



VELLORE NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL (QLD)

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(Qld FOV is a branch of the Australian Board of the Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital)

Dear Friends,

One of the many reasons I am happy to join others in regularly supporting the Friends of Vellore with personal effort and with a donation is because I am assured of the financial integrity of the Australian Board and the various State groups, the accounts of which are subject to professional audit. So too are the accounts of the Christian Medical College itself. A Council with representatives from its many member Churches in India and its overseas support organisations provides oversight.

And it is not only financial integrity which is significant. I have had the privilege of meeting many of the CMC staff in the Directorate and at many other levels of the work of the Hospitals and the College as well in the communities they serve. Not only their level of expertise but also their commitment to the ideals of the whole institution are certainly inspiring.

We invite you and your friends to:

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF QLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE

Uniting Church Foyer, 1050 Waterworks Rd, The Gap

2 pm Saturday, 24 November, 2012

Speaker: Mrs Cathy Chandani who chairs the Qld Friends' Committee and has recently visited CMC Vellore

RSVP to: GwendSpencer33001542(gwendaspencer@hotmail.com) or
Brian Lee 33513272 (jblee19@bigpond.net.au)
before 17 November

THE PAUL BRAND BUILDING AT CMC

Born into a missionary family in India and receiving medical training in UK in the 1940s, Dr Paul Brand became a famous member of the CMC Vellore staff because of his pioneering work in hand surgery for people damaged because of leprosy. He is recognised as the first to convince the medical world that, since many leprosy sufferers lose all sensation in fingers and toes, losses in these were the result of injuries, not because of some supposed “wasting” of tissue because of leprosy. Dr Brand received a number of prestigious awards because of his work.



The former College of Nursing building has been refurbished for its new use. It now houses the administrative offices of the Departments of Surgery, Orthopaedics, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and their specialties. Now named the Paul Brand Building it was dedicated for its new use in September.

A painting of the Himalayas by the late Dr Howard Somervell surgeon, Everest mountaineer, painter, musician and formerly CMC lecturer, which was donated by Dr Christina Selvapandian, was also unveiled.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS BY BANK TRANSFER

People wishing to donate to CMC Vellore may find it more convenient to pay by Bank transfer rather than by cheque. Our Treasurer, Richard Caitens, has provided the following information:

Full Name of Account: Friends of Vellore Christian Medical College & Hospital Queensland Group Support Fund. (You can enter just: Friends of Vellore Support Fund)

BSB no.: 633000

Account no.: 131073413

Reference: Your surname and suburb (or as much as space allows)

After making the transfer, please send an email regarding your deposit to the Treasurer at this email address: cmcvellore@optusnet.com.au so a receipt can be sent to you.

LEPROSY IN INDIA – VARALAKSHMI'S STORY

Though it has disappeared in many countries, leprosy still affects people in India. Early diagnosis and improved treatment has lessened leprosy's impact. Leprosy destroys the nerves, especially in the hands and feet, so that the patient loses sensation of pain, the body's warning of physical injury. Part of patient care is teaching people how to guard against injury and the need to seek help if injury happens. Men, women or children, often begging, their faces, hands and feet devastated by leprosy, was a common and distressing sight in India 50 years ago but is rarely seen now.

Varalakshmi, now 55, became a leprosy sufferer many years ago. She makes a meagre living to support herself and her invalid husband by running a roadside flower stall selling the fragrant garlands and flower buds worn by girls in their hair. Following instructions she regularly checks her hands and feet and one day noticed an ulcer between her toes.



Aware of the importance of early treatment she came to the CMC dermatologist and was admitted to a ward so her foot could be rested, the wounds cleaned and regularly dressed and she was given antibiotics. After three days she returned home with the treatment continuing until the wound was completely healed.

She had no resources to pay for this treatment so the cost was met from the Person to Person Fund, set up by well wishers throughout the world, including Australia, to help people like Varalakshmi.

MEDICAL STUDENTS' ELECTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

From many countries, including Australia, medical students spend time at CMC Vellore as part of their course. But it is not a one-way street. This year six CMC students took part in an Elective Exchange Program for 4 to 12 weeks in Karolinska University, Sweden, Maastricht University in the Netherlands, the National University of Singapore and Kyoto University in Japan. Amazing, incredible, unforgettable, enriching, enjoyable, an educative eye-opener – these were some of the words the returning students used to describe their experiences.

