



KARUNA SRI LANKA INC APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER



A safe house to call a HOME of their own!

Hi to all our fantastic donors from the Karuna Committee!

Welcome to our first Karuna Sri Lanka Newsletter of 2022.

We hope you all had a good Christmas and now enjoy the easing of covid restrictions. It is good to see international borders opening again. This has given us the opportunity for one of our Committee Members to visit Galle during November/December 2021.

Read on to hear about the house we have rented to give 4 of our former Yasodara girls a home to enjoy living in with a carer.

GOOD NEWS IN THIS NEWSLETTER!!

- ✚ Vice-Presidents visit to Sri Lanka.
- ✚ Computer Classes.
- ✚ Tertiary education courses – more students.
- ✚ Birthday Celebrations.
- ✚ Latest Project – renting a safe house.
- ✚ Meet our new Co-ordinator - Jayani
- ✚ Profile of 2 of our young ladies from Yasodara.

Vice-President visits Sri Lanka

Our Vice-President, John Woods, was very keen to visit Sri Lanka when the Covid restrictions eased and was able to organise a trip during November/December 2021.

John has written the following report on his very successful visit:

Setting off in November 2021 I spent just over two weeks in Sri Lanka. I enjoyed many outings with the children after not being able to visit for so long.

The first outing was a trip that Shashi and Ishara do monthly to visit Pradeepa, Anusha, Sathya and Piyuma, Bhashini and the Roti children. It was a great success and we saw everyone in their home environment. Pradeepa lives on top of a huge hill which was quite an experience reaching! Anusha has had a baby so it was lovely to see her with her daughter. It was her birthday so we bought a cake to celebrate!! Anusha's home is very basic; however, she is happy if a bit isolated.

I caught up with Shashi, Dileka and Ishara most days as they are based in Galle and I took Supun surfing three times which was great to see him enjoying himself so much. It is his one outlet from working hard on his studies.

Shashi and I did a round trip to Colombo to catch up with Chandu, Nadeeka and Wassana who are scattered around villages nearer Colombo. These girls are all in their mid-20's, all formerly from Yasodara, an earlier generation! They are more settled and all have partners. They are happy with life although it is not easy. Chandu has a little sewing business but unfortunately her husband is out of work. Nadeeka is looking after her husband who had a bad motorbike accident last June. Wassana has the shop we assisted them with and this is working well. We also met Piyumi who is doing a childcare teacher training course that we are funding.

Another trip was to see Sachini near Yalla National Park. She has had another baby so her hands are full! She seemed very happy and also looked fantastic. She is still getting on well with her husband's family which was good to hear. On the same trip we went to see Nilmini who is still in Canadapura Orphanage. She was very shy but

pleased to see Shashi, Ishara and Dileka. We bought dry food for the orphanage so another successful outing.

I was very pleased to catch up with Dinithi (Dileka's sister) who is doing tremendously well with her own fruit and vegetable stall. She was so happy to see us and I was very impressed to see how well she is doing. Karuna may be able to assist her as the business expands.

We held a swimming pool party for fourteen of the children at my hotel on my last day. It was a tremendous success with lovely food, fruits and treats for the children. It was great to see so many former Yasodara girls back together and how they interacted with each other. There was great excitement that Anusha brought her baby daughter to meet everyone.

I have just arrived in Sri Lanka again and hope this trip is as successful as the last! It was an absolute pleasure for me to spend so much time with everyone. We feel it is so important for the girls to see that we care about them and when any of our Committee Members visit Sri Lanka we try to spend as much time as possible visiting everyone.

Programs still running

Computer Class – Advanced Diploma Level. Shashi, Ishara and Supun are continuing online classes to achieve their Advanced Diploma.

Computer Class - Certificate Level – Introductory – The children enrolled in these classes have been encouraged to resume. We have purchased phones for some of the children to enable them to work on the online classes we have arranged. More children are attending this class now which is great.

Tertiary Education

Ishara Is continuing to work on her online studies in Accounting, Business Studies and Economics classes which we fund.

Piyumi is continuing to work hard in her pre-school teacher training course.

Sathya and Piyuma are studying an online maths class.

Dileka is studying sewing at the Singer Fashion Academy – The courses include Certificate in Basic Scientific Dressmaking and 1st Kiddie's wear. There are 3 further additional courses Dileka will be able to study after this – Saree Jacket, Casual Dress and Tailoring if she does well. Dileka's aim is to be able to have her own business using these skills.

Gaguli has commenced Advanced Level Commerce Course which includes Business Studies, Economics and Accounting.

Ageesha left Yasodara Orphanage before it closed. She has succeeded in being awarded a scholarship to university (including lodgings). Ageesha is the first Yasodara girl to achieve a place at university. We wish her well and Karuna is happy to assist with purchasing text books if required. During John's visit to Sri Lanka this month he has a laptop computer which his company donated to present to Ageesha.

