



KARUNA SRI LANKA INC

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER



Ishara, one of the young ladies in the safe house celebrates her 21st Birthday. John, our great vice-president funded the party, including dinner to finish the day off. Thanks, John for your amazing generosity, Ishara had a fantastic day.

June Foote our Treasurer visited Sri Lanka on 4th March 2024 for 3 weeks and was joined by John Woods, Vice-President on 22nd March and he stayed until 1st April

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

Please check our article at the end of this newsletter where we show you how we spend your generous donations.

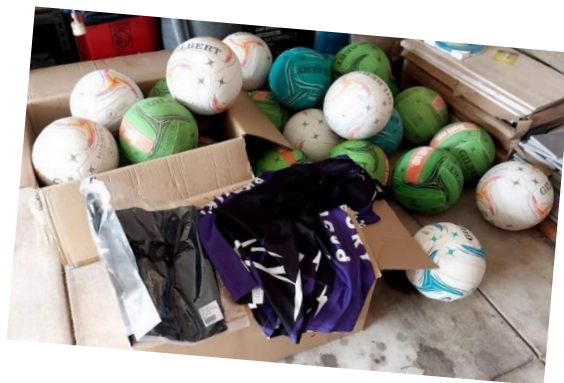
This newsletter starts in Perth before June travelled to Sri Lanka. We wish to share with you 2 very generous donations of items to Karuna.

Netball Items

Uniforms, bibs and 28 netballs donated to Karuna from the Padbury Netball Club. It was not possible to take everything on this trip due to luggage allowance, however, 2 sets of uniforms, 2 sets of bibs and some netballs were packed. More of these items will be taken next time I visit Sri Lanka. We wish to thank Padbury Netball Club for this very generous donation.



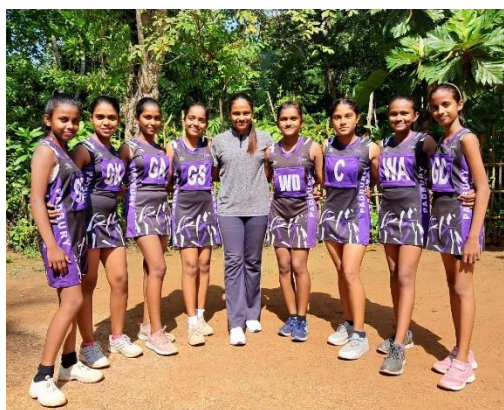
Melissa and Sally delivered all these netball uniforms and balls



The uniforms and netballs were very well received by 2 netball clubs in Sri Lanka



June presenting the uniforms and receiving a thank you speech from the team captain.



Manacare - Hopes & Dreams Village wish to commence playing netball with their after-school students.

I met with the new coach to show her the uniforms, bibs and netballs, she was very happy with them.

They are now looking forward to their first practice match. The uniforms look very smart and have given the girls a lot of confidence.

, The new team wearing their uniforms

Sam's Spares – refurbished laptops

Sam's Spares is a WA non-profit organisation set up by Samuel Thomas, who lives with autism. Sam's Spares is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to reducing IT Computer E-waste and bridging the gap between the IT end-user and the E-waste recycler. Their mission is to refurbish and repair discarded computer electronics, making them available to those in need and providing training in repairs for our neurodivergent community. When the donated laptops, mobile phones, monitors etc. are refurbished this organisation donates them to other non-profit organisations.

We have been very grateful to receive 3 re-furbished Dell laptops to take to the girls living in the safe house in Galle. Presently they have 1 donated laptop from our last trip between 4 girls.

They were very surprised and delighted to receive their own laptop, as they are all busy either studying for a university entrance exam to become a lawyer, attending school to pass A level exams or studying to achieve qualifications to be a nurse,



June receiving 3 Dell laptops from Sam



It was fun presenting the laptops to Ishara, Piyuma and Sathya

BIG THANKS to Sam and his team for their kind donations



We are very proud of our 1st University student – Ageesha

During our stay in Sri Lanka, we heard that Ageesha had been chosen to introduce the Election Commissioner of Sri Lanka who was visiting the University to give a talk.

Ageesha is doing very well at her studies and works very hard. She is a high achiever.

We assist Ageesha with the cost of her university accommodation which she is very grateful for.

