

Vellore News

CMCH Vellore Web site:
Australian FOV web site:
SA FOV email:

<http://www.cmch-vellore.edu>
<http://www.australianfov.net.au>
safriendsofvellore@gmail.com

VELLORE PRESENTATIONS EVENING

7:00pm, Fri 8th May, 2015
Rosefield Uniting Church
2 Carlton St, Highgate



Speakers:

- * Dr Shilpa Thomas, Ophthalmologist, Flinders Medical Centre, will talk about her ophthalmology experience here and at Vellore
- * Dr Thomas Matthai, Orthopaedic surgeon, Flinders Medical Centre
- * Medical student, Chris Kappamankal, will speak on his trip to Vellore

You are **all welcome** for an enjoyable and informative evening. Supper is provided.

April 2015

Vellore
Presentations
Evening

New President
of Aust FOV

Munniyamma

From the new President of the Australian Vellore Board, Dr. Bella George

It has been a privilege for me to take over from Prof Ian Olver as President of the Australian Vellore Board in August last year. Being an alumnus of CMC, I consider it a great honour to be able to serve my Alma Mater in this way.

Ian has been a member of the Board for a total of 12 years, 3 yrs as Publicity Officer, 3yrs as Vice President and 6 yrs as President. Notable achievements during his term as President have been the setting up of fledgling FOV groups in the NT and WA, and also the redesigning of the FOV webpage, enabling on-line donations. I thank Ian very much for his leadership and for his innovative ideas.



Our current executive is made up of Vice-president- Stephen Aseervatham, who is doubling up as Publicity officer; Treasurer- Richard Caitens; and Secretary- Liz Guiver, all very experienced in the workings of the Australian Vellore Board. We will continue to work closely with the State groups and with the CMC Alumni Association of Australasia. Our links with the worldwide Friends of Vellore are also becoming easier in this electronic age and we look forward to closer working ties with them in the support of CMC.

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safriendsofvellore@gmail.com

Upcoming Events At A Glance

7pm, Fri, 8th May 2015
Vellore Presentations Evening
Rosefield Uniting Church
Highgate

Sat, 29th August 2015
SA FOV Annual Dinner
Fogolar Furlan, Felixstow

South Australian Friends of Vellore Committee

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At Vellore, many exciting changes are taking place under the leadership of Dr Sunil Chandy, Director of CMC, with developments on the main campuses and the outlying ones. Tim Nichols and his team who made the earlier video "Home of a Healing God" went to Vellore recently making the new promotional video and we are privileged to be part of that process. Also in the pipeline is a plan for a Retirement/Assisted Living Facility for CMC faculty and staff—a project being taken up by the alumni in the USA, with hope for support from the worldwide alumni. This facility is to be built on the Bagayam campus and named after Dr Paul Brand, whose birth centenary is this year. I'm sure we will hear more about all these developments in the year ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank the State groups for their loyal support of CMC over many many years. I am aware that in some States our supporters are becoming frail, and I hope and pray that our younger generation will come forward to continue their work. May God bless us in our endeavours to partner this great institution that is CMC, and may He continue to bless the staff who work there and give of themselves selflessly day in and day out.

SA Friends of Vellore Annual Dinner 2015

*** Sat, 29th August 2015 ***

Fogolar Furlan, Briar Rd, Felixstow

Keep the date free!

More details to follow soon.

CMCH Awarded

The prestigious Christian Medical College, Vellore, in southern India's Tamil Nadu state were among several organisations and individuals who were honoured with the public health awards by the United Nations World Health Organisation in India. The awards were announced on April 1 in New Delhi at the National Consultation on Food Safety, which was jointly organised by the WHO and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare of the Government of India, in view of the World Health Day, Tuesday April 7, 2015. The Public Health Champions honoured for their sustained contribution to public health are SEWA Rural, the Community Health Department, the Christian Medical College, Vellore, the Biocon Foundation and Dr Vinod K. Paul, head of the Pediatrics Department of the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), New Delhi.

MUNNIYAMMA

In the bustle of what is now a prosperous Vellore City, there remains a persistent number of people living below the poverty line. A long time ago Rangaswamy Nagar (RS Nagar) was one of the fashionable quarters of Vellore allegedly where the Maharajah kept his concubines. It became the 'Red Light District', that was closed down some years ago. But today it has degenerated into one of the most deprived parts of Vellore. Its residents are marginalised and ignored. A church group started work in the area and soon saw the urgent need for sympathetic medical care for the residents. They began to pray. At the same time the staff of the Low Cost Effective Care Unit (LCECU), the Urban Health Care of CMC, whose mandate is to serve the poorest in the community in Vellore wanted to identify another of the most needy areas in which to start a new Outreach Clinic. LCECU is appropriately based in the grounds of the Mary Tabor Schell Hospital where Dr Ida Scudder started her first 40 bed hospital in 1902. Seeing the need in the RS Nagar area, they started a monthly Outreach Clinic in a room loaned by the church group, who saw this as an answer to their prayers. They now help LCECU to run the clinic. It was here that the Outreach Team first met Munniyamma.

