



# FRIENDS OF SMYRNA HOME

bringing hope to those in need

## News of 2018

### Welcome to our latest newsletter

Thank you all for your continued support and prayers.

#### Meeting Your Child

Meeting a child you have sponsored for years is a never to be forgotten experience. The next best thing is a personal link.



In August the team visiting Smyrna Home hosted the Saturday morning get together of Sponsored children. On this morning all the UK sponsors meet and Melinder and her Mother were there. Knowing the long-term sponsor, I took a photo and texted it to him. The reply asked me to thank her for the cards she had sent over the years.

That afternoon a group of us visited her home and so another photo was texted, this time with Mum and Dad. Melinder said she had never seen a picture of her sponsor. A selfie arrived within 2 minutes, much to the delight of all present. A memorable time which means so much to the family as we seek to bring hope to those in need, and a reminder of the opportunities to meet with those who we all sponsor.

#### Training Hens

On our visit we were asked to provide a training day. This is a chance for everyone who works at Smyrna Home to spend a fun day together. Our theme was working as a Team. We divided into four random groups. One activity was for everyone to choose an animal that represented Smyrna Home. I was expecting the giants, lions, tigers etc. But our group chose a chicken and we were called the hens!



A chicken, Why?

It protects its young under the shelter of her wings. Wow that fits. Care and protection that's what sponsorship is about. Hens lay eggs a reminder of the feeding programme, that gives the elderly a weekly meal and a monthly food parcel. Not a symbol one might expect but one that reflects the love shown to so many each day. This was such a fun day as we did lots of team building activities and silly games involving balloons, newspapers, blindfolds and coloured balls. At the end of the session, they went around the room and shared how much they had enjoyed it, valuing the space they had to enjoy each other's company and laugh together, this was so uplifting to hear. Many of them said they would remember the day forever.

I had always wanted to visit India.....

Smyrna is set on the hillside a steep run up from the town (and I did run it - several times. I called it altitude training and it took my breath away more than once). The welcome at Smyrna throughout our stay was overwhelming. True hospitality. I made many new friends here, not only with my fellow travellers but the local team and those using the different services of the centre. I was struck by the work with poor 'downtrodden' children. That term may be used by Smyrna to describe some of the shocking economic circumstances these children find themselves in, but there is nothing downtrodden in the spirit of these amazing young people. They thrive as they gain a better education through the support of sponsors from the UK and elsewhere. It was truly inspirational to see and great fun sharing time with them in their homes, school and on site.

The difficulties and challenges children and adults face and the support they receive whilst using the medical rehabilitation facilities of the New World Centre genuinely humbled me.



From adult stroke victims to children born with cerebral palsy, all benefit from the care and attention they receive here. I will forever remember a hug from a young lad with cerebral palsy who thought my larking around funny. He and I share that understanding; others may yet come to appreciate my comic genius!? Smyrna works with young and old alike. It does so with genuine care and compassion, no matter the background or social position of those it helps. It was a privilege to share time with both youngsters and older residents. Throughout our stay we were well fed in body, mind and spirit. This is truly an optimistic place. It is a shining example of genuine love and it moved me. 'Let your light so shine before men.' It shone brightly for me.

#### Smyrna Visit 2019

We are planning another group visit to Smyrna Home in 2019, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August. If you think you may be interested in coming with us, please get in touch with Tony and Val Neal (02083935256/[tonyandvalneal@gmail.com](mailto:tonyandvalneal@gmail.com))

# Could you get this by email?

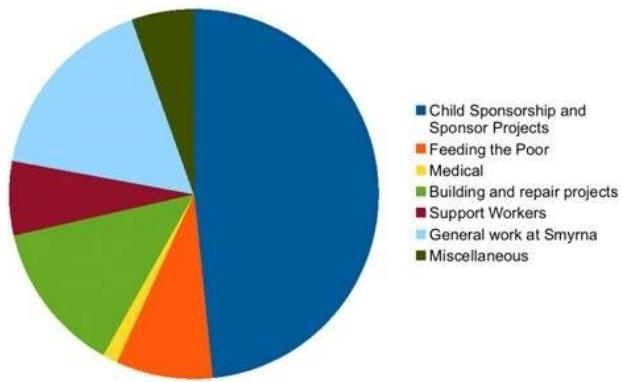
Our newsletters are made available on our website. Many supporters are now emailed when we publish each one and view the colour version online. With the rising postage & stationery costs this helps reduce our administration bill.

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.

## Gifts for the Year

### Friends of Smyrna Gifts sent to India for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

Child Sponsorship and Sponsor Projects	£17,772.00
Feeding the Poor	£3,110.00
Medical	£480.00
Building and repair projects	£4,860.00
Support Workers	£2,380.00
General work at Smyrna	£6,120.00
Miscellaneous	£1,992.41
<b>Total ....</b>	<b>£36,714.41</b>



## Becoming Self Financing

Smyrna Home is a large colonial house build by the British and for many years was the home of the Bishop. When it was purchased by the Smyrna Fellowship Trust an internal floor was added, creating challenges as the supporting beams were only about 3 feet from the new floor. The dream was to return the house to its former colonial grandeur and let the rooms as a guest house or as they call it a Homestead. Then advertise on Airbnb. The first 3 rooms have been completed with funds raised through offering a time share type arrangement. Work is now ongoing to create a further six rooms. The plan is to use these to raise enough income to run Smyrna Home and all the activities so that the Trust is self-supporting.



We have found it increasingly difficult to transfer money into India, so this vision will protect the children. If you know anyone going to South India suggest they book!

The costs of the work requires funding from outside gifts and this type of project and mission is an ideal one for considering when wills are being made.

## Tamil Friends

Three of the young girls who went on the August trip bonded with some of the ladies who lived in the shelter onsite. This is for vulnerable women. They spent a few afternoons with them as they were taught how to crochet. Despite the language barrier, they were able to communicate with each other. These ladies were very good crochet teachers and particularly patient as one of our team took about 30 minutes to master the basic stitch!

A couple of videos were made during last year's trips, please use these links below to see what is happening at Smyrna:

Val's video [https://youtu.be/cJhPvj\\_GP8](https://youtu.be/cJhPvj_GP8)

Michelle's [https://drive.google.com/open?id=1PJLIdT8oBYYcUG7xOLhc\\_qf-AIUuUxGa](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1PJLIdT8oBYYcUG7xOLhc_qf-AIUuUxGa)

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 new web site [www.friendsofsmyrnahome.com](http://www.friendsofsmyrnahome.com)

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

