

# Newsletter- July to October 2024

## Rev. Fr. John Suresh Social Projects

*Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8*

Dear Friends

Greetings from Rev Fr. Backiya Regis, Rev Fr. Charles, and Nandhini Krishnan!

I hope this message finds everyone in good health and high spirits. It is with great pleasure that I present the progress report covering the months from July to October 2024 for Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School, St. John's Home and the WE Group.

### Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School, Neerpair



#### Medical Camp:

A medical camp was organized in collaboration with Primary Health Care, Nallamur, specifically for the 12th standard students. This camp focused on general health check-ups and well-being, aiming to address key health concerns. It is part of an ongoing initiative, with plans to conduct similar camps on a monthly basis to ensure the consistent health monitoring of our students.

#### Teachers Orientation Program:

On August 24th, a comprehensive Teachers Orientation Program was organized for the staff of Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School at the National Shrine of St. Thomas Mount, under the guidance of Rev Fr. Michael Thomas. The program offered valuable insights, practical approaches, and innovative teaching strategies aimed at enhancing student engagement and fostering a more dynamic and effective learning environment. The session equipped teachers with tools to enrich their educational methods, ensuring a positive impact on both teaching and learning.



### Distribution of Bicycles:



As part of the Government of Tamil Nadu's welfare initiative, free bicycles were distributed to students of the 11th and 12th standards. This program, facilitated by a people's representative (Member of the Legislative Assembly), aims to ease transportation challenges for students, promoting regular school attendance and supporting their educational journey. The initiative reflects the government's commitment to improving access to education by addressing practical barriers faced by students.

### Independence Day:



India celebrated its 78th Independence Day with nationwide festivities, embracing the spirit of patriotism, unity and gratitude for the nation's hard-won freedom. Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School proudly participated in these celebrations, honouring the Freedom Struggle and the sacrifices of our Freedom Fighters. A special event was organized to commemorate the occasion, focusing on the significance of independence and the enduring values of liberty, justice, and democracy. Fr. Anand, Administrator of the Chingleput Diocese, graced the event as the chief guest, adding to the solemnity and pride of the celebration.

### Dr. Hannes Datta's Visit to India:



Dr. Hannes Datta and his daughters, Charlotte and Marielle, received a warm and heartfelt welcome at Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School. A special event was organized in their honour, where the school community came together to celebrate their visit. Later that day, the RC Primary School also hosted a cultural program, showcasing the rich traditions of Tamil Nadu. The students were thrilled by the opportunity to interact with the guests and eagerly demonstrated their talents, making it a memorable day for everyone involved. Their visit fostered meaningful connections and strengthened ties with the community during their time here.



## **Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School: Zonal Sports Meet:**



The Zonal Football Event kicked off on July 26th, with the inauguration led by Dr. Hannes Datta. Nearly 15 schools, including several from the surrounding areas, participated in this exciting competition. The remaining events of the Zonal Sports Meet were held across various schools. A highlight of the event was the

outstanding performance of our super senior girls volleyball team, who secured the first prize, showcasing their skill and determination.

## **St. John's Home:**



Currently, St. John's Home is home to nearly 78 students, who are being cared for by a dedicated team, including 2 girl wardens, 2 boy wardens, a regency brother, and an Assistant priest. The home is under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Charles, who serves as the rector. Over the past three months, we have

facilitated various activities, including ice-breaking sessions, to help students acclimate and feel comfortable in their new environment. As a result, the students are now well-settled and thriving in our community.

## **WE Group Gathering:**



On July 27th, the WE Group gathering took place in the presence of Dr. Hannes Datta. The event included a heartfelt tribute to Mr. K. Armstrong, State President of BSP Tamil Nadu, recognizing his significant contributions to the Dalit community. His leadership in advocating for the

upliftment of marginalized groups was honoured, and his tireless efforts to promote equality and social justice were deeply acknowledged by all in attendance.

## **German Friends Visit:**

### **Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School and St John's Home**



A group of friends from Albert Schweitzer Schule and Gymnasium Oesede arrived in Chennai at midnight on October 7th to connect with our project. They spent two unforgettable days at Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School and St. John's Home, beginning their visit on October 9th,

celebrated as Benefactors' Day.



Rev. Fr. Backia Regis, the Nodal Agent for our project, visited St. John's Home to discuss our initiative with our German friends. During this visit, he provided an overview of our project's goals and achievements, followed by a delightful lunch hosted in their honor. That afternoon, Mrs.

Kathrin Haase inaugurated a science exhibition where students enthusiastically showcased their innovative projects and creative talents, leaving a lasting impression on our German guests.



On October 10th, sports equipment was provided to Dr. Arulappa HSS, fostering a spirit of camaraderie. Following the morning session, the German friends engaged warmly with the students, sharing experiences that enriched both groups. They also visited RC Primary School,

where they distributed school t-shirts to the children, spreading joy and excitement. That evening, Mrs. Kathrin Haase, Mrs. Hilde Munk, Ms. Andrea Schulten, and other German friends participated in the inauguration of the newly constructed girls' toilet, marking a significant step forward in improving facilities for our students.

### Chingleput Bishop Meeting:



On October 12th, the German friends visited the tomb of Rev. Fr. John Suresh to pay their respects. Later, they met with Rt. Rev. Bishop Dr. Neethinathan, the Bishop of Chingleput Diocese, to discuss our ongoing Neerpair project and its impact on the community.

