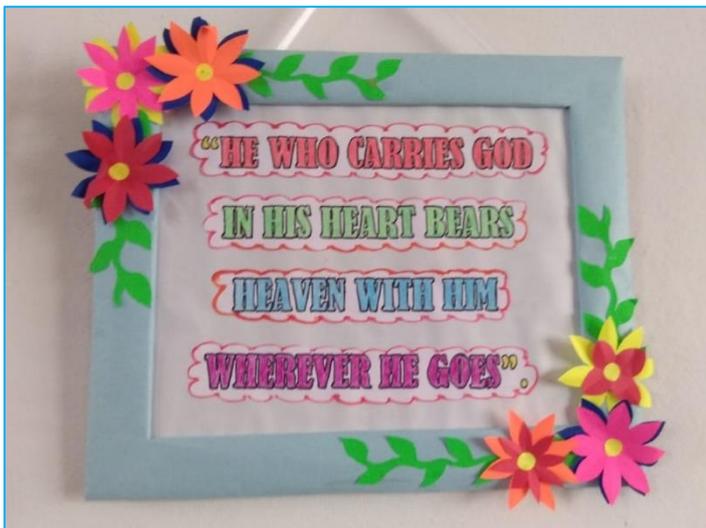
Autumn is well and truly upon us, the year is racing by, *but* it appears that the Covid situation in India is easing up thankfully! More and more students are back at school, including the younger students, which is great news. We can only hope and pray there isn't another lockdown in India, but for now the situation is definitely better than it has been for 18 months.



I was really happy to hear yesterday from Sister Reena that her 1st – 5th Std students are now attending half day classes. These younger students have been restricted to WhatsApp lessons since the first lockdown began in India 18 months ago. They are all really pleased to be back at school again.

The 6th – 8th Std students have been back at school for a month now.

Here are some photos of the younger students studying, and also some of their efforts from a recent picture frame competition.



9th Std students at Manvi

This is the second year that the eldest students at Kapepaladi school have left Pannur and moved up to 9th Std at the Manvi campus. Fr Leo is seen here with the 9th Std students. He has met all of them individually and is taking a great interest in how they are transitioning from one school to another. When lockdown was still in place, he ensured they were in close



contact with their teachers and felt well supported.

The girl in the front with the light green dress on is a child I have followed closely since first meeting her 10 years ago. She was very quiet and shy and came across as a serious little girl then. She

has a sponsor parent and I have delivered many a card to her at Kapepaladi school over the years, but her smiles have been given sparingly - to me anyway!

Here she is 5 years ago, with an Easter card I think although it could be a Christmas card - I'm not quite sure (!) ...



It's wonderful to see Vijay with her class mates in Manvi, in a much larger school campus with such amazing facilities. She is clearly blossoming, as are all the children she has grown up with. These students never cease to amaze me - how they achieve so well in the face of such adversity and poverty. From looking at them now it's hard to imagine the trials they have experienced over their 13 or 14 years, within their families.

Ambulance Appeal Update



In May this year, we launched our boldest ever Appeal for an ambulance for the Pannur Health Centre. Pannur's parish priest, Father Ambrose, became one of Covid 19's earliest victims and he needed urgent hospital care. The ventilator he needed was not available at the Manvi hospital.

Fr Ambrose had to be driven by jeep to the hospital in Mangalore, 11 hours' drive away. He didn't have oxygen for the journey and he needed two nurses to help keep him steady for the entire journey, in the back of the

pretty old and uncomfortable jeep. His lungs were, by that time, very badly infected. Tragically Fr Ambrose didn't recover and died in hospital 2 weeks later.

As a result of this terrible news and a call for help from Sister Leena, we launched the Ambulance Appeal. As always (although this is never taken for granted), so many people came forward and gave generously.

The total funds we have sent to the Pannur Health Centre for the ambulance is £18,308.99 - an incredible testament to the generosity of tens of you.

Since Sister Leena collected the ambulance in July, and it has already been used many times. Here is one lady who needed transferring to the hospital in Manvi due to complications in labour. Both mother and her twins are doing very well!



The Giving Lottery, the Giving Machine and our charity Christmas cards

Our wonderful volunteer, Rachel, has worked very hard this past year on 3 projects in particular. Promoting our Christmas cards, the Giving Lottery and raising further awareness about the Giving Machine. It is fantastic to report that all her efforts have been extremely successful.

