



KARUNA SRI LANKA INC



SAFARI at YALA NATIONAL PARK



Welcome everyone to our 1st Karuna Sri Lanka Newsletter for 2020. In this edition we wish to share with everyone news about a very successful trip to Sri Lanka by 4 members of our Committee – **Justin, Katie, John and June** in October/November 2019. As you know Justin is adamant that all your donations go towards assisting our children and families in Sri Lanka, therefore all expenses for accommodation, meals etc. have been paid personally by the committee members.

OUR AIMS ON THIS TRIP

- Introduce our hard-working Co-ordinator, Shashi to Katie and June.
- An overnight trip to take some of the children on a Safari!
- Visit 6 orphanages to meet the girls from Yasodara who were re-homed. (see next newsletter)
- Justin & Katie's visit to Tikiri Sevana Orphanage, Kandy. (see next newsletter)
- Join the children at the English class we sponsor and have tea with them.
- Donate items we had been given by friends and our donors.
- Meet children and their families we assist with your kind donations.

Our Safari Trip

This was a new experience for Shashi, 10 children and 4 carers, and great fun was had by all.

When we commenced our journey to Yala National Park there had been heavy rainfall and this caused roads to flood in some places but we had a great driver and he managed to drive through. Everyone found the floods quite exciting even though it was a long trip.



We visited a botanical garden which was enjoyable. The children especially enjoyed the tour in this bus.

We saw some lovely atriiums with many different plants

It was then time to continue the trip to the accommodation for the children, Shashi and carers. The children were very excited to see that they each had their own bed, something we take for granted.



We had purchased food during the day and the cook at their accommodation had agreed to prepare an evening meal for them. After settling everyone in, Justin, Katie, John and June left and booked into their hotel for the night.

It was a very early 4am start for everyone but we managed to wake up and join our safari tour vehicle on time. Shashi and the carers did a great of organising our 10 children at 4am and after a short drive we all arrived at the gate of the National Park waiting for it to open. By this time the children were very excited as they had never driven in safari vehicles before. We had 4 vehicles so Justin, Katie, John and June each joined the children and carers in separate vehicles.

As soon as the gates opened, we were off and the first animal we met was an elephant on the road. He was happy to let quite a few vehicles pass but then decided to turn and walk/trot towards us. The vehicles all backed up rather quickly but the elephant stopped and turned towards the bush so it was safe to pass. The children thought it was great of course!!



During our tour we saw more elephants, water buffalo, crocodiles, impala, mongoose, lots of birds and many peacocks because they are the national bird.



We were lucky with the weather but the tracks were very boggy. We had a very exciting time when the drivers heard on their 2-way that a leopard had been sighted. All the vehicles merged onto one spot and jostled to get the best view of the leopard which was not bothered by the many cameras taking photos. He eventually decided to wander off into the bush and we carried on looking for our next animal.



When the Safari Tour concluded our vehicles met outside the National Park and we returned to the accommodation. We gave the children time for a bit of relaxation before packing the luggage into the bus and commencing the drive back to Galle.

Shashi knew that one of the girls, Sachini, from the Yasodara orphanage who had left before it closed because she was 18 years old, lived nearby. Our driver was very patient and drove down many streets and lanes trying to find her address but, in the end, we had to carry on. We had travelled for about 15 minutes when Sachini rang Shashi and asked if we would return and her husband would bring her to meet us.



Justin welcomed Sachini into the bus. asked Justin to sit down and look at their wedding album which he then passed on for us all to see.

You can imagine how thrilled Sachini was to meet her friends whom she had not seen for a long time. Sachini asked if we could follow them to their home as she wished to show us where she lived with her husband's family. We were warmly met by her husbands' mother and 2 sisters. It was good to see Sachini so happy and she proudly



We walked to the back of the block where they are building a house. The footings had been completed and they were saving to have the walls built. This is the way they build houses in Sri Lanka, saving for every stage before commencing. Sachini was sad to see us go but the children had been delighted to meet her so the delay in our travels was well worth it. Hopefully we can visit them again one day. Shashi and the Committee were very happy to see Sachini settled and happily married to her childhood boyfriend.

We were all very tired when we eventually arrived back in Galle but everyone agreed it had been a fantastic trip and certainly an experience for the children and carers that they will remember for a long time.

