



## KARUNA SRI LANKA INC

### SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



**Great news – we have a new Safe House with a garden**

***Our Vice-President, John Woods visited Sri Lanka in April 2023.***

***This is his story of a very busy trip***

(As per our rules, any committee member visiting Sri Lanka pay for their own flights and accommodation)

**Welcome dinner** John arrived on the 14<sup>th</sup> April which is New Years Day in Sri Lanka and a very important day in their culture. The girls in the safe house hold their own ceremony in the home to welcome the new year at a set time of the day.

It is custom in Sri Lanka for families to purchase a new outfit for the celebrations and every year Karuna provides a new outfit to the children and families we help.

John was treated to an amazing lunch at the safe house and was very impressed with the way the girls have settled in and keep the house very clean and tidy. He was very happy to see Dexter, (the dog John bought and maintains for the girls) was enjoying having a garden to run around in.

We have also bought some new furniture and the girls now have their own wardrobes, as well as a big dining table and chairs which they can also use for studying.



In the 18 months since we have funded the safe house it has been a big success. The girls are all now settled in study programs and job opportunities as well as feeling safe and cared for.

We are proud to see them enjoying life in this way.



### *Visit to meet Dileka*

John has worked with Dileka from England to help her through a rough time mentally. Alongside this counselling we have found her a nice, safe boarding house where Dileka feels she is part of a family and she sent us a video of her room as she was so proud to be living in a decent home.

We also helped her find a steady job and she is now enjoying life at long last. She is a very bright young lady and always has a big smile despite a tough upbringing. We have also enrolled her in a month long intensive English school due to start in September, with a hospitality course to follow.

Sachini and her children were very happy to see John, Shashi, Sathya, Piyuma, Sanduni & Ishara when they visited her. Sachini lives in a very small one room house with her husband and 2 children on the in-law's property. She



has a hard life, with not a lot of support from her husband and family which is sad to see.

We visit once a month and take some dry foods, sanitary products and medicines for the children to make life easier.

John visited Sachini twice as it was her birthday and also took Ageesha and Dileka with him as they were all at the orphanage together. Ageesha had not seen Sachini for around 5 years so there were lots of tears on reunion. John also arrived with a



*Sachini with her husband, children, Ageesha and Dileka.*

lovely birthday cake which was a big surprise and something Sachini would not normally receive. We support her as much as we can.



Visit to Pradeepa. John and the girls were then able to meet Pradeepa who lives a few hours away from Galle in a rural area. The girls were all very close at Yasodara so it was a fun visit. Pradeepa is now married to a soldier and lives with her mother-in-law. Her husband only has leave from the army for 10 days every 3 months. She works 7 days a week in a shop to donate her wages to the family fund. Pradeepa had very good grades at school so we are hoping to help her re-start her study and create a better life for herself.



*Pradeepa, 2nd right front row meeting with John and the girls.*

Moravinna Children's Home in Pandura. John was able to visit Moravinna Childrens Home in Panadura with Shashi and the girls in our safe house. The children in the home were very welcoming and the 4 girls from our safe house formed an instant bond with each other as they know exactly how life is lived after years at Yasodara children's home.





After meeting the children and matrons who run the home and delivering food, we were able to discuss the needs of the home. We were able to return a second time with 6 pedestal fans for the bedroom areas to help keep the rooms cooler in such a hot climate.



We also delivered requested dry foods and treats on both visits. Karuna now visits monthly and the safe house girls continue to grow a friendship and really enjoy the visits too.

**The Manacare Foundation Orphanage** After Karuna had visited and met Joy from Manacare on our last visit in November 2022, John was able to meet her this time.

Joy is a very busy lady with varied projects within the Manacare grounds- she works with many special needs and disabled local children and families to which Karuna donates every month to help pay for the physiotherapist. There is a young girl Oneka who is unable to walk and we have assisted to buy her splints, which will help strengthen her leg muscles with the dream



that one day she will walk on her own accord.



*Students attending the Montessori school.*

Joy also has a Montessori school for the nearby village children.

Manacare accept volunteers from around the world to help day to day with any skills they have and Joy also employs local ladies from the nearby village to make soaps and towels which are then sold to hotels to help fund Manacare

Maheesha - has been living in Childrens Corner Orphanage since Yasodara closed. We visit her often and she has become a model student and just completed her O level exams. We have helped her



older sister Chamodi to start a small shop in her village with her husband. We have also found them a rental house so that Maheesha can move in with Chamodi.