Since joining the Giving Lottery 6 months ago, £327 has been raised through lottery ticket sales. We are on track to raise the same amount for the next 6 months as things currently stand. The 2 children the Giving Lottery funding aimed specifically to support, have actually kindly been sponsored by one of our existing sponsor parents. A third child who we sent

details about to our Giving Lottery supporters, is in the process of being sponsored as I type. It is always humbling and heart-warming when any child is sponsored, but when a child that we are aiming to support collaboratively is then snapped up and sponsored by an individual, it is just brilliant. In fact, you will be happy to hear that this year in particular has seen a surge of sponsorships which has kept us busy!

Following Rachel's successful campaign to raise greater awareness last year, the Giving Machine is now generating enough funds to sponsor 2 additional children every month. You may be interested to know that we have received a total of £2684.01 from 5097 individual donations from the Giving Machine over the past 10 years. Isn't it incredible to think that just through remembering to click on The Giving Machine's link to websites, this enormous sum of money from retailers has been raised for Supporting Dalit Children! Of course, this time of year is the most opportune and financially rewarding time to online shop through The Giving Machine. It would be fantastic for us to double our number of current supporters who regularly use this website, so please, if you haven't done so already, visit www.thegivingmachine.co.uk as it will help us to sponsor more children, just by clicking the mouse twice each time we shop online. (How it works for those new to the charity, is that each year online retailers/organizations pay millions of pounds in sales commission to the websites or search engines that promote their shops or direct shoppers to their stores. The Giving Machine is one of these websites and facilitates online shopping via their website in order to reclaim the sales commission the retailer is prepared to pay out. The Giving Machine then pay this sales commission to the charity of your choosing, once you have signed up that is. Once set up (which only takes a few minutes), the sales commission from each online purchase is paid to Supporting Dalit Children, and these funds keep adding up every month!

Our Christmas cards and other charity merchandise are available for sale as always, although stocks of our beautiful porcelain mugs are now running a bit low. All card sales are 100% profit for the charity as the printing costs have now been covered. Here are some of the designs if you haven't seen them already.



Last year, a school used 3 of our Christmas cards to send to parents and bought over 650 cards. If you know of any other schools or organisations who might like to do something similar, please let us know. The cards all have information about the charity on the back, and

over the years we have had many people contact us from having received one of our cards, so they are a very good way of spreading the word about our work.

And finally

And finally, I leave you with a beautiful testimonial sent to us by one of our sponsor parents. Andrew Lewis started sponsoring Priyanka just over a year ago, and here is his experience of sponsoring her thus far:-

" I have a lifelong passion for India, it's history, cultural diversity, art, music, food, devotional life and breathtaking landscapes. Since my first visit in 1991 I have travelled extensively in India, each time becoming more and more concerned about the lives of street children and Dalit children in particular. On each trip I would make donations, visit schools providing whatever help or gifts I could, and give to individuals who lived on the streets with no certainty of food and shelter.

I was never certain that my donations were being wisely or appropriately used. I was never certain that my efforts were making any real or lasting difference. I was certain of one thing only: these children were innocent victims in need of love and support. I witnessed their fear and sorrow, the vacant stares of hopelessness in the sick and starving. I also witnessed the joy, playfulness and openhearted friendliness of these resilient, beautiful children. What bright generous spirits they have, even living in the kind of poverty few can imagine. What potential, shackled and dormant.

October 18th 2018 changed my life in a moment of rare sublimity. Walking in Jaipur, I came across a child begging in the street, something I had witnessed thousands of times. This time was different. This encounter was charged with the deepest sense of connection to a fellow human being, a weak, vulnerable, fragile spirit. I felt I had known this child forever, and this meeting was for a purpose. It penetrated to the very core of my being, touched my soul with glowing permanence. Why this particular encounter, this particular child? Who knows? Who can tell?

I returned home determined that this encounter would not be in vain, determined that this child, through my agency, would bring light and hope to other children.

I did some research, looking for a Charity that would make a real difference to the lives of Dalit children, a charity where every penny (or rupee!) would be spent where it was needed and not on excessive administration.

Supporting Dalit Children was just what I was looking for. It works with financial transparency, is enthusiastic and passionate with clear practical goals. I am now a 'sponsor parent' for a Dalit child, helping to provide an education, a path out of poverty, and a hopeful future. I will be able to follow this child's progress through education and beyond. This fills me with the greatest joy.

The street beggar in Jaipur may no longer be alive and in any case could never know that our encounter was the wellspring for something so positive and life-affirming.

My gratitude is to that child of Jaipur and to Supporting Dalit Children. Both unfolded a path for me and both are with me on the journey.

Thank you so much for all your support this year and we will be in touch again in the coming weeks.

Dinah and Peter

p.s. if you have any questions about any aspect of Supporting Dalit Children, please do drop me an email and I will be happy to answer it if I can!