



Registered Charity No. 1125102

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Autumn 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We hope you are well and have enjoyed the summer months. We have been very busy here, primarily with organizing new sponsorships that have been taken out since the launch of our new website in March. The latest two children sponsored this week now have a sponsor parent from New York which is fantastic! We are convinced that our new, more informative and interactive website, has made a big difference to the numbers of requests we have had for sponsorships. Once again we thank our volunteer Rachel who spent a great deal of time developing it. You may not be aware that every month Rachel updates the Home Page with information from India as it arrives, including school experiences from students and others. If you haven't had a chance to look at the new pages on the website, do have a browse over a cup of coffee sometime – for example this link takes you to a page devoted to the experiences of some of our sponsor parents: <https://supportingdalitchildren.com/from-sponsor-parents/> We will be talking a bit more about our sponsor parents later in this letter.

From 5th Std student at Kapepaladi school, to teenager now in 10th Std in Loyola School, Manvi – how sponsorship makes such a difference to every Dalit child. Here is Padmavathi's story



In November 2017 when visiting Kapepaladi school, Chris Carter, one of the sponsor parents accompanying us and who is also a great photographer, took photos of all the children who were then present at the school. The photo on the left shows Padmavathi with the Christmas card she'd recently made for her sponsor parent-to-be.

In early 2019, we received this photo of Padmavathi (on the right) after Mary, her new sponsor parent, sent her a Christmas card and letter.



In February 2020 when last visiting Kapepaladi school, I took a short video of Padmavathi. She had very short hair and I was worried she hadn't been well. Her explanation surprised me. She told me that her father used to drink excessively when she was small, and her mother said she would shave Padmavathi and her brother's heads if her father gave up alcohol. At Christmas that year, the two children's heads were shaved as their father decided to stop drinking. The short video file is too large to send by email, but it's a lovely, smiley 2 minute clip if you

are interested – if you are, here is the link: <https://supportingdalitchildren.com/from-students/>

As is now the case for all of Kapepaladi school's 9th Std students, Padmavathi then moved to Manvi School at the end of 8th Std. She has been there just over a year now, and is now in 10th Std. She has written a few lines about her experience moving from one school to the other.



“After finishing my studies in 8th standard in Kapepaladi School, I told my desire to my parents that I want to continue my studies in Loyola School, Manvi. My parents agreed to my wish and made me part of Loyola School. But unfortunately, because of lockdown I was not able to come to school. But we were having online classes for two months. I faced a lot of difficulties during these two months of online classes because poor network problems and other disturbances at home. After two months the school

was reopened. I was very excited to see my new friends and teachers. Initially I felt very nervous and anxious to speak and to be comfortable with teachers and friends. For a few days I was not able to cover the syllabus that was taught online but with the guidance of teachers and friends I grabbed all the knowledge that was taught during online classes. After one month the unit test was conducted and I did very well. There were so many competitions that were conducted in our class. And I want to become a topper. With lots of efforts and hard work, I became second topper of the class at the end of the academic year. I feel immensely grateful to God for blessing me with the schools that I have been fortunate to study. I thank in a special way my Dinah and my sponsor parent who are an inspiration to me to work hard and come up in life. I am grateful to all the benefactors who help us to have a bright future. I want to do well in the coming board exams and bring honour to my school and to everyone who continue to support me. I feel deeply privileged to be part of Loyola School.”

Continuing in education at Loyola School in Manvi, and then Loyola College

Many of you reading this letter sponsor children who have now transitioned to Loyola School in Manvi. This school was founded by the Pannur Manvi Mission in 2004 and is an excellent school with substantial facilities.

In 9th and 10th Std, students continue in their High School studies. At the end of 10th Std, they take public examinations to obtain Secondary School Leavers Certificates (SSLC).

