



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,

Qld Friends of Vellore were able to send \$120,000 to the Australian Board in the last financial year – a record amount. Where does all this money come from? There are three major sources:

1. **Donations.** Friends have been contributing in this way right from the time the group started in the 1950s. This year's donations, plus a bequest, amounted to \$110,065.
2. **Street Stalls.** Monthly stalls in Tank St City and at Toowong raised a net \$19,362, an amazing result from the volunteers involved
3. **The Annual Vellore Dinner** with net proceeds last year of \$2660. As well as being a fund raiser and a great way to share a meal with friends, this Dinner enables many to hear Vellore news from speakers with personal knowledge of this great institution.

We invite you and your friends to:

THE 2016 VELLORE DINNER

Saturday 28 May (6 for 6.30pm)

Again at the Emmanuel Uniting Church Hall, 249 South Pine Road, Enoggera. Good parking in Laurel St, behind the Church.

Speaker: Dr Chillam Kirubakaran (see details p.2)

Entertainment: Indian Classical Dance and Music

The program includes a quality Indian meal.

Tickets (adults \$45, concession \$35) available from Ian Kerr 33725970 or Brian Lee 33513272. An application form is included for email readers and for addresses in or near Brisbane. Do get your tickets early to avoid disappointment because numbers are limited.



PROF. CHELLAM KIRUBAKARAN

Dr Chellam married Dr Meshach Kirubakaran, a CMC graduate, and they moved to CMC in 1971, retiring 35 years later and moving to Australia in 2007.

At CMC she worked first in Dermatology then from 1973 in Paediatrics. As a Professor at CMC she worked as Head of the Departments of Child Health and Neonatology, Paediatric Intensive Care & Paediatric Haemato-Oncology and the Division of Critical Care.

During times of Sabbatical leave she worked at the Alice Springs Hospital. She was a Neonatal Research Fellow at the Adelaide Children's Hospital for the 3 years of her Study Leave. "This is my reason for coming back to Australia and which endeared Australia to me".

Other experiences include 5 months organising the Paediatric and Neonatal services at the Patan Mission Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal. CMC's Senior Staff Development Fellowship enabled her to participate in courses in the University of Illinois Hospital, Chicago, and the Children's Hospital Cincinnati.

In 2009 she became the President of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) having earlier been the Chair Person of its Disaster Management Chapter. At the IAP Tamil Nadu annual conference in 2007 she received an award for meritorious service to children and for her academic work – described as a life time achievement award.

Dr Chellam has received a number of Indian and International awards including the International Health Care 2016 Award by the International Society of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Transplant and Nutrition. The citation says the award was for her extraordinary contribution to Medical Science and Health Care globally.

We are indeed deeply grateful and privileged that Dr Chellam has accepted our invitation to be the speaker at this year's Vellore Dinner.

JAWADHI HILLS - CMC OUTREACH AREA

Support for various projects in the tribal areas of the Jawadhi Hills will be a major focus of the Australian Vellore Board this year.

Brisbane couple, and much valued Vellore Street Stall workers, Don and Julie Cutmore, visited CMC for 5 days in January. They reported that they were blown away with their visit on Day 5 to the Jawadhi Hills where they went together with Dr Bella George, President of the Australian Board, and other overseas visitors. "It is hard to believe people are still living such isolated lives – coconut palm huts, head tribesmen, communal grain storage pots etc. The clinic where our Ultrasound will be utilised is outstanding. Australian Friends should be commended for this project."

Much of the following is from Dr Bella's report:

The Jawadhi Hills comprise one of three ranges in the Eastern Ghats of southern India. There are several villages in this area and because of the difficult terrain only some of them are accessible by road. The communities here have been given "tribal status" by the Government (which gives certain privileges) but because of their isolation they have had very little in the way of medical, educational or social help.

A Catholic organisation, the Don Bosco Fathers, has been involved here since the 1970s, mostly in social development. The Community Help and Development (CHAD) of CMC became involved in the 1980s because of a Central Government move to control leprosy and TB. For the next 20 years this was CHAD's primary work in this area.

Health indices remained poor. Opportunities for children's education and for adults' jobs were negligible. In the early 2000s a grant from Denmark enabled development projects to be set up.

In 2013 the Danish Government grant ceased. Since then all medical work in this area is supported by funds from CMC but there are no on-going sources of funds for educational activities.



TRAINED HEALTH CARE WORKERS FROM JAWADHI HILLS?

For many, this had seemed an impossible dream!

This story begins in 2011 when CHAD took a group of 1st year medical students to the Jawadhi Hills for their 2 week Community Orientation programs. Students and staff were challenged by the plight of the school leavers. For these teenagers from tribal communities higher education was still a distant dream. Even if they stay at school until they are 17 no one encourages them to apply for college courses. A further hurdle is that all their education is in Tamil but the application forms and the courses themselves are in English. Without help they could not even start.