*The small shop Chamodi has started.*

We will continue to assist Maheesha and help further her studies to hopefully give her a bright future.

Bashini - John's timing in Sri Lanka also coincided with Bhashini having a baby girl! Everyone enjoyed the visit especially the girls who got to have a cuddle. We arranged to help fix the bedroom roof on Bhashini's house and delivered some baby care products as well.

We look forward to our next visit this year to see how the bub has grown. Shashi continues to visit every month so Karuna can help with any needs.



*John, Shashi and the girls visit to Bashini and her baby*



## MORE KARUNA NEWS

**Netball Competitions** Jayani has been very pleased to see the teams she coaches doing so well in a recent netball competition.

- ✚ 2 teams – Under 20 and Under 16 won their Grand Final match.
- ✚ 1 team – Under 18 lost their Grand Final match by 1 point.

It was a great result as prior to Jayani taking on the coaching role the netball teams have never won anything in the school's history.



*Under 16 Team celebrate their win.*



*Jayani (rhs) with her successful team in their Wembley Uniforms*

Thanks to Wembley WA netball club in Australia, Karuna donated uniforms to the teams last November and they have been a big hit and hopefully contributed to their success!

**Rashmika**- When Karuna built the cricket nets at Gintota Maya school back in 2013 and employed a coach, the dream was that we could help produce some talented cricketers to match the richer schools.

Rashmika came through those early years at Gintota and last year made his first-class debut. We were very proud!

He is now playing his first season of club cricket in England.

Huge thanks to our secretary Sarah who lives in England, she was able to complete some fundraising to present Rashmika with a new bat and helmet on his arrival. He was then able to celebrate his first century for the club not long after.



Chandu receives industrial sewing machine and overlocker We have been assisting Chandu with the rental of a sewing machine and overlocker for quite a while. The rental contract was coming to an end and therefore we decided it would be better financially to purchase 2 second-hand machines to keep Chandu's business going. She works very hard to make money working from home rather than a sewing factory to enable her to look after her young child. Chandu visited the warehouse with Jayani, one of our co-ordinators, to enable her to trial the machines before purchasing.



Thanks, from Piyumi - one of our Yasodara girls we have watched grow up



*Piyumi with her delicious birthday cake*

John has, for a few years, organised for the girls to receive a special cake on their birthday

This is a copy of the note Justin received from Piyumi after receiving her cake. (In Sri Lanka the word "Brother" is communally used)

Brother, I received the cake you sent. I was very surprised. I was very happy. Thank you. We ate cake. I have never eaten a cake worth so much in my life. Today is the happiest birthday of my life. I am happy today because of you. Thank you for your kindness

## DONATIONS

Thank you everyone who has donated to our charity and continue to support us. We may be a small charity but we have a big heart and feel we are making a difference to many lives in Sri Lanka. The Karuna Committee are the face of the charity but our donors are the heart as the programs and accommodation assistance we give could not be achieved without you

**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 that amount!! This is a great opportunity for us and we are pleased to report our first donor continues to support us. If you or anyone you know works in a company with this opportunity, please look for us in the Good2Give register.

## To Our Donors

**PAYPAL now available.** Just a reminder that we can now receive payments via PayPal. This option is now available on our website.

### A FUNDRAISING IDEA TO CONSIDER.

**The PayPal Gift Fund** is a very easy way to raise funds for our charity if you wish. The idea is to select Karuna Sri Lanka Inc. as your favourite charity on the PayPal Gift Fund Facebook page. Instead of receiving a gift for a birthday, special anniversary or event you can request friends to donate to our charity. You may have already received requests from friends for this type of fundraising. The PayPal Gift Fund does not deduct fees from any donations therefore all proceeds are received by the charity. We have already had 2 donors raising funds for us and the donations have amounted to over \$2,000 which is amazing.

**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.***

### ***A Note from the Committee***

#### ***Please pass this Newsletter on to others***

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.

Website: [www.karunasrilanka.com.au](http://www.karunasrilanka.com.au) (A Donation form is available on this site.)

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

OR contact Justin on 0423 169 328.

### **AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:**

***You help to put smiles on the children's faces and improve their health and education opportunities!***