Manacare – Hopes and Dreams Village



Joy was very happy to receive coloured pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, text books, biros and lead pencils. Classes are held every afternoon at Manacare after school and on Saturday therefore this much needed stationery will be very helpful.

June, presenting all the stationery to Joy



Ramani and Sanduni holding the quilt the ladies made.

The ladies in the sewing room at Manacare were very interested in the half-made quilt June had brought with her. Joy had mentioned she wished to make quilts to sell, however the ladies were not sure of the concept. They soon understood and within a couple of days they had made their first one. They certainly picked up the concept quickly.

Sanduni, on the right is 17 years old and has been looking after her disabled mother since she was small therefore, she has never attended school. They had been mistreated by the husband/father therefore Joy has welcomed them into one of the houses at Manacare where they can live safely and Sanduni can start her education. She is a very bright girl, loves helping in the sewing room and always has a big smile on her face.

Iolantha and Ramani happy to receive a new steam iron we purchased. They were using a very old dry iron which had a faulty thermostat.



Visit to Bhagya and family

Bhagya lives in a small village in the country. Jayani, June, Dileka and Dinithi visited Bhagya, it was good to see her daughter, Oshimi, who is growing fast. Unfortunately, Bhagya explained that the tree plants they planted had died during the recent very hot, unusually dry weather in Sri Lanka. They have applied to the Government for a grant of 1,000 free plants.

Everyone enjoyed a very tasty lunch which Bhagya made. Dileka and Dinithi enjoyed playing with Oshimi, they love little children while Jayani and June chatted with Bhagya about a new project she is thinking about. This entails building a small shop in their front room where there is a large window which would be able to be used to serve customers. The village does not have a shop and it is a long way from the nearest town. We hope Bhagya will be successful in this new project.



Dileka playing with Oshimi.



June, giving small gifts to Oshimi.



*The visit would not be complete without a group photo.
Oshimi, Bhagya, June, Dinithi, Jayani and Dileka*

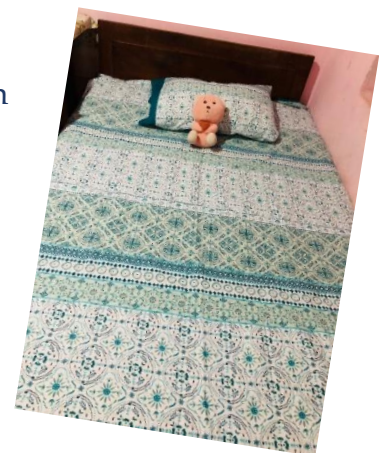
Quilts for Dileka, Dinithi and Ageesha

During her last trip to Sri Lanka in November 2023 June gave quilts she had made to the girls in the safe house and Shashi to give them something that they can keep and take with them whenever they move on.

This trip it was Dileka, Dinithi and Ageesha's turn to receive their quilts.



Dileka receiving her quilt



Dileka sent this photo when she returned to her boarding house.



Dinithi loved the colours of her quilt.



Ageesha was also happy with her quilt.

A great day at Sukitha Orphanage

John, Jayani and June travelled to Sukitha Orphanage, a home for children and adults with special needs. It was good to meet with Janaka and Maneesha once again. Since our last visit in November 2023 to celebrate the opening of the new accommodation block Maneesha has set up a vocational centre where the ladies and gentlemen living at the orphanage can make and sell a



The Sukitha Shop is situated on the main to attract Customers

large collection of items, including bath mats, clothing, bags, hair clips and other small items. The proceeds assist in keeping the orphanage going.



The next big project is to rebuild a very old footbridge on the property. The Free Town Trust in England have very kindly donated \$1,000 towards this project. Karuna continues to assist with regular monthly sponsorship.



John with Moksha who made this lunch bag John purchased.

Moksha gave a very special thank you speech in english while we enjoyed a very nice lunch

World Down Syndrome Day 21st March 2024

Jayani is part of a group that give support to down syndrome children and their families. This celebration day was held in Colombo therefore Jayani, Miheli, (Jayani's grand-daughter) and June caught the highway bus to Colombo then had a tuktuk ride to the celebration venue which was outside a church with a good fence to hang signs on. It was great fun waving at the passing traffic to make them notice the signs. People walking past were given a card one of the ladies had made which the organisation had printed. The young lady was very proud to hand the cards out.



