



VELLORE NEWSLETTER

OLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL

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

Dear Friends,

This letter advertises our **ANNUAL VELLORE DINNER**. You will see that this year it will be on **Saturday, 6 June**, just a week later than our usual date.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL: Quite a few will receive this letter by email. Given the expected rise in postal charges again later this year, we appreciate this way of getting Vellore news to you quickly and cheaply. Of course, we will continue to send printed copies to those who prefer getting them this way.

For an email copy please contact Ruby Chari on fovqld@hotmail.com and let her know your name and your present postal address so we can adjust our mailing lists.

Please note the date of the 2015 Vellore Dinner – and plan to come!

Saturday 6 June (6 for 6.30pm)

Again at the Emmanuel Uniting Church, 249 South Pine Road, Enoggera, this popular dinner will feature two speakers with personal Vellore experience, Dr Sharon George and Mrs Cathy Chandani (see the next page for more about the speakers). Tickets (adults \$45, concession \$35) available from Ian Kerr (33725970) or Brian Lee (33513272). For email recipients and addresses in or near Brisbane an application form for tickets is included.

THE 2015 DINNER SPEAKERS

- **Dr Sharon George** studied for the MBBS degree at CMC Vellore and graduated in 1989. She then worked with the Emmanuel Hospital Association in rural and semi-urban India, except for time spent in CMC Ludhiana where she did her post-graduate studies. Just before coming to Australia in 2004, she worked for two years in the Bangalore Baptist Hospital. Dr George is now a GP on Queensland's Gold Coast. Her husband, a CMC Ludhiana graduate, works in the Gold Coast University Hospital. They have three daughters, two going to Uni and one still in school.
- **Mrs Cathy Chandani** is a mental health occupational therapist at present working in an Older Person's Mental Health Service. In a private practice she teaches O Ts and other health professionals to use the Functional Cognition Model. She is a director of Karakan Ltd, a non-profit organization providing lifestyle support to people with mental illness who are living in the community. In the early 1980s she worked with mental health patients and taught mental health to occupational therapy students at CMC Vellore which she says was a life changing experience and Cathy is proud to be involved with Friends of Vellore in the support of CMC, and currently chairs the FOV Qld Committee. Cathy is a member of the Beenleigh U C and serves as a liturgist in the worship team there.

AUSTRALIAN AWARD FOR CMC GRADUATE

Dr Benjamin D'souza, now on the staff of the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital, has been awarded by the Australian Federal Government the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal for his work in Pakistan in 2010.

Dr D'souza was part of the Australian Disaster Response Team deployed to provide medical services in the aftermath of floods. They had set up a field hospital in Kot Addu and provided emergency medical care for the injured and displaced of that region.

Writing to CMC's Alumni Association, Dr D'souza said: "I owe this award to CMC that taught me and shaped me into the doctor I am today. Above all, were it not for the grace and mercy of Christ in my life this day would never have been possible."

FROM OUR 2014 ANNUAL MEETING

At the annual meeting on 10 November at The Gap Uniting Church a special welcome was given to our long term member Dr Bella George recognising her election as President of the Australian Vellore Board.

Our Secretary, Mrs Ruby Chari, asked to be relieved of this position since she now has three little children to take up her time. Dr Sharon George accepted the Secretary's role.

In his annual report, Richard Caitens, Treasurer, said that this year \$100,000 was forwarded to the Australian Board from the Queensland group for transmission to CMC Vellore. This included a bequest amount. For the 2014 -15 year, \$70,000 is the target.

Of the money received from cash donations, 100% is forwarded to Vellore through the Australian Board. Expenses related to the Newsletter and other administration matters (about 5%) are all funded from part of the Street Stalls and Indian Dinner proceeds.

Nearly one third of the Qld Group's income was from the Stalls and the Dinner. Many people work hard to achieve that.



Workers at the Toowong Stall

CMC'S MEDICAL GRADUATION 2014

It was my privilege a few years ago to attend one of the several graduation ceremonies at Vellore. A feature of them – for nurses and for doctors – is the enormous chain of jasmine, about 20cm thick and long enough to reach the stage from the front door, which is carried into the Assembly hall. At the medical graduation in November, the guest speaker was Dr Shashi Tharoor, a prominent member of the Indian Parliament, for 30 years one of the executive staff of the United Nations, a brilliant orator and a well known author of fact and fiction.

He exhorted the 54 graduate doctors to stay rooted in their values, their culture and their calling, for in these they would find enduring answers in the real world.

A STORY FROM RUHSA – ASHOKAN’S FOOT

Ashokan is from a rural village in the area served by the Rural Unit for Health and Social Action (RUHSA), a part of CMC’s community health service. As a 16 year old he was a fine, athletic young man eagerly looking forward to a career after he finished school. He would have been a very different boy but for the care and expert skill of the staff at RUHSA and CMC.

Ashokan was born with a crippled right foot. His father was not supportive, blaming his wife for his son’s deformity. She wanted to take him to RUHSA but he refused to give her the bus fare. So she walked the 4km to the hospital, carrying her baby. At first the usual plaster cast treatment was not successful so at 6 months he underwent surgery to straighten his right foot and when he was two, X-rays showed he had made a good recovery.



Only his closest family know that anything had ever been wrong with his foot.

Since early treatment of this condition is important, the Paediatric Orthopaedic Department holds club foot clinics twice a week. The modern *Ponseti casting technique used in the clinic now ensures that very few children actually need surgery these days.

