

Greetings and I hope you're well.

You will have received my last email regarding the temporary closure of the Yasodara Girls home. Unfortunately, the home still remains closed. The probation board has said it will reassess after 3 months to see if the correct staff can be put into place. We await any further developments but I am sadly not confident it will reopen in the immediate future.

However, there are some positives that have come out of this through the help of Shashi Roland, one of the carer Mothers who was employed at Yasodara. With her help we are still in contact with the majority of the girls and have been able to assess their immediate needs and provide some help.

Shashi worked at Yasodara for 4 years in charge of bookkeeping and other computer based administrative tasks and speaks very good English. She also holds a degree of Social Development with the National Institute.

She formed a strong bond with the girls at Yasodara, and when the home was closed and the girls sent to different orphanages and situations, she took the time to track each one down individually and organise a visit to check in on them. Some of the girls were sent to other orphanages, some to adult training centres and some were even able to return home to family and their villages albeit with tricky circumstances. Our current funding expenses to support the girls have included schooling costs and transport, living expenses, medical needs, English classes, and improving their living circumstances.



Shashi with 3 of the girls – Sathya, Piyuma and Dilleka on a recent home visit

We have employed Shashi to be our administrative contact in Sri Lanka on a full-time basis, which is a positive for Karuna as we can now help to improve the girls' lives and futures with individual consideration and care, and a positive for Shashi who can remain employed in her field of expertise while still caring for the girls from Yasodara.

As a result of these developments we have also begun looking for some of the former children who left Yasodara over the last few years to see if they can be helped in any way with their lives outside of the home. In many cases they were sent back to their villages with no help or encouragement for their future and we could not find a way to contact them.



Sisters Sathya and Piyuma are now back with only their mother. We are funding their monthly schooling and transport expenses.



The living conditions at their home are challenging. Above shows toilet block in disrepair which we have quotations to fix

I have for a long time aimed to set a program in place so that when the girls leave an institution like Yasodara they are given a helping hand to live a better life, such as help with required skills, training and study for a career. The first program we plan to implement will be the funding of English lessons. With tourism now such a big part of Sri Lanka's future, the need to speak English is a big bonus for young people finding work.

With a forthcoming visit to Sri Lanka by myself and 2 other Karuna committee members, Katie and John, we look forward to visiting the children and building new relationships with the orphanages where they are now homed and the families they have returned to.



Shashi with gifts from Karuna for Sanduni who has been re-homed to a new orphanage. We are covering all schooling expenses.



Bashini is now at an adult training centre for young women. We gifted her a new phone and regular payments for living expenses.

With the continued closure of Yasodara, we felt strongly the need to remain transparent with you on the current situation. We are disappointed and upset to say the least that the girls from Yasodara are no longer together in their home where they were safe and had formed important friendships, and have again been displaced. We hope that you can also see as we do that there could be a positive opportunity for us to follow through with our ongoing support of these amazing girls.

Thank you as always,

Justin and the Karuna committee

June, Allan, Merle, Tim, Katie and John