BIRTHDAYS should always be a fun experience

Once again, our Vice-Chairman, John Woods, organised birthday cakes. Over the years our girls have never experienced having a birthday cake to celebrate their special day and we know that John's kindness is very much appreciated.

There have been 4 birthday celebrations since our last newsletter so the birthday cake lady has been quite busy.

We celebrated:

Shashi's birthday in December,

Dileka in January

Sathya and Ishara in March



Ishara celebrating with friends

Dileka enjoys her birthday with friends

Our Latest Project

Renting a house to make a home.

In previous newsletters we have mentioned Sathya and Piyuma whose mother is now unable to look after them as she is unwell and sometimes has to spend time in hospital. For some time, we have been working towards establishing a “Safe House” for some of the girls who are living in vulnerable conditions. We have now found a suitable home in a safe area and fully furnished the property to accommodate girls who work and also those that still attend school. We have a carer living full-time on site. Teaching life skills is also the aim and we educate the children with grocery shopping and weekly budgets. All this is made possible thanks to our donors and sponsors and is a real step forward for Karuna ensuing brighter futures for these amazing children. We now have 4 girls living in this accommodation together with the carer.



We have furnished the safe house with new beds, wardrobes and study desks.

Traditional “new home” welcome ceremony



Our Previous Project

The shop at Panadura

Our Vice-President, John Woods, was able to visit the shop that we funded to enable Wasani (a Yasodara Orphanage girl) and her partner to start up. The shop is going well and customers are finding the large range of goods very enticing. We are pleased to see this large project working well.

Welcome to our new employee Jayani

We are excited to announce a new employee for Karuna in Sri Lanka. Ms. Jayani is a recently retired teacher from Gintota Maya School. Justin first met Jayani in 2013 and she has voluntarily assisted Karuna in the past. Jayani has assisted and still volunteers with other charity work in Sri Lanka and has a great knowledge of the education and child probation systems in Sri Lanka. She has also coached netball at a national level.



WELCOME TO KARUNA JAYANI.

PROFILES

Meet more of our young ladies - SATHYA and PIYUMA

Sathya is now eighteen and along with her sister Piyuma (17) has been living with their mother since leaving Yasadora. Both sisters' study hard and Sathya did really well in her GCSE. The girls lived up in the hills behind Galle and one of our past projects was to build a toilet for the family. Due to their mother's continuing illness, the girls are now living in the house Karuna has rented together with Dileka and Ishara. All these girls lived at the Yasodara Orphanage so they know each other well. This is a great opportunity for them to become responsible, learn to budget and keep the house clean and tidy. Sathya & Piyuma have enrolled in maths classes which we are funding to assist with improving their studies.



Update on donor James Floyds support.

You may have read in our previous newsletters that well known English Actor, James Floyd, who stars in the hit show “Good Karma Hospital”, is working with Karuna to help improve the lives of the girls from Yasodara Orphanage.

Last November, while filming Good Karma Hospital in Sri Lanka James re-united with the girls he met while visiting Yasodara Orphanage in 2017.

Considering covid was such an issue at the time it was a minor miracle to get everyone together for a beautiful day by the beach!

The girls were starstruck of course but after tough months of lockdowns it was a very happy day for them all to just enjoy themselves and it was great for James to re-connect. The girls bought James a gift of framed photos of the girls when they were living at the Yasodara Orphanage to show their appreciation of his continuing support.



Big thanks JAMES for organizing this get together!

DONATIONS

Our regular donors deserve a BIG THANK YOU. Your continuing support and interest in our small charity gives us the opportunity to offer the girls a better education especially as quite a few have now left school and wish to advance their studies or work on a career opportunity. This could not happen without your regular donations.

Good2Give

Is a Corporate organisation which offers employees of registered businesses to make pre-tax donations. The employee is able to decide the amount they wish to donate on a regular basis and the employer will match the amount!! This is a great opportunity for us and we are pleased to report our first donor has registered with us. If you know of anyone that works in a company with this opportunity, please let them know we are registered with Good2Give.

To Our Donors

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.

OUR COMMITMENT

Our commitment to our Karuna Sri Lanka Inc. donors is that all money donated is used entirely for the support of our organisation in Sri Lanka. We are a volunteer run charity and we do not use any of your donations towards our running costs. These are met by Justin, our President, and other committee members.

Please pass this Newsletter on

If you have friends or relatives that you feel may be interested in reading this newsletter, donating, visiting our website or following us on Facebook please forward this newsletter to them to read about our work.

Website: www.karunasrilanka.com.au (Donation form is available on this site.)

Facebook: Visit our [Facebook page](#) karuna sri lanka inc.

OR contact Justin on 0423 169 328.

Please remember: *You helped to put smiles on the children's faces!*