



VELLORE NEWSLETTER

OLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL

PRINT POST PUBLICATION NUMBER 100003849

Vol.49 No.2 October 2014. Subscription to newsletter \$5 p.a.

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

Dear Friends,

A good news story in this issue of our Newsletter is the election at the annual meeting of the Australian Board of Dr Bella George as President. This Board coordinates the efforts of the various State Friends of Vellore groups and helps to link our work with the policies and programs of the Christian Medical College. Dr Bella has played a leading role in this Qld group for many years and I personally am delighted that she is able to take up this new important role. More about Dr Bella on the next page.



Also on the next page is the invitation to the **Qld Friends of Vellore Annual Meeting** when annual reports are presented, office bearers and committee members are elected and plans for next year are discussed.

QLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE ANNUAL MEETING

This is an organisation that does not have a formal “list of members” but all who support FOV in any way are welcome to attend and take part in the Annual Meeting.

This is your invitation to the 2014 Annual meeting to be held in the foyer of The Gap Uniting Church, 1050 Waterworks Road, The Gap (next door to the High School), from 2pm Sunday 9 November.

RSVP please - Afternoon tea will be provided so we would like to know how many are coming. Kindly contact Ruby, our Secretary, (rubbycmc@yahoo.com or mob. 0431 963 557) or Brian Lee (jblee19@bigpond.net.au or ph. 33513272)

DR BELLA GEORGE

Dr Bella gained her MBBS at CMC Vellore where she was a student from 1965 to 1971. She married Tom George the following year joining him in UK where both did post-graduate training, Tom in Psychiatry and Bella in General Medicine and Geriatrics.

They came to Brisbane for only 2 years in 1978 but have not been able to leave this beautiful city. They have two married daughters and each couple has given them a grandchild.

Bella joined Qld Health in 1985, working there part-time till March this year. Since 1993 she has been working in General Practice.



Soon after Tom and Bella arrived in Brisbane in 1978, a Malayali friend, Rebecca George, took her to a Vellore dinner and there she met Dr Felix Arden who had recruited many into the community of CMC Vellore supporters.

Six years ago Dr Stephen Aseervatham, a member of the Australian Board, persuaded Dr Bella to accept the position of Vice-President.

Joining Dr Bella as the office bearers in the Australian Board are Dr Stephen Aseervatham, Vice-President, Liz Guiver, Secretary and Bella's fellow Queenslander, Richard Caitens, Treasurer.

Dr Ian Olver, the retiring President, concluded his report to the Australian Board with this: “I have always been aware of the hand of God at work at CMC but I am also in awe of the same guidance driving the many dedicated people who serve with the FOV groups in Australia. I am very confident to be handing over to Bella who will bring detailed background knowledge to the role.”

CMC ALUMNI IN AUSTRALIA



Most of those who graduate from CMC's Medical College go on to work in India. Over the years there are also those who have spent some years, or perhaps the rest of their working lives, in

other countries.

Perhaps because all CMC students live together in Hostels on the College campus, strong, often life-long, bonds are developed – and some marriages!

For a few years now 30 to 40 of the Australian Alumni have attended an annual meeting which includes a time of fellowship and renewed friendships as well as some serious lectures. Their meeting in Darwin last year will hopefully lead to the beginnings of a Friends of Vellore group in the Northern Territory.



This year the Alumni met in Brisbane. It was a great privilege for me to have dinner with them on Saturday night, 13 September, and conduct a worship service for them in the conference room on the 12th floor of Rydges Hotel, South Brisbane, on Sunday morning. The President of the Australian Board for CMC, Dr Bella George and the Vice-President, Dr Stephen Aseervatham,

are both CMC Alumni. Alumni play significant roles in the State Friends of Vellore groups.

NEW AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES ON THE WAY

Many of you have had glimpses of “a day in the life of CMC Vellore” through the DVD entitled “Home of a Healing God”.

If you haven't seen it, copies are still available. A copy of this DVD is free on condition that you share it with friends! I would love to get this DVD to you. Contact me at 33513272 or jblee19@bigpond.net.au.

In his annual report to the meeting of the Australian Board, Dr Ian Olver reported that we have been asked to contribute to the making of “the next generation of promotional DVDs”. Tim Nicholls, the Australian producer who made the Healing God DVD, will make multiple short films to profile several specific activities of CMC. Finance for this project will come from other international support groups as well as from Australia.

AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO CMC VELLORE

Richard Caitens, the Australian Board Treasurer, reported to the annual meeting in August that up to June 30, 2014 the State Groups, together with \$975 given through the web site, gathered \$203,301.95. Of this total \$164,301 was from tax deductible gifts. From the remaining General Funds only \$5726.74 was spent on administrative matters including the cost of the web site, Public Liability Insurance and the Annual Meeting.

Expected payments to CMC Vellore in this coming year include further contributions to the Ida Scudder Centenary Endowment Fund, to the cost of the new promotional DVDs and for the usual annual payment to the Senior Training Fellowship Fund which is a program shared with CMC's support agencies in UK and USA.

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.

Donations can also be made directly through the Australian CMC web site www.australianfov.net.au

HONOURS FOR CMC

At admission time in June, throughout India the several thousand would-be medical students are confronted with a plethora of options and choices. For several years now, leading Indian English-language magazines carry out research based surveys ranking medical colleges in a number of fields to enable students to make an informed choice. These surveys, carried out with a rigorous methodology, provide a bench mark for the best educational facilities in India.