After 10th Std, the students, with the help of their teachers, decide which subjects they are going to continue with into their 11th and 12th Std, known as PU1 (Pre-University1) and PU2. They continue with these subjects and then decide whether or not they wish to embark on a 3-year Degree. The subjects for both PU and Degree are grouped into 3 categories - Arts, Science or Commerce. The subjects studied within each category are listed below:

Arts: History, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Kannada, and English

Science: Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, Statistics, English and Kannada

Commerce: Accountancy, Commerce, Economics, math, English, and Kannada

The exams taken in 10th Std are the first public examinations our students take, and they work extremely hard for these. One of our sponsor parents suggested that it might be a nice idea to treat this class of students to a special meal, after they have received their results and progressed to 1st PU, which I thought was a lovely idea. If any sponsor parents of 1st PU students would like to join in that celebration, please do get in touch and I can organise this with Father Leo, who also thought it was a lovely idea.

Successes of sponsor parents and others who continue to support the Dalit children

Recently we have heard of several ways that people are raising money for the charity and I thought you might like to hear about these successes.

Andrew - One of our sponsor parents, Andrew, is a self-employed yoga and meditation teacher living in Wales. Andrew first wrote to me in 2020, having been to India on holiday and wanting to do something to help the Dalit children. He writes “As you can imagine many of my clients who are attracted to meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, and other such activities, are always interested in hearing my tales of India, and I often



talk of the street children, 'railway children' and Dalits in general. I would love to help you help the Dalit children! I know that so many of my client group would be deeply sympathetic to the cause, and I have a few ideas like - a donation box for 'Supporting Dalit Children', donating a percentage of the session fees to 'Supporting Dalit Children' and keeping a small stock of your gifts, notepads, cards for my clients to buy." We thought that all of Andrew's ideas were excellent, and he is now donating a fifth of all his income to Supporting Dalit Children, as well as buying our charity gift cards and notebooks

regularly to sell or to use himself. As good old Tesco's says, 'every little helps', and it certainly does! Thank you Andrew, for your inspirational ideas and for thinking of the Dalit children as much as you do.

Helen – Helen is a potter and has made many mosaics over the years, however, a recent project has captured a lot of people's interest and support. In Helen's own words, "a rather unusual fundraiser for Supporting



Dalit Children (and some other charities) is The Hertfordshire Mosaic Project. Started in 2019, this large mosaic pavement was made at Helen Baron's studio at Grandeyes Place in Much Hadham by a group of about 40 friends. Each of them (under Helen's guidance) created a 50cm square panel, representing a Hertfordshire bird or animal. They started by drawing their design on brown paper and then stuck down ceramic tesserae, following the form of the animal. They were concreted and grouted to make square paving slabs, along with lots of traditional roman-style twisting



guilloche borders. 44 mosaics and many borders were put together as a huge pavement, for an event at the studios last summer. Originally the intention was to auction off each mosaic panel for charity at a big event, but Covid got in the way and most of the makers wanted to keep their own, so instead they made a contribution for the materials and a donation to the charity of their choice. For many of them this was Supporting Dalit Children as lots of them have a close connection to the charity through Dinah.

It was a very enjoyable project and everyone was very satisfied with the results. It is hoped that the mosaics will come together for another show at St Albans Museum in the near future. If anyone would like to create their own panel to add to this, or to help with borders, please get in touch with Helen at helenbaron3@gmail.com" Thank you Helen for your wonderful idea and for the all the support you have encouraged others to give us.

If you have a story to share with us about how your individual efforts are helping to educate a Dalit child, please do share them with us.

Pannur Health Centre

We continue to support the excellent work of the Sisters who are who run the Pannur Health Centre, situated next to Kapepaladi school in the village of Pannur. The Health Centre provides vital primary care to the children at Kapepalad school, and their families living in the local villages. We have just received some news

from Sister Leena, head of the Health Centre which we thought you might find interesting. The Sisters are as always, working extremely hard!



“The famous proverb “Good Health is the best wealth” means a lot when we come across people with various health problems daily in our health centre.

Our daily duty starts at 8.30am and is carried out throughout the day until 7.30 pm, and also during the night and other times in case of emergency cases. We take care of all the medical and nursing care, along with our lay staff nurse in the Pharmacy, and the Lab technician who does all the lab tests.