Through meeting with CMC staff and young medical students, some of the most promising youngsters showed an interest in pursuing nursing and allied healthcare related training.

CHAD arranged for 28 to come to CMC for a 45 day crash course in English and how to complete applications. Further tuition helped them apply for courses of their choice. Of these 17 were awarded places in four Mission Hospitals. Twelve are in first year Diploma of Nursing and the



Eight of the Jawadhi students

other 5 are doing various allied health courses – Radio Diagnosis, Radio Therapy or Medical Laboratory Technician. For most of these students they will be the first members of their families to attempt higher education. One of the aims of this program is to create a pool of trained healthcare workers from the Jawadhi Hills who will be able to find local employment when permanent medical facilities are established in the project area – a program which is now, in 2016, beginning to happen.

Money to fund the fees for this first group of students came from various sources including contributions by CHAD staff from their salaries.

JAWADHI HILLS - HISTORY OF THE PROJECTS

When the Danish money became available, seen as areas of greatest need were:

1. **Health:** A hospital was built and staff from CHAD started daily clinics. Mobile clinics to outlying villages were started. Some were accessible by road, others only on foot with supplies carried manually.
2. **Education:** There were only a few schools in the area. To help the children achieve the required standards, night schools were started in collaboration with the Don Bosco Fathers. Over 1000 children came to summer camps where children were taught life skills, cultural dances, extra English and Maths teaching plus annual medical checks.
Scholarship programs for 10-12 grade students interested in medical sciences were brought to CHAD for extra coaching in English and computer literacy so they could sit for entrance exams for various tertiary courses..
3. **Income producing projects:** These are aimed at training for local employment to reduce the need for migration from the area. This program is largely run by the Don Bosco Fathers.



JAWADHI HILLS – TODAY'S AIMS AND NEEDS

1. **Health:** Staff accommodation at the Hospital. This is located in one of the larger towns in the area. Out-patient clinics run from 8am to 4pm, but at present staff travel 2 hours each way each day. Resident staff would be able to run evening clinics as well.
2. **Education:** Support for the summer camps and the scholarship programs since there is a dearth of schools and teachers in the area. CHAD medical staff and the Don Bosco Fathers are committed to improving the education levels of these children and have found the summer camps are a good way of achieving this. With 1000 children attending it costs about \$20 dollars per child.

JAWADHI HILLS - AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS' GIFT



Recently Australian Friends of Vellore paid for an Ultrasound Scanner (USS) for the Jawadhi Hospital.

When Dr Bella George was at CMC for the Council meetings in January she was shown this valuable piece of equipment which had just been unpacked. It was shown with much pleasure and gratitude. Dr Bella said, "I felt we had supported a really worthwhile project."

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)

Bendigo Bank 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.

ROHIT – A STORY FROM CMC’S REHAB INSTITUTION

The Rehab staff found it a joy to work with such a hard working young man as Rohit. He and his wife won the respect of all while he was there as an in-patient. His two little daughters brought smiles to everyone’s face.

Rohit was originally from Jharkhand, a two day train journey north east of Vellore. His father, a rickshaw puller, can earn little so young Rohit, after completing 6th grade, was sent to Delhi to find work to boost the family income. Even while doing a variety of jobs and picking up a number of skills, he took up the challenge to complete his schooling through an “Open School” program.

Working as a hotel cleaner, he impressed his boss who gave him the opportunity to learn to cook.

Now 25, in July last year Rohit was visiting a village to attend a funeral. He climbed a tree to cut timber for the funeral pyre, lost his footing and fell. Because of an injury to his lower spine, he lost the use of his legs.



For two months he was in the local Government hospital and did not seem to be getting better. Some of his neighbours urged him to go to CMC. This meant that the little land the family owned had to be sold to defray travel costs. He was admitted to Rehab at CMC in November.

There the whole team of doctors, nurses, social workers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists became involved in Rohit’s rehabilitation. He doubted his ability to cope, but the staff cooperated to give him the confidence to work from a wheelchair.

His cooking skills were developed and a business plan was drawn up as to how he could earn a living from cooking.

Of course he needed a suitable wheelchair. This costs at least AU\$250. He was able to pay part of this but he and the rest of the family could not afford the full cost.

The team at Rehab were able to get enough from funds donated by various sources to enable Rohit to move to the next stage of his life.

THE NEW DVD – “OUR STORIES, OUR CMC” will be available at the Dinner. You can order your FREE copy now from Brian Lee ph 3351 3272 or jblee19@bigpond.net.au

POSTAGE RATES have increased significantly this year. If the Newsletter can be sent to you by email it would save money, and you would get the pictures in colour!

To get on the email list please contact fovqld@hotmail.com

giving your surname and current postal 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.

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).

Thanks to Dr Bella George and Mrs Ann Witchalls for some of the material in this Newsletter.

Regards, Brian, (Newsletter Editor)

QLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE OFFICE BEARERS

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