**The Ponseti treatment involving gentle manipulation and plaster casts preferably soon after birth was introduced to UK in the late 1990s and was used world wide by 2006.*

A PLEA FROM CMC FOR SKILLED STAFF

Late last year the Prosthetics and Orthotics Unit at CMC, which provides artificial limbs, callipers, wheelchairs, walking aids, footwear and so on for various disabilities and rehabilitation needs, has begun a BSc degree course. They have found it very difficult to recruit qualified faculty staff from within India.

Any suitably qualified person in Australia willing to go to CMC for periods of one month or more to help in teaching and in developing the Department would be very welcome. Academic qualifications are not essential but people willing to share their practical skills and experience can also help in this new degree course..

Further enquiries or offers of service to: CMC Development Office at dev.office@cmcvellore.ac.in

CMC JANUARY COUNCIL MEETING



The CMC Council meets at Vellore in January and June with most overseas representatives attending the January meetings. Dr Bella George, as President of the Australian Board, took part this year.

Dr Bella lists among the highlights:

- The opportunity to interact with USA, UK, Germany and Sweden Friends of Vellore representatives and to learn of the projects they are involved in.
- A visit to the new Chittoor campus, 45min by road north of Vellore. CMC staff daily commute to run the OP Clinic. A casualty block, two theatres, a labour room and obstetric ward and 3 in-patient facilities (40 beds) were under construction and should soon be complete.
- CHAD (Community Health and Development) in my 1960's student days was a small hospital called the Rural Health Centre. CHAD now has a staff of specialists, post-graduates, interns and nurses looking after and making monthly visits to 64 villages resulting in significant improvements in health and wellbeing.



CHAD has recently started a 5 year project in the Jawadhi Hills, a tribal area 60kms away.

German and Swedish Friends of Vellore groups along with a Danish aid organisation have built a day hospital visited each day by a CHAD mobile clinic. In the past this area has received very little medical attention – it is difficult to access – so there are high rates of infant and maternal mortality, low immunisation rates and high rates of treatable infections.

Dr Bella is sure Friends of Vellore groups in Australia will hear more of this important project and will help in its support.

DEATH IN LIBERIA OF KARIGI ADMINISTRATOR

During the crisis in West African countries because of the Ebola epidemic, Vellore people received the sad news that Dr Augustine, the Administrator at Karigiri (the Leprosy Hospital closely associated with CMC) died in Liberia of a serious type of malaria. His life may have been saved except that the Ebola crisis prevented his getting immediate treatment.

Dr Augustine had sacrificed his sabbatical leave to go and relieve the administrator of a small mission hospital in Liberia. Dr Augustine leaves a young family.

A FAMILIAR AUSTRALIAN STORY SET IN VELLORE

CMC's Department of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism now runs regular six hour workshops in a Teachers Training Program to help cope with Vellore city's rapid nutritional transition driven by aggressive advertising. As incomes improve children are increasingly consuming refined carbohydrates, high saturated fatty snacks and sweetened carbonated drinks. They learnt that school canteens are stocked with junk foods and physical training periods are either truncated or cancelled as a sacrifice for more academic time.

Sessions include an overview on how obesity and diabetes evolve, instituting healthy dietary practices for people with and without diabetes and proper foot care practices and an exercise plan for people with diabetes - just one of the many ways CMC reaches out to the local community.

VELLORE'S PRISONS

Not far from CMC's College compound are the Central Prison and the Special Prison for Women. Every Christmas at events in the prisons organised by the Vellore Prison Ministry, CMC staff and their families are involved. This last Christmas, they provided a mutton biryani lunch along with music, songs and Bible readings.

The Christmas gift to the prison inmates this year was bags of cement, not to make thicker walls, but to fulfil a long time wish of the inmates to have an outdoor stage so that cultural programs can be easily arranged. As someone said, "Even today the love of God can penetrate the guarded prison walls."

DEATH OF DR MARGARET BRAND (1919 – 17.11. 2014)

Since they met in England as medical students, Margaret and her famous husband Paul were equally passionate about medical mission work. In Vellore she specialised in ophthalmology, pioneering outstanding work and gaining renown as one of the world's leading authorities on problems of the eyes in leprosy. The book, "Ten Fingers for God" tells of a young man, Sadagopan, finding himself at the fringes of society when his leprosy was diagnosed. He was directed to Dr Paul Brand's house. In this time of his despair he was welcomed by Dr Margaret "who spoke to him with a kindness that made him feel human again." It was this kindness that touched her interactions with everyone for, like her husband, she treated each patient not just as a victim of ocular leprosy. She saw in each person the image of God.

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 for donors:

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

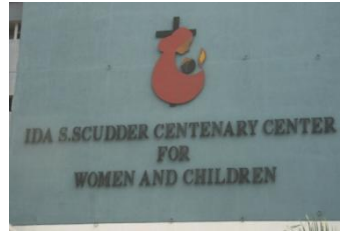
at this email address: cmcvellore@optusnet.com.au so a receipt can be sent to you.

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

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. They still raise a lot of money for the work at Vellore.

Each of the Toowong and Tank Street stalls happens 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).

OLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE OFFICE BEARERS

Chairman: Mrs Cathy Chandani, 24 Mathews St, Bethania 4205 (0412391353)
 Vice Chairman: Rev John Hooper, (3892 2567)
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