The common health issues we are treating in the Health Centre include upper and lower respiratory tract infection, chronic obstructive heart disease, gastro-enteritis, typhoid fever,

skin infections and urinary tract infections

Typhoid fever and Gastro enteritis cases are increasing in many villages as they drink water from the flowing river without boiling, in spite of the Jesuit father’s effort in supplying them pure drinking water. We are motivating them to maintain hygiene and drink pure filtered water.



Emergency care

“We are available to our people at all times of the day and night, especially in times of emergency. They feel confident to come to us as we treat them immediately and if necessary, we send them to hospital by our ambulance for further care. We save many lives since we have had the ambulance, though not in every case. We get many emergency cases including minor and major road accidents, cardiac patients with chest pain, poisoning due to attempted suicide, scorpion stings



We are able to treat these emergency cases and give first aid to the cardiac and major accident cases and refer them to hospitals for further treatment immediately by using our ambulance. It is very challenging for us sometimes, to plan immediately the treatment as when the patients are brought in they are in a critical condition. We have purchased an adjustable bed and a patient monitor in order to check the patient’s vital signs through the monitor like pulse, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, temperature and ECG without wasting any time in checking these things manually. We are able to treat patients immediately and if they require further care, we take a quick decision to send them to hospital by our ambulance, and with oxygen to sustain them. The adjustable bed helps us position the patient automatically.

These past 12 months the numbers of young patients coming to our health centre with chest pain and other cardiac related problems, has increased. We have now organized a free medical camp with a Pulmonologist from Raichur, on 25th of September.”

Gift cards



Anybody who knows me will know that I love flowers (!), and for this reason I wanted to take this opportunity to mention two of our gift cards which are particularly beautiful, as well as apt for this time of year. Both designs were printed from watercolour paintings, beautifully painted by a local artist and

kindly
donated to
Supporting
Dalit
Children.



Gift cards are blank inside and cost £1 each, which I think beats the price of every other gift card in the shops as far as I know! However, both designs retain the same excellent quality of all our charity cards. These two designs as well as other gift cards, can be found on our website: <https://supportingdalitchildren.com/product-category/gift-cards/>

Our Christmas cards are also on the website, or you can phone through an order if that is easier. We hope that you enjoy the new presentation of the cards, and how easy the ordering process is. Here is the link to the relevant page on the website: <https://supportingdalitchildren.com/product-category/christmas-cards/>

I hope that you don't mind me putting so many links on this Newsletter. It is only possible for me to do this on our Autumn Newsletter which is emailed to everyone rather than printed and posted.

And finally

An interesting and moving conversation about the battle for good education with one of our British sponsor parents. Recently I needed to contact Rosalyn to inform her that the girl she was sponsoring has sadly left Kapepaladi school. Rosalyn's response was understanding, and interesting as she went on to talk about her own experience of education a few decades ago. She agreed to sharing her story in this Newsletter.

"My parents' education was interrupted by the war. My mother was an evacuee and I am not sure about my father. Both saw that a good education bought you a better job. My dad died when I was seven. Mum didn't want her children in factory work, cutting the tops off carrots for 10 hours a day. So she struggled and begged for good schools to take me on. My priest also wrote a letter explaining the circumstances. I got a good education. Many of mum's fellow workers did not have that attitude. In fact, some were proud that they were 3rd generation working in the same factory."

It is important to remember that a good education should never be taken for granted, whether we live in a first or third world country. For the Dalit children whose parents do not realise how potentially life-changing all round it is that their children are at one of the schools we support, we will continue to battle for them, supporting them financially and being a presence in their schools and in their lives. It goes without saying that the Jesuit Fathers, Head teachers and class teachers also do their very best to encourage the students' parents to support their children to stay at school and complete their education with them.

Within the next 6 weeks we will be in touch once again, with details of this year's Christmas Appeal. Until then we wish you all the best, and thank you for all the support you are giving.

Best wishes,
Dinah and Peter