Gintota High School – Galle

Justin has been involved with this school for many years, building cricket nets, paying for cricket coaching and presenting the school with a great deal of cricket and netball equipment plus uniforms which have been very kindly donated to us. On this visit we were able to present Jayani, the sports teacher, with a full set of netball bibs and skirts. As you can see from the trophy cabinet the school has had great success with their sports.



Photo taken in front of the nets Justin had built with kind donations.

We are now paying the cricket coach through Karuna; however, Justin is donating the funds required to pay the cricket coach through his own donations. He was able to meet with the coach and watch a game of cricket in Galle after the other committee members had left.

Computers and Phones

We have been very lucky to have laptops, tablets and phones donated to us and these are given to children that we know will use them to assist in their studies and make it easier to communicate. The laptops required a windows conversion for Sri Lanka and Shashi took Justin to a computer shop in Galle that was able to perform this work at a very reasonable cost.



Anjula and **Ganguli** were presented with iPhones and a tablet by Justin and John when we visited their home. Justin and John have watched these girls grow up in the orphanage and it is good we can continue to help them.

Dileka is another of the girls from the orphanage that received a tablet from John. She is such a lively, caring young lady who will be 18 in January. Dileka has a job in a watch shop which Karuna helped her find and when we visited her at work the owners said she is a good worker. Justin and John have also watched Dileka grow up in the orphanage, she always has a big smile on her face even though she has been through a lot of tough times over the years.



Supun is the 14-year-old son of Priyantha, Justin's tuk-tuk driver and good friend who sadly passed away in 2018. He is another recipient of an i-



Phone and laptop. Supun works so hard on his studies, often going to 3 out of school classes on a Saturday, including our english class. Supun's goal is to become an engineer and hopes to study overseas, maybe even Perth when he finishes school! It was his father's wish for Supun to become an engineer so he has a good incentive and we are sure he will achieve this goal as it is what he wants as well. The laptop has been a big advantage to work on his studies.

Stop Press: *Supun achieved 8 A's and 1 B in his exams last year and was top of his class.*

English Classes



Justin talking to the english class students

Every Saturday afternoon we sponsor a number of children to attend an english class in Galle. Our Committee members were able to attend the class. Justin spoke to the children explaining that the classes are funded by our donors and he trusts they will work hard and learn to speak english which will assist them in the future to obtain good employment.

After the class is finished Shashi takes the children for dinner to various cafes, this encourages the children to attend the class and also gives them a good meal and time to socialize with each other.



Dinner at the pizza hut as a special treat.



Shashi, Dileka, Justin and Supun ready to surf.

Every day in Sri Lanka was busy but Justin found time on a Sunday to take Supun, Shashi and Dileka for a surfing lesson. Justin found Supun is a natural surfer and he was soon riding waves and coming into shore standing up. Shashi and Dileka enjoyed their first lesson and had fun in the water.



Supun enjoying surfing

Children to Children Gifts

Tim, one of our committee members, and Katies brother, Luke, explained to their own children about our trip and the children happily dug into their toy boxes to send over some of their toys for us to give to children less fortunate than themselves. It was great fun giving some of these toys to Kavishka, Thirheshi and Kavishka when we visited their home. The children also attend our english classes which they enjoy and hopefully will help them as they grow up. They are always smiling and happy and a delight to be with.



Kavishka, Thirheshi and Kavishka with their gifts.

Everyone agreed the trip had definitely been worthwhile and we all wish to return and carry on this good work which would not be possible without your very kind donations. You are certainly making a difference to the lives of these children.

There will be another newsletter published soon to give you news about the orphanages we visited. We trust you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and if you feel any of your relatives or friends would be interested please pass it on.

DONATIONS

GIVE NOW has become a very easy and cost-effective way for our **overseas donors** to process either a one-off or a regular monthly donation. We have a Give Now donation button on our website which connects directly to their website.

PLEASE NOTE: Payments from overseas to Give Now can **only** be made through a Credit Card account.

Our donors in **Australia** are able to make payments **direct** to our bank account from their own Debit account or Credit Card with no transfer fees attached.

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YOU helped to put smiles on the girl's faces.