



# FRIENDS OF SMYRNA HOME

bringing hope to those in need

## Spring Newsletter 2017

Welcome to our latest newsletter

Thank you all for you continued support and prayers.

### Smyrna Home Visit, Summer 2016

By Tony Neal

It now seems quite a while since that Friday morning in the summer when thirteen of us met at Heathrow to start the long journey to Smyrna Home. We covered a wide



age range, from Toby Marchant at 11 to Ken Morgan at 70ish, and while some were veteran visitors to Smyrna, for most it was a first time in India and there was a mixture of excitement and apprehension as we contemplated spending the next couple of weeks in a strange place with a strange group of people!

One of the initial objectives of the trip had been to work on the Smyrna Home house-building project and to provide three new homes for particularly needy families in the area but, a few weeks before our departure, we'd learned that this wouldn't be possible within the new regulations of the Indian government. Nevertheless, we were able to provide the finance for these homes and to witness the building of the first of them. It was a huge privilege to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony when this house was completed and to pray for the family as they moved into their smart new home.



Even without the building work, there was plenty to keep the team busy as we helped the Smyrna Home staff with their various projects. We spent a lot of time in the New World Centre where, day by day,

Smyrna does a fantastic work with local disabled people. We worked with the full-time specialists at the Centre, playing and doing activities with the young people and adults and helping with their therapy.

Although this was emotionally challenging, it was also very rewarding as we were able to share the joy of the regular attenders as they engaged in new experiences and made new friendships.

Smyrna Home also runs a feeding programme for the neediest in the community where, once a week, they receive a hot meal and once a month a food parcel. We sponsored this meal whilst we were there (less than



£2 per person) and helped prepare the curry over an open wood fire in traditional Indian style. Some came from over 10 miles away for their only substantial meal for that week; everyone was so grateful, a truly humbling experience for all of us.



For some in the team, our previous contact with Smyrna Home has mainly been through supporting a child through the sponsorship programme. It was a great blessing to be able to visit some of these children in



their homes and to hear them speak of their gratitude for what a difference the sponsorship was making to their lives. We were also able to take part in one of the regular mornings when a group of the sponsor children are invited to

the Home to take part in games and activities. Other highlights of the trip included an evening spent with the sponsored student girls who live in the hostel at Smyrna Home as we shared in some games and a camp fire (and trying to learn some Indian dancing!); a visit to the associated school at Kotigiri where we organised some games and tried to teach some English; and a training day spent with all the regular staff at the home.

It would be wrong to give the impression that the trip was 'all work and no play'. We found the time for some sightseeing, spotting monkeys and elephants in the wild, and taking in the sights and sounds (and smells) which characterise India. And, of course, the younger members of the team came back with made-to-measure Sari's and suits. We also spent some time studying the Bible together in the evenings where we learned valuable lessons from the life of King David.

Each of the team will have their own special memories of the trip but, perhaps for all of us, the abiding memory will be the experience of working so well together as a team as we sought to bring help and hope to people who have so little of the world's material wealth and yet can teach us so much through their cheerfulness and faith. It was a joy to share this experience together and to bring some encouragement to the staff at Smyrna Home who month-by-month faithfully serve God through this wonderful and life-giving work.

## Could you get this by email?

Our newsletters are made available on our website. Many supporters are now emailed when we publish each one and view the colour version online. With the rising postage & stationary costs this helps reduce our administration bill.

If you received this in the post but could use the online version then let us know ([info@smyrna.org.uk](mailto:info@smyrna.org.uk)) so we can add you to the email list next time. Please note we have no plans to stop sending printed copies out and are happy to send them to all that want them by post. Thank you all for taking time to read our newsletters.

### THANK YOU

Following visits to Smyrna Home in the spectacular Nilgiris Hills in South India in the early nineties, a charitable trust was set up in the UK in 15<sup>th</sup> July 1996.

One of the three founding Trustees was Melanie Parrish. From day one her husband Neil acted as the Treasurer.

Earlier this year they decided that they would be giving up these voluntary responsibilities.

Melanie and Neil have carried all the administrative responsibilities for just over 20 years and Friends of Smyrna owe them a considerable debt of gratitude. It is not possible to estimate how many children and others have been blessed through their work.

During 2016 they set themselves a target of "walk, bike, run, row, swim", 6133 miles the distance from their home to Smyrna Home in Ooty and raised £2,000. We will miss them, they are special people.

In the summer we sent a letter to all our supporters. It was our first appeal letter to with an invitation to join with us in finding £1,000 per month to continue the general support of the work in India. A legacy some years ago was providing most of this. Eighteen of our Supporters were able to contribute towards this with promises of £4,000 per year and one off gifts of £7,000. This is so encouraging for us all. Also a reminder of how effective legacies can be, and we know of others who have promised to leave money to Friends of Smyrna...one day!

Please note our new address at the foot of the newsletter. You will see we have changed our logo. The new one emphasizes the need to pray for all those we all support in India. We hope you like it!

## Working Holiday to Smyrna Home

### 10 Volunteers Needed

#### Purpose

To encourage those working at Smyrna Home, by helping

- them in the New World Centre (for disabled children)
- with the child sponsorship
- with the community feeding program
- sponsoring house building

**Confirmed dates:** 7th - 24th August 2017

**Cost:** £1,400.00 (to be confirmed)

Includes: all travel, visa, food & lodging

Excludes: vaccinations, souvenir shopping & food in transit

#### How to apply

Contact: Tony Neal or Sam Marchant

Email: [tonyandvalneal@gmail.com](mailto:tonyandvalneal@gmail.com)

Phone: 0208393 5256

Email: [samuelmarchant@btinternet.com](mailto:samuelmarchant@btinternet.com)



If you are interested in sponsoring a child at only £10 per month please contact us by;

email at [enquiries@smyrna.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@smyrna.org.uk)

or contact form on our web site [www.smyrna.org.uk](http://www.smyrna.org.uk)

or send us your details to Unit 3, 80 High Street, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9HE.

Name:

Address:

Email:

then we can send you a standing order & gift aid form and arrange your sponsorship

