THE Sylvia Wright TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 326139

Supporting

Residential School for 200 profoundly deaf children
Education & Therapy Centre for 100 severely disabled children
Nursing College for 120 students

Newsletter Christmas 2020

www.sylviawright.org

Dear Friends

Sylvia in a socially distanced staff meeting

As this strangest of years started, our teachers were preparing the children for their Board Exams and I was explaining about a new 'Covid Virus', its signs and symptoms. Suddenly, in early March, we were told to send all the children and the nursing students home for an indefinite period. Thus began a long period of difficulty and heartache. The disease spread quickly from the cities and into the rural areas, causing unemployment and great hardship.

Several of those we know have died. Thankfully however, only one of my own staff has been hospitalised, together with his daughter. Both have recovered. A number of staff have had to self isolate following positive tests.

In spite of everything, we have continued to serve, both in education and in other ways. We very much hope that we can reopen all our projects at the beginning of January.

I have stayed well but have not left the campus since mid March. Only very recently have I been able to attend Mass at a local convent. Every time the phone rings, the first words I hear are: 'Are you alright, Madam?' By the grace of God I have been able to answer 'Yes, thank you. I am fine!'

I am sincerely grateful for all your messages and cards and I continue to remember you all daily in my prayers. I am sure you do the same for us. May this difficult time soon be behind us.

Love and God bless you all. *Sylvia*

Covid in India

India's size and population have made tracking and treating the virus very difficult: it is likely that not all infections, hospitalisations or deaths have been recorded, especially in the more remote areas. However, over 10 million cases have been logged nationally with 150,000 resulting in deaths. Tamil Nadu has been one of the worst affected states.

Normally, Indian towns and villages teem with people and so it was most strange in the early days of the lockdown to see them so eerily empty.

Some photographs in the chapel

Remembrance

Even though the children could not be present, the tradition of marking All Souls' Day in the school chapel on 2 November was maintained. Several teachers (most are Hindu) came and helped decorate the chapel. We prayed for all our deceased students, staff, supporters and benefactors and for their families and friends.

Day Centre for Disabled Children

Learning from home

Online communication with disabled children, especially those with cognitive, hearing or speech impairments, is problematic. Instead of remote learning, Sylvia has organised regular home visits by the staff. Parents have been given ongoing advice and have been most grateful. With some help from the local authorities, supplies of food, other essentials and toys have been distributed to those families most in need.

Staff deliver food and other essentials

School for the Hearing Impaired

The whole campus has been deserted for almost a year, except for a few cleaners, gardeners and cowmen. In March Sylvia allocated six children to each teacher and organised remote learning, with weekly tests. The teachers have monitored progress and given regular reports. Their efforts have been much appreciated by families and by the children, who are desperate to get back to school.

The Nursing College

Online Learning for a Nursing Student

All our nursing students are young adults; most have IT skills. The Indian Nursing Council was quick to arrange online learning modules to which Sylvia's college contributed. As a result, a good deal of academic training has continued, though with a complete absence of practical work and no continuity in examinations. Nevertheless many of our third years have already been offered nursing positions, despite not having taken their finals yet.

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship remains a key source of income. Most of the children in the school and some of those in the day centre have sponsors. It has been pleasing to see a steady increase in support from the Indian Community. Even so sponsors are needed for the remaining children. (Angela Clark 0113 267 7660)

Our apologies to current sponsors for the absence of children's reports this year. This has been due to the lockdown and ensuing difficulties with Indian postal system. Locally bought presents can, of course, be arranged.

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