CMC Vellore has consistently ranked among the best medical colleges in India, a tribute to the founder, Dr Ida Scudder, who believed that medical education should be more than just a degree. Recently both "India Today" and "The Week" magazines rated CMC the second best Medical College in India, the latter also rating CMC as the best private Medical College in India. In thanking God for this honour a CMC staff person wrote that it is "a testament to our motto, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

On 20 September the Skoch Group based at Gurgaon, near Delhi, a think-tank that deals with socio-economic policies and practices, gave their highest award to CMC for programs including enhancing medical education through the use of I T, human resource development, the work at RUHSA and the Distance Education Unit.

CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE LAND OF BOLLYWOOD

One of the great things about India is that anything can happen! In July CMC was host to the Handel Manual Chorus, the Fernandes String Quartet, string players from Coimbatore along with musicians from Vellore and Chennai. All contributed to "Varieties of Musical Experience: Religious and Secular". With selections from famous oratorios and much more, there were many examples of the way music can paint pictures, tell stories, elevate our spirits and glorify God. The program included formal concert pieces by choir and orchestra, comic opera, Broadway musical and Gregorian chant.

This concert was primarily intended as a chance for the Vellore community to enjoy beautiful classical music but it also aimed to raise funds for CMC's Development Office Emergency Fund which gives grants for the treatment of economically disadvantaged patients. The concert raised over 100,000 rupees.

REMEMBERING DR PAUL BRAND

To celebrate a hundred years since the birth of Paul Brand this year there have been a number of events at CMC recalling the commitment and remarkable achievements of this great man. The Paul Brand Centre for Hand Surgery and Peripheral Nerve Surgery, the first such unit in India, hosted some of the celebratory programs.



Dr Paul Brand

Dr Brand is remembered as a pioneer in developing tendon transfer techniques and in 1948 was the first surgeon in the world to use reconstruction surgery to correct some of the deformities caused by leprosy. Importantly, this became possible because, after a decade of painstaking research, Paul Brand established it was not this disease that caused the rotting away of tissue but the loss of the sensation of pain which made the patients susceptible to injury,

In July CMC's Chaplaincy Department organised a Thanksgiving Service in the College Chapel. A Symposium in the ASHA Building gave opportunities for speakers from medical, nursing and chaplaincy backgrounds to deal with the subject, "Pain – A Blessed Suffering".



Philip Yancey

In August the well known US writer, Philip Yancey, who co-authored four books Paul Brand (including "Pain - the Gift Nobody Wants" and "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made") came to CMC to deliver the 2014 Dr Ida Scudder Humanitarian Oration. He said of his work with Paul Brand, "I gave words to his faith and in the process he gave faith to my words".

IMPROVED ACCESS FOR LOCAL VELLORE PATIENTS

Because of its reputation throughout much of India and beyond, many "out of town" potential patients arrive at CMC Hospital every day. It is natural that some local residents feel they could easily miss out.

The newly opened Shalom Family Medicine Centre is part of the institution's response to increase the access for Vellore people to CMC's services.

Located in the Church of South India Vellore Diocese building, opposite CMC's Schell Eye Hospital, services exclusively for Vellore residents are provided by a team from the Departments of Family Medicine and Dental, Nursing Services, Pharmacy and other support staff. This will provide a one-stop destination for immediate health needs and continuing care.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CHAD HOSPITAL

Being born on Christmas Day is regarded in Australia as a mixed blessing. I heard someone complain that it means only one present a year instead of two!

In Vellore Christmas is a mid-winter event and Vellore people find even the South India winter cold. One Christmas morning the doctor was visiting the maternity ward at the Community Health and Development Department (CHAD) Base Hospital and found the Mums wrapped in shawls or wearing sweaters. The new born babies were snugly swaddled as the baby Jesus was all those centuries ago.

Punitha's story: It was on a Christmas morning that the pride and joy on Punitha's face was clear to see as she proudly showed the visiting doctor her firstborn, a 2.4kg boy, born at 7am. During her pregnancy she had been routinely screened for diabetes. Although her blood sugar was showing high there was deemed to be no risk. Her husband has a job and they live with his parents but they will have to manage their finances well now they have a baby to care for.



Chitra's story: Chitra studied only to 8th standard and lives with her husband Sreenivasan in Vellore in a 3 room rented place. There is a water tap in the house but it flows only intermittently and they often have to buy water from the water tanker that comes along their street.

They chose to come to the CHAD hospital, 8kms away from home, drawn there by the CHAD Hospital's reputation for skilled and compassionate care. Chitra had had a miscarriage, then a boy only 2.1kg when born, and now a girl born on Christmas Day.

AND FROM THE LOW COST EFFECTIVE CARE UNIT

In this Unit known by all as LCECU, near the Schell Eye Hospital, a number of patients were waiting to go home. Through Vellore's short winter many living in the poorer areas of this city suffer from fevers, Last Christmas Day most of the patients in the Men's Ward were there with high fevers. These included a long-term unemployed farm labourer, an auto-rickshaw driver and a traditional barber. Like so many in the lower strata of employment in India they get paid only when they work – no sick pay, no holiday pay and no superannuation. Prompt treatment leading to an early discharge is very welcome, The LCECU (formerly the Ida Scudder Ward) was set up to meet the needs of people like these.

About 35 people will get this Newsletter by email. Would you like to get your copy this way? To join those already on the email list:

Please email Ruby, our Secretary on fovqld@hotmail.com

giving her your surname and current address so our mailing lists can be adjusted for the next Newsletter.

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 & 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 Ruby Chari ph, 0411 943 557 or rubycmc@yahoo.com
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