### WE Group Gathering:



On October 13th, the group visited CHEER in Siruseri, where over 150 WE Group students gathered for an engaging meeting. A PowerPoint presentation titled "Our Society and Our Project" was showcased, providing valuable insights into Indian society and the initiatives of Fr. John Suresh's social project.

For many of the German friends, this was their first experience with our project, making the presentation especially impactful. Additionally, several WE students shared their inspiring success stories, illustrating the profound positive effects of the project on their lives and the community. This exchange fostered deeper connections between the two groups, enriching their understanding and appreciation of each other's experiences.



### Meeting with Dr Thol Thirumavalavan, MP (Member of Parliament)



On October 14th, our esteemed German friends—Mrs. Kathrin Haase, Mrs. Hilde Munk, and Ms. Andrea Schulten—had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Thol Thirumavalavan, a Member of Parliament and the founder and President of the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK). The meeting was warm and welcoming, with Dr. Thirumavalavan graciously receiving our friends and providing insightful information about his party's vision and initiatives. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to him for his generous hospitality.

### Loyola College Visit



On October 15th, we visited Loyola College, where Fr. Vasanth and Fr. Kennedy warmly welcomed our friends. They took the time to explain their project in PARAN at Kadambur, near Makkapalayam, providing valuable insights into its objectives and impact. To show their hospitality, they also hosted a delightful lunch for our friends, making the visit truly memorable.

### Marriage of Raj Prasath:



Raj Prasath, a dedicated member of the WE Group, comes from a small slum in Chennai. He began his educational journey at Dr. Arulappa Higher Secondary School, where he studied from the 5th standard through to higher secondary, all while receiving unwavering support from the WE Group. Raised in St. John's Home, Raj is one of our success stories.

On September 16th, he married his long-time girlfriend, who also attended Dr. Arulappa HSS. Currently, Raj works as a sales manager for a private company, while his wife serves as an assistant nurse in a reputable hospital. His remarkable journey, from humble beginnings to achieving significant personal and academic milestones, stands as a testament to the transformative impact of the support and guidance he has received throughout his life.

Thank you, dear Pappa Dr. Johannes Mispagel, and all our friends from Germany and Belgium. It is your unwavering support that has made such meaningful change possible.

## Success Story:



My name is Maheswari, and I am delighted to share my journey with you. I hail from a small village near Maduranthagam in the Chingleput District. After completing my 12th standard, I pursued a course in fashion design at ITI in Neerpair. During this period, I married Kumaresan, a member of the Adavu Cultural Team.

After marriage, I continued my studies and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, while also working for a private company. However, my life took a different direction after the birth of my three children. I made the difficult decision to pause both my studies and career to focus on raising my kids and managing household responsibilities.

As my children grew older, I felt a renewed sense of purpose and the desire to pursue my dreams once again. With determination and the unwavering support of my family and the WE Group, I decided to return to my studies. I embarked on a Bachelor in Education program, fuelled by my passion for teaching.

This journey would not have been possible without the incredible assistance and encouragement I received from the WE Group and our German benefactors. Their financial support and moral encouragement were instrumental in helping me pursue both of my bachelor's degrees. I take great pride in my ability to learn and grow, particularly as a woman and a housewife.

This year, I am on track to complete my Bachelor in Education, and by next year, I will finally realize my dream of becoming a teacher. I am immensely grateful to the WE Group and all my friends from Germany and Belgium for enabling me to reach this milestone in my life. I hope my story serves as an inspiration to other women, especially housewives, encouraging them to believe in themselves and pursue their goals, no matter the challenges they encounter.

## True Story:



My name is Keerthana, and I am currently in the 9th standard at St. John's Home for Children in Need. Before coming to Neerpair, I studied at Kattangulathur Government High School. Unfortunately, my family was unable to afford my further education because my father works as a daily wage labour, and his earnings were not sufficient to support our family.

In my family, there are five of us: my mother, my younger brother, my sister, and me. During the rainy season, my father often struggles to find work, making it extremely difficult for us to make ends meet. In light of these challenges, my father learned about St. John's Home and decided to enroll me here.

Now, I am happy to say that I am thriving in this supportive environment and studying diligently. With your support, I am determined to pursue my dream of higher education. Thank you so much, dear friends, for believing in me and helping to make my aspirations a reality.

## **Social Issues in India:**

*Figure 1 Photo source: The Times of India*



In this newsletter, I would like to highlight some pressing social issues currently affecting vulnerable communities in India. On August 9th, a tragic incident occurred in Kolkata (West Bengal), where a 31-year-old trainee woman doctor was brutally raped and murdered at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital. A civic volunteer, Sanjay Roy, has been arrested and charged in connection with this heinous crime.

This case has ignited widespread protests within the medical community in West Bengal, with doctors demanding justice and advocating for enhanced workplace safety in hospitals. In response, junior doctors across the state have initiated hunger strikes, calling for immediate action from authorities.

The urgency of this situation cannot be overstated; it has sparked a nationwide conversation about the need for reforms in hospital security and accountability. As protests escalate, numerous doctors from various hospitals have voiced their discontent, leading to the resignation of senior doctors from several institutions.

This case remains a significant point of contention, reflecting broader issues of safety and justice for women in India. It is imperative that we address these concerns and work towards creating a safer environment for all.

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*We are deeply privileged for your continuous and unwavering support for our project. Thank you.*

*- Editorial team: Rev Fr Backia Regis, Rev Fr Charles, Nandhini Krishnan (and Shravanti T & Nivi K)*