

AUTUMN 2018 NEWSLETTER

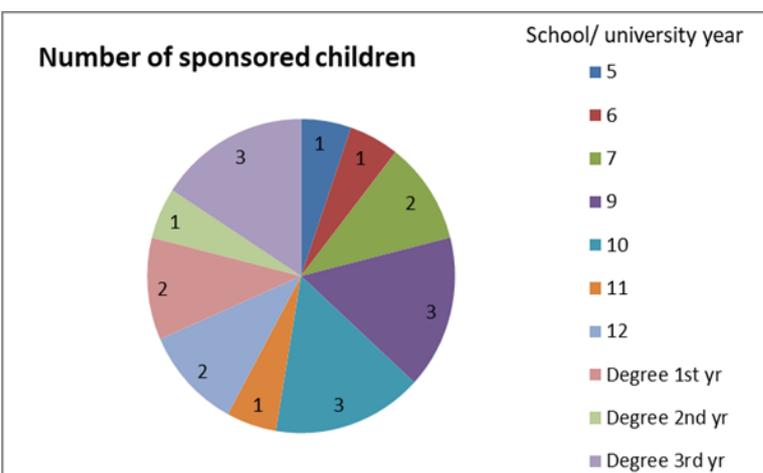
Dear Friends,

As the new academic year started in June in Chennai, a number of parents approached the Vine Charitable Trust for help with annual school and college fees for their children.



Focus on sponsorship

For many years Anglo-Indian Concern has run a sponsorship scheme to provide support for VCT children who are either at school or university. Kirsten Masson, a trustee of AIC, has recently taken on the responsibility for the scheme. She writes: 'Over the years we have sponsored many children and students and have been delighted to see how this has benefited them and their wider families by seeing them move from education into paid employment.'



19 out of a total of 67 school and college students are currently sponsored- see the graph to the left. We are very grateful to sponsors, past and present, whose support has enabled each young person to have a good education and made a real difference to their future prospects.

There are however, a number of children and young people who do not have sponsors.

We would like to share the stories of a few of these now.

Jacob(6)* and his brother, Jimmy (4), live with their mother in their grandmother's home, an old dilapidated house in Perambur. Their father died in an accident two years ago leaving their mother very depressed. She is working in a local call centre and concentrates on her sons' upbringing.

*All names have been changed

They are in Year 2 and Lower Kindergarten respectively. VCT is supporting them with school fees (see photo to the right)



Sally, has been supported by VCT for many years and so it has given them great pleasure to see her successfully complete her 12th Standard (A level equivalent) exams earlier this year, scoring 1102 out of 1200 marks, which is an excellent score. She has now got a place at Stella Maris college and is studying on a BCom degree course. Her ambition is to become a chartered accountant.



Sally's father has a long term mental illness but manages to do a low paid job as a security guard. Her mother is hard working as a tailor in a garment factory. Without the support from VCT this level of education would not be possible for Sally.

Sally's brother, seen with her in the picture, is studying at Bishop Corrie's School in the 10th standard and is also excelling. They all live in one small room, which has poor quality cement sheeting roof.

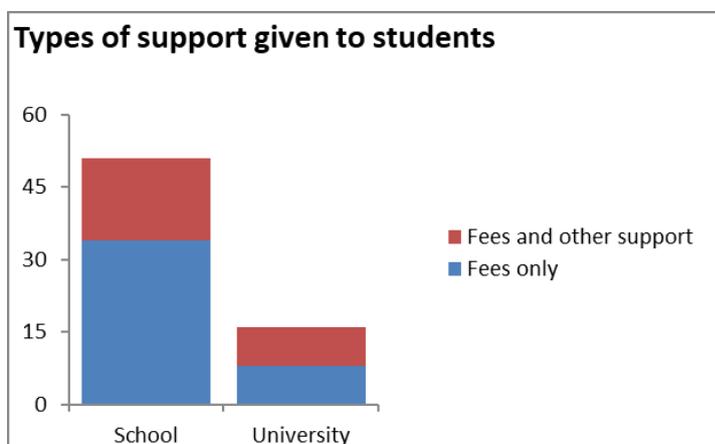
Finally meet Bernadette, aged 13, who lives with her grandparents in a slum clearance flat. Bernadette witnessed a horrific event when she was small which led to the break up of her family. Her trauma was undetected for a number of years but now she receives counselling, which has improved things, but she still finds it hard to concentrate at school. She is in class 8 and a boarder at St George's school. Her grandfather has a very low income. VCT provides school fees for Bernadette.

In each of these stories mental health issues have contributed considerably to the difficulties of those helped by VCT. Whilst the primary purpose for attending the office is for financial support, John and Grace spend a lot of time listening to and supporting those who often feel isolated, fearful or depressed.

Of the 67 children currently supported by VCT, some only receive fees and others receive extra support, which could include food aid and or medical help.

Most of the children who are currently sponsored are those who receive this additional support, which ensures that they can stay in school and stay well.

If you are interested in sponsorship please contact Kirsten at Kirsten.masson@ntlworld.com and she will arrange a time to discuss it with you.



Other News

Abigail Shrimpton, daughter of Grace, VCT's office manager and David, the pastor at the People of the Way church, has just passed the final exams for her dentistry course (BDS). She is extremely thankful to AIC for supporting her. She now has to undertake an intern year before she finally qualifies next summer.

The Thurley family and the Shrimptons have a close historical link. In the 1950s Tom Thurley and Grace's father served on the committee of the first University Christian Union in India, at Madras University. In the 1990's, after the death of Grace's father, Tom and Rachel arranged the marriage of Grace with David, who was the first student ever sponsored by VCT. Rachel has always been 'Granny' to Abi.

It is therefore wonderful news that Abi is to marry in January and Rachel is hoping, after a break of 6 years, to return to Chennai for the wedding. She will also spend time at the VCT office and will be especially happy to see the older people who she knew well on her annual visits. Please pray for Rachel's health for this trip as at 84 she may struggle with the travel and the heat.

Lettie Kearney will also be visiting Chennai in January as usual. She also would value your prayers for good health during her stay.

People of The Way Fellowship

Roughly 300 adults and 130 children attend the group of churches that Pastor David Shrimpton oversees. The central church in Periyar Nagar is approximately half Anglo-Indian and half Indian Christian. The other satellite churches are a mix of different local language groups.

In the last few months a very generous gift from a supporter in England was given, which has enabled the builder at the site of the new church at Erukancherri to complete the floor slab and build a kitchen, lavatory and the housing for a lift. The next stage will be the ceiling/ floor for the first floor which will eventually be the main hall.



This will cost at least £35,000 and will need to be done in one go, so the site will now be cleared so that the church currently meeting on a nearby roof terrace, can move to the site under a temporary structure. This will be the first time any of the congregations has met on their own land, which is a special landmark for PoTW. The main church at Periyar Nagar will not relocate to the site until the building is further along. We give thanks to God for the wonderful gifts that have made this possible.

We end with thanks for reading this letter and for your support of the work in India.

Yours with love

Rachel Thurley

Rachel Thurley

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