Munniyamma, aged 70, has lived all her life in this slum, experiencing both much sorrow as well as love and care. She lives with three of her grandchildren. Their house is a dilapidated, tiled hut, built on waste land alongside one of Vellore's big sewage canals. She married Kanagaraj, a rickshaw puller; a man from the same area, belonging to a higher caste. It was a love match. They had two children, a daughter and a son. Sadly when their daughter was 11 years old she became ill and died. The Kanagaraj, long addicted to narcotics, also died. Munniyamma turned to work as a rag picker, scavenging the rubbish heaps to support her son.

Before long Selvaraj, a friend of her husband, asked Munniyamma to marry him. They were blessed with four children – three daughters and a son. When they were married, Selvaraj worked in a tea shop. Later he took up watch repair, sitting by the roadside. Munniyamma continued working as a rag picker. Selvaraj was a serious alcoholic and died when their second daughter was 12 years old. Once again widowed Munniyamma became sole breadwinner for the little family.



Munniyamma with her grand-daughter, Komathi

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Of Selvaraj's four children, the eldest daughter married, but her husband was killed in a traffic accident. The girl herself succumbed to HIV. Their second daughter remained unmarried and died from cancer. Their third daughter married and had a son. She suffered from Tuberculosis and died leaving behind her husband and child. Her husband, with the boy moved away, seeking a better life. After her eldest daughter died, Munniyamma took on the care of the two granddaughters, Komathi and Kumari and grandson, Devaraj, with whom she still lives.



Munniyamma walking

Komathi works in a factory, making soda water. She is only employed 3 months in the year, when she earns Rs.150 per day. Her husband, a cook, earns Rs.9000/- a month. He works in a hotel 100KM from Vellore. He stays at the hotel, returning home for a week, once a month. At present he is the main breadwinner of the family. They have three young sons.

After marriage, Kumari moved to live with her husband in the nearby slum from which he came. An alcoholic, he regularly beat his wife and their two small daughters. When she could no longer tolerate his abuse, two years ago, Kumari returned with her daughters to live with Munniyamma. She works at a hotel as a daily wage earner, earning around Rs.150 per day. Grandson, Devaraj works in a parcel service. He earns Rs.150 per day.

A couple of months ago, as Munniyamma was walking along the road, another resident of RS Nagar, riding his motor bike while under the influence of alcohol hit her from behind. Munniyamma was knocked down, and injured her hip and thigh. The family thought that she would recover after suitable rest. However, Munniyamma developed problems walking and getting up from the floor, essential in a poor Indian home where life is lived at floor level. Their hopes were raised when they heard that LCECU had started a clinic in their area. Friends of Vellore has helped LCECU expand its outreach work, including developing more outreach clinics. In all their trials there had never been any money to spend on medical needs. Even the cost of taking an auto-rickshaw the short journey from RS Nagar to the LCECU base, they felt was beyond their means. But now perhaps at last here were people who could and would help. Supporting their grandmother between them the two granddaughters struggled to bring her the short distance to the clinic and up the steps into the room, gently lowering her to the floor. The doctor noticed her immediately and quickly began to

talk to her and to find out what was the matter. It was obvious that she had a fracture and so she was referred to the Orthopaedics Department. To stress the importance of taking her for medical care quickly and to assess their home situation, the Team also visited the home that day. The very same day she was taken to the main hospital and was seen by the Orthopaedics Department. She was diagnosed to have a fracture of her right hip. It was decided to treat her conservatively and she was advised complete rest for six weeks, with medication for the pain and calcium tablets. After this she was asked to start walking using a walker.

Regular follow-up visits to the home were made by the Team to ensure that she was taking her medication regularly. A young boy living in RS Nagar who was using a pair of axilla crutches saw Munniyamma's condition and offered his crutches to her. Unfortunately those crutches were not appropriate for her height so that they were not of much help for her mobility. Munniyamma started to drag herself in sitting position to move about and her granddaughters helped with her toilet needs. After the six weeks rest prescribed, the Team advised her to use a reciprocal walking frame that would help her mobility. A new walker at CMC costs Rs.1500/-. The Outreach Team promised help in buying one, if the family were willing to contribute some amount from their side. They happily contributed Rs.500/- towards the cost and the rest was written off from LCECU's patient support fund.

Now Munniyamma has a reciprocal walker at home that she uses to walk in and around her house. She is independent in toileting with the help of the walker and feels very comfortable and confident to walk without anyone's support. She is under regular follow-up by the Outreach Team.



With Bala, the community nurse. Her house is behind them.

Donations can be made online at: <http://australianfov.net.au/donations/>
Simply and easily make a donation to the work of the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore.

Dr. Ian Roberts-Thomson
8 William St
Hawthorn, SA, 5062

Please accept the enclosed donation of \$..... to the work of the Christian Medical College and Hospital at Vellore, India.

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(Donations are tax-deductible if made to the Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital Support Fund)