

"I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Heb 2:13



May 2018

Dear all

May 2018 already- this year is moving along at a steady pace and it's time for us to update you all on the happenings at Have Faith Projects and India.

Our first Newsletter of 2018 is going out to both Sponsors and those who gave to our recent Sukumar appeal. We wanted to update you all on his progress.

As you know, Sukumar was diagnosed with 'leaking valves' in July 2017, eventually admitted to hospital end of December 2017 and his heart operation brought forward as a matter of urgency to the 8th January 2018. The private hospital that did the surgery were/are an amazing group of doctors committed to the care of both poor and paying patients. They performed the life-saving surgery and care for Sukumar at a significantly reduced cost and their ongoing treatment for Sukumar is as exemplary. In fact, they have committed to doing a health clinic with the India home each year, for children and staff, as well as making their own donation towards the children's education this year (GBP£500.00).

We visited India in February this year and went to see both Sukumar and the hospital staff. Sukumar, his mom and grandmother were all smiles: he is recovering very well and even his scar is already fading to a thin line down his chest. We had not fully appreciated that he is the only surviving male child in his family. What a privilege for us to be part of his amazing story, and we are grateful to God for the way things were orchestrated to bring this to pass. And a massive thank you to all those who helped us not only reach our fund-raising target of £4500.00 but achieved £5500.00!! And all in 4 weeks... The extra monies are now ring-fenced for Sukumar's ongoing medication costs, which will be for a life-time. Happily, the doctors say his new valve should last at least 40-50 years. What a difference to the 6-month life expectancy he originally had. As we write this letter, it's safe to say that it's not only Sukumar and his family who are smiling.

Sukumar will return to the home and school in June this year. He is very excited, as are both the Trustees and the Home! A bit of a party is being planned to celebrate.

There are another 74 children who also require care and attention, though thankfully not as medically challenging. We have had some ups and downs, as you do with that many children. When we (Sandra & Neil) visited in February, we had the opportunity to take children to the beach. Although only 81km's away, it was a 3-hour, hair-raising bus journey to Machilipatnam. Warm sea, wide beaches and a mild day were just what the doctor ordered. About 95% of the children had never seen the sea, and nearly as many never seen open water, even in lake form. We had brought a number of games (volley ball, cricket, hoops etc.) with us to the beach, but once the children were in, they simply did not want to get out. After 7 attempts we did manage to safely retrieve them from the water & enjoy a picnic of curry & rice before heading back home. It's the appreciation of the simple things in life that keep catching us off guard every time we visit. We took home 74 happy & tired children from a trip that I think most will remember for a very long time. And the following day, we had 'Water Olympics', finishing off with a huge water fight. Fantastic stuff!

The downs? One of the young girls in the home had to write her final exam, 2 days after her brother (older, not part of Have Faith India) was tragically killed in a farming accident. They were quite close and, obviously, she is devastated. Unfortunately, the Indian schooling system does not allow for any exceptions and if she did not write her exam, they would simply fail her and she would have to resit the entire year. It does not seem very fair, and it was a difficult decision for the team in India to send her to school to write it.

Also, one of the older girls (just 15) has recently been paired by her only surviving family member – grandfather - to a man for marriage. We are unlikely to see her return to the home after the summer break, which is a great pity as she made so much

progress and worked very hard for her good grades in the last school year (March 2018 exams). However, as the home has no legal hold, there is nothing they or us can do about it. We trust that the difference made whilst at the home, will stand her in good stead!

On the 26th March, the children finished their exams and finished the school year about mid-April... always weather-dependent. School was at only half days, and the home got through a lot of craft materials as they occupied their time. As it gets hotter, the school closes earlier if the temperature becomes too high. Many of the children returned home to either parent(s), grandparents or extended family, if they have any. Those who have nowhere to go, remain with Syam & Shanta over the summer. School starts again in June, again heat-dependent!

The children in India all did well in their exams. We anxiously waited for the results for Chaitanya: he had already broken State records for his previous results. He achieved it for his finals too (equivalent UK A Levels). Though he will get a State bursary towards his school fees to train to become a doctor, which he really wants to do, we recently learned that the entrance exam and lessons would cost GBP£1200. Then we add the rest of the fees plus books and, whilst that would be fantastic, we are unfortunately unable to help him with those costs, which will run to about GBP£3000/year. We will, as a charity, see what can be done but he would (as second choice) also like to do cultural engineering which is about GBP£600 in total for the year, which is a manageable sum, and we are happy to support him in that too. It may seem a small amount to people generally but when you have another 70-odd to get through schooling, it becomes difficult. A difficult truth....

We wanted to come back to the number of children: the last time we wrote, we had 68 listed at the home that we were supporting. Syam had taken another 6 children on a temporary basis from the school but, as a charity, we cannot financially support any more. It is still a good number of children to keep the family feel, and it's good to see the close friendships develop as the children consider each other as 'brothers and sisters'. We will be back to 68 for the school year starting June 2018.

From a Have Faith Projects note, you may have noticed we are quite active on the Website and, recently, Facebook to some extent. Peter has joined the team to manage the website, and we are grateful to him for volunteering to update and tidy our website a little...or a lot, as he has made some great improvements. Part of the website now also includes children's profiles, so do pay a visit to: www.havefaithuk.org.uk and have a read.

Charity Checkout remains our main on-line donation tool, though there is a charge of 8% (the lowest of the charitable tools available and they also have a great support team too. The charge also takes away the administrative burden of managing Gift Aid which they take care of).

As we close this brief update, we want to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their ongoing support and care shown to us, as both a charity and the children we are committed to supporting. Without it, a number of children would simply fall through the cracks of society ...including some like Sukumar, who if he had not been in the home to start with, would have simply become another statistic of children dying in India as a result of poverty and no access to care and education. So, THANK YOU – you are making a huge difference in the lives of these children – and we trust that the pictures and stories on the website, reflect a small part of that!

And so, as our 9th School Year finishes and the 10th starts for Have Faith Projects India, we pray you will have a wonderful few months ahead – that summer WILL appear in the UK and that as we start planning our 10th anniversary celebrations, you will take encouragement from all you have done to give these children a happy, loving start, and hope for the future.

Warm regards & heartfelt thanks

God bless

The Trustees, Have Faith Projects