Some of the signs for people to read. I am sure Australia can relate to these.



June receiving her card from the young lady that made it.



Karuna and The Freetown Trust gave donations to the Down Syndrome organisation to assist the children and their families.



Visiting Sachini and family

We always wish to visit Sachini, we have watched her 2 children grow up. On this trip Jayani and June visited Sachini and her family. They live in a 1 room house with a verandah at the front where we sat and chatted to them. The children played with the small gifts we had purchased on the way together with some food to assist them as Sachini's husband is not working.



Jayani shopping for Sachini and her family.



Sachini and her husband



Sachini's children playing with the toys we gave them.

We visited Chamodi and Maheesha on the way home.

It was great to see Chamodi with her small shop which is open until 9pm. They live in a small area where there are no local shops and when Chamodi approached us with a project to build and open a shop for the locals we assisted her to realize her goal. The shop is doing well and she is introducing new products all the time as people request different items. She even has a small area for fresh vegetables now.



Maheesha, Chamodi and her husband in front of the shop

Maheesha, Chamodi's younger sister who is living with them is now attending school to do her "A" Levels. We bought her uniform and school bag when she started school and also pay for her bus fares as the school is a reasonable distance away from her home as well as tutoring and dance classes.

Maheesha looks very smart in her new uniform. It always amazes me how clean the uniforms are as many families do not even have a washing machine!!

She is a very good traditional dancer and has been asked to perform in a big concert. Hopefully we will have some photos for the next newsletter.

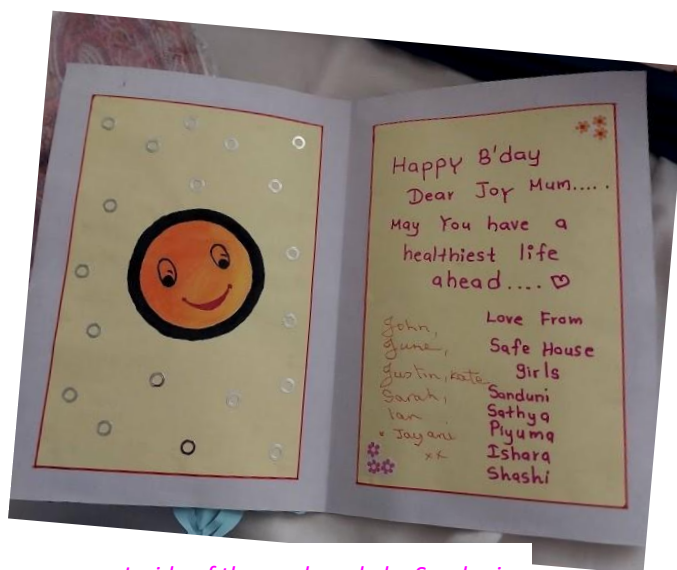


Joy, from Manacare celebrated her birthday and invited us all to attend.

It was a cheese and wine party; our girls drank Coca-Cola!! They enjoyed meeting Joy again and she was delighted with the birthday cake, baked by Piyuma and Sathya plus the birthday card which Sanduni made.



The birthday cake, card and gift for Joy.



Inside of the card made by Sanduni

Great news, we have re-connected with Thanuja, one of the girls that lived at Yasodara Girls Orphanage

We lost touch with Thanuja when she left Yasodara, however a facebook article put us in touch with her again. Justin and John are really pleased to have found her. Jayani organised for us to visit Thanuja and her family when we had Dileka and Dinithi with us. June just wishes she had taken a photo when the 3 girls met, it was as if they were young children again, they were laughing and hugging, obviously very happy to see each other.

Thanuja welcomed Jayani and June as if she had known them for ages. She is such a bubbly, happy lady. It was her son's 2nd birthday recently and Thanuja decided to do alms giving to a local orphanage nearby where they look after down syndrome girls and adult ladies. The meaning of Alms is that people cook food, give money or other material goods and take it to an orphanage or families in poverty. Karuna wished to help Thanuja and she requested a donation towards the alms giving food.

Thanuja and her husband took us to the orphanage where she had taken the alms giving. The girls/ladies were very happy to see us especially when we gave each one a small chocolate bar. Unfortunately, because it is a government run home, we were unable to look inside the buildings or take photos without permission from the probation board. Hopefully we will be able to visit again one day.