COLLEGE MOTTO AWARD AND MISSION HOSPITALS

Each year CMC's Alumni Association presents an award to a CMC graduate whose life and work exemplifies the College motto, "Not to be served but to serve". This year a doctor couple Shalini (known as Tina) and Anil Ninan Cherian received the award. When they completed their post-graduate training, Tina in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Anil in Paediatrics, there were many avenues open to them, but they both had a passion – to work at the grass roots level.



Through training and education they aimed to empower the community in which they worked and so move towards equality of health. To follow their dreams they stayed with mission hospitals. They went first to a hospital at Uttraula in Uttar Pradesh, identified as the most backward area in reproductive and child health in India at that time, and then moved to Chattarpur, where they managed both clinical and administrative responsibilities. They found in this backward area that hospital deliveries were taboo, trained assistants were not allowed to assist deliveries and untouchability was rife. Through their dedicated work the use of the hospital increased by 350%. A successful adolescent girls' training program on life skills and hygiene took off. Beyond the immediate work of the hospital they managed a "child environment" project focussing on safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

Now in Delhi they are involved in the implementation of many health and development projects in the EHA (Emmanuel Hospitals Association) spread over 7 States in North and North East India. As the Alumni Award was presented the speaker said, "At tremendous personal cost and sacrifice they have contributed generously with their time, wisdom and support and we have seen them raise the bar of clinical care and network across disciplines."

IT'S NOT ALL WORK – THERE IS SOME PLAY!

Visitors to CMC, especially overseas ones, don't think there seems to be much spare room in the Hospital Campus but enough space has been found for a very welcome synthetic tennis court which was inaugurated in July. It has been built to require minimal maintenance and is unaffected by adverse weather conditions. Membership, allowing use of the court, is available to residents of all three Vellore Campuses. The new lighting facilities allow use from 5.30am to 10.30pm. There is also a proposal to start tennis coaching for children and for adults.

CHATRAM – AN EXAMPLE OF COMPASSION AND CARE

On an average day up to 50 people, patients and their relatives, stay in Chatram, a low cost facility built for this purpose near the Hospital grounds. Chatram has a very long history.



At Dr Ida Scudder's famous weekly roadside clinics it was found that some patients needed outpatient treatment at the Hospital. To help them a temporary shelter was built but soon this was inadequate so two dormitories were constructed. Extensions in 1950 and again in 1959 gave more room. This structure was in a corner of the Hospital Campus where once there had been a parking place for horse-drawn carts. In

1968 the beginnings of the present Chatram were built near the Hospital on land that had been the Microbiology sheep pen. More rooms were added in 1988 and again in 2010 so now there are 18 rooms and 4 dormitories of varying sizes. There are facilities and access for patients with disabilities. There is a full time caretaker.

As a treat, local business people give the residents special food on festival days and some CMC doctors have initiated a fund to help with providing food for Chatram residents as well as for other very poor people who come to the Hospital for treatment.

Chatram may rightly be seen as another example of CMC's commitment to compassion and care for those in greatest need.



DR JOHN VANCE'S WORK OF "CARE AND COMPASSION"

Care and Compassion is the heading of an article in a Qld paper about this former Chairman of the Qld Friends of Vellore. Like some other retirees, John has retired in name only. Gradual loss of vision ended his work as a lecturer in paediatrics but he has found many ways to help others still. He has counselled people who, like him, have retinitis pigmentosa and has trained them to use a cane. He has advised Queensland Rail on improvements to help the visually impaired and successfully sought a Queensland Health grant to assist in rural areas. Using the help of a guide dog himself, he is also on the board of Guide Dogs Queensland.

During his lecturing career John spent 6 months as a volunteer at RUHSA, one of the rural outreach programs of CMC Vellore.

BINAY YADAV – A STORY FROM THE CHILDREN’S WARD

Nine year old Binay Yadav was born into a close knit North Indian family where grandparents, uncles, aunts, parents and children live together in the family home. Three of the family made the 2000km train ride to bring Binay to Vellore and stayed to look after him there,

Binay is the eldest in the family of Manoj Yadav and his wife Dinashwari. Manoj works as a day labourer which means Rs 100 per day when he can get work. A small piece of family land was sold to pay medical bills when Binay first became ill. Treatment in a local hospital for his fever, difficulty in passing urine and some diarrhoea, was both expensive and ineffective so Vellore was suggested. Somehow the family collected more money for fares and towards expenses at CMC Vellore.

In CMC’s children’s ward staff of the Unit specialising in kidney disorders saw him and made a diagnosis. The treatment involved about 10 days in hospital, 5 sessions of dialysis then a biopsy for further diagnosis and treatment. With no money left after the Rs 5000 deposit already paid, what to do?

Fortunately for little boys like Binay and thanks to supporters of CMC within India and overseas, the Hospital has funds for some free treatment. A percentage of all patient fees and professional charges go into a fund. From this the cost of treatment for poor patients can be drawn.

Also there are sources like the Endowment Fund and the Person-to-Person program which help many patients unable to pay full fees for essential treatment.

WORK BEGINS ON THE NEW NURSES’ HOSTEL

In the April Newsletter I wrote that when I visited the new College of Nursing in February, “I was told that negotiations with the authorities for permission to use this land for its intended purpose” (the Nursing Students’ Hostel) “are virtually complete and soon the building work will begin.” On 29 June there was a service at the College grounds to mark the laying of the foundation stone for this Hostel. As he unveiled the plaque the CMC Council Chairman, Dr Kuruvilla Varkey, spoke of Christ being the corner stone on which the pioneers have laid the foundation of the College of Nursing, an ideal which the present generation is called upon to carry forward. Many students, staff, faculty and Council members were present.

DINESH – A RUHSA STORY

For most of us, far away from the damage, a tsunami disaster captures the headlines at the time but is then easily forgotten. For those who suffer the devastation of a tsunami, like the one that hit many parts of coastal Asia, including India's east coast, on Boxing Day, 2004, only programs of long term help can allow families to be restored to normal life.

Social workers from RUHSA (the Rural Unit for Health and Social Action of CMC) visited homes soon after the tsunami. Dinesh, a young man just past high school years, was seen as one who could benefit from a course at RUHSA's Community College. They were impressed by the way his parents were doing so much for their community as it went on with the task of rebuilding.



When Dinesh completed his training at RUHSA he was a qualified Air Conditioning mechanic. "Sincere, hard working, of good character and conduct" was the report on his work placement in one of Vellore's hotels and he is now fully employed in what is described as "one of the best hotels in Vellore". Out of his Rs1500 monthly pay he sends his parents

Rs 1000. His younger brother also studies at the Community College.

Through Dinesh and many others, the CMC tsunami relief fund has been able to make a major contribution to securing good quality of life for this family who themselves are sharing their small resources to help the people of their village and in the surrounding neighbourhood.

FORMER PRESIDENT DELIVERS INAUGURAL ORATION



CMC was honoured to host His Excellency, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, as he delivered the very first Dr Ida S Scudder Memorial Oration. CMC and the Vellore CMC Foundation, New York, jointly established this Oration to honour the memory and legacy of the Founder of CMC. It aims "not only to recognise her immense contribution to the development and expansion of medical services in India but also to draw attention to the inspiring qualities of her character and life so that members of the healthcare professions may continue to emulate and embody these in their lives and service".

THE DVD “HOME OF A HEALING GOD”

Copies are available from Brian Lee (ph. 3351 3272 or jblee19@bigpond.net.au) for \$10 (including postage). It is a great resource to use to tell your friends about CMC Vellore, its people, its work and something of what makes it the great place it is. Copies will be available at the Annual Meeting on 24 November.

WEB SITES

www.australianfov.net.au

Vellore and USA sites: www.cmch-vellore.edu & www.vellorecmc.org

STREET STALL NEWS

Many thanks to those wonderful people who continue their many years of stall work and to those who have joined them recently. In recent months up to \$1500 a month has come just from these two stalls.

Each of the Toowong and Tank Street stalls happen once a month. New helpers are always welcome. Continuing needs include:

- Suitable items for sale, especially cakes and biscuits
- Help with transporting the goods
- Workers at the stalls
 - regularly or now and again as you are able.

If you, or someone you know, can help in this, kindly contact Mrs Claire Mainstone (3371 1332).

For much of the material in these Newsletters I am again indebted to CMC’s weekly “Newslink” and to Mrs Ann Witchalls’ great stories about people whose lives are changed by what happens at CMC Vellore.

Regards, Brian
(Newsletter Editor).

QLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE OFFICE BEARERS

Chairman: Mrs Cathy Chandani, 24 Mathews St, Bethania 4205 (0412391353)
 Vice Chairman: Rev John Hooper, 74 Meynell St, Salisbury 4107 (3701 0017)
 Hon. Secretary: Mrs Gwenda Spencer, 22 Elgata St, The Gap 4061 (3300 1542)
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