

FRIENDS OF METTUPALAYAM TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1054673

www.irtdt.co.uk Facebook- Friends of Mettupalayam Community
<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/fom>

November 2017

Adele Eldridge
The Coach House
Bainbridge
LEYBURN
DL8 3EE
01969 650618

Francis and Rosie Muncaster
The Rowans
Exelby
BEDALE
DL8 2HF
01677 425961

Hugo and Jean Welsh
16 The Avenue
Haxby
York
YO32 3EQ
01904 769248

adeleeldridge@gmail.com

fmuncaster@hotmail.com

hugo.welsh30@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

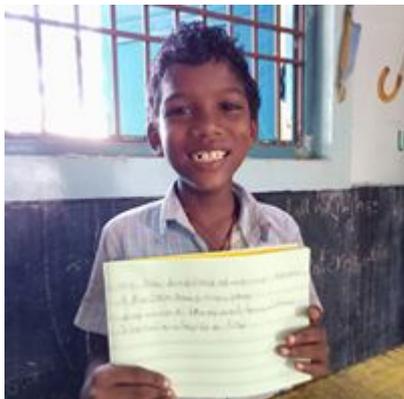
Welcome to our final newsletter of 2017 and as we come towards the end of the year, we thought it an appropriate time to reflect on what it is that keeps us together and has kept us going for over 25 years.

Friendship - “a form of interpersonal bond...whose characteristics include affection, kindness, love, compassion, trust...”

It is part of the first two words we use in every newsletter and of course the first word of our charity, but we felt it worth reflecting on just how friendship shapes what our charity has always been about. We can only continue because of your support, your kindness, compassion and trust. We always try to operate the charity through these same values. And our relationship with Venkat and the project team in Mettupalayam is absolutely based on friendship. The financial support that FOM provides is a practical demonstration of our friendship and compassion. But Venkat will always tell us that what is most important are the personal friendships and the development of friends across the world – and the sharing of experiences and understanding. And this is the way that the charity was born, when David and Adele met Venkat and developed an unbreakable bond. Venkat calls it “caring and sharing”. Thank you for being part of that bond of friendship, which does so much for so many people in the relief of poverty and sickness, the advancement of education and the preservation of good health.



Education News



You may remember Boubadi, who has cerebral palsy. He is intelligent but gets very frustrated with his physical limitations. Well, he is making tremendous progress with his writing and looks rightly proud of it. Our thanks to all the caring and dedicated work that the teaching staff and Ramya put in with him every day. Boubadi’s story is just one of the many that your support makes possible.

Venkat also reports a general improvement in English language at the Crakehall school, which has been aided by