Jayani, Dileka, Thanuja with her son and Dinithi



June presenting almsgiving donation to Thanuja

Morawinna Childrens Home

John, Shashi and the girls from the safe house always enjoy visiting Morawinna. The girls at the home have really bonded with our girls as they understand about living in an orphanage. We always buy a variety of dry foods which the matron suggests that they need. In addition to the food, we are supplying them with a re-filled gas bottle. The cook has been using a large open fire cooking for over 20 girls. Firewood is getting expensive plus the cook finds the heat and smoke from the fire very uncomfortable. We are sure our donors will be happy to know that some of their kind donations go to this cause. Due to government rules, we are unable to take photos of the children.

We always visit Bhashini on the way to Morawinna.

Bhashini is always happy to see John and the girls. Her little girl is growing quickly and Bhashini really appreciates the baby food and other small items we give her.



Ganguly receives a phone



Ganguly has been studying hard and is now waiting for her A level results. Her goal is to attend University. We have funded Ganguly's studies along the way to enable her to complete her A levels.

John was happy to present Ganguly with a mobile phone that had been kindly donated to us.

Ganguly is also an amazing artist in her spare time. She gave, this recently finished drawing to John.



Ishara's 21st birthday party

Last but certainly not least Ishara had a wonderful 21st Birthday with her friends from Karuna. We have watched Ishara grow up since she was **8 years old**. The venue was a gym that John often attends and we must thank Sophie, the manager for arranging the balloons and hanging the Happy Birthday sign. John had arranged a birthday cake and flowers as he always does for the girls. After cutting the cake and opening presents everyone enjoyed a swim in the pool as it was a very hot day. The party ended with everyone enjoying a meal from the extensive menu. Thanks to John for funding this great celebration.



Everyone enjoyed the swimming pool.



Sisters Ganguly and Anjula arrived later due to working and enjoyed a swim with Shashi.



A GREAT DAY WAS HAD BY ALL

Thank you for reading this newsletter. Once again it was good to spend time with everyone, however it also highlights the work we still have to do going forward.

As we always say - **WE COULD NOT DO THIS WITHOUT YOU.**

Update on how important your donations are. Presently we are funding the following projects plus other small projects as they are needed:

- ✚ Renting the safe house where 4 girls can live safely and attend further education.
- ✚ Food and expenses for the safe house.
- ✚ Wages for 2 co-ordinators.
- ✚ Education expenses for some of our girls to obtain their A levels to enable them to continue their education, achieve independence and good employment opportunities.
- ✚ Funding hospitality courses and study fees for university entrance exams.
- ✚ Boarding house and University accommodation fees.
- ✚ We visit Morawinna Childrens Home every month It gives us the opportunity to provide alms giving dry foods and a gas bottle for cooking. This makes it so much easier for the cook who only had a cook top heated by an open wood fire.
- ✚ Visiting and assisting girls that lived at the Yasodara Girls Orphanage and now have children of their own. We feel it is important to keep in touch and offer support.
- ✚ Set up business opportunities for girls that submit a business plan for the committee to consider. If approved we assist with funding and monitor the progress of the project.
- ✚ Assist Sukitha Home for children and adults with disabilities to achieve building a new accommodation facility. This was completed in 2023 and we continue to assist with plans to replace a bridge on the property which is in need of rebuilding.
- ✚ Fund an extra day for the physiotherapist to attend his clinic at Manacare.
- ✚ Fund cricket coaching fees at Gintota High School.
- ✚ Assist netball clubs with uniforms and equipment which have been donated to us.

If you have any friends or relatives, you think may be interested in our work, please pass this newsletter on. We are always hoping for more regular donors to join our team. Even a regular donation of \$10 per month would be gratefully received.

There are different ways we are able to receive much needed donations.

THE PAYPAL GIFT FUND does not deduct fees from any donations therefore all proceeds are received by the charity. We have already had donors raising funds for us and the donations have amounted to over \$3,800 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.

DIRECT TO OUR BANK 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.

Karuna Sri Lanka Inc. – Westpac Bank

BSB: 036-044 Account No: 339-908

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

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

A little Note to end:



The schools in Sri Lanka often have encouraging notices around the schools and these are just two of them. It may be good for our schools to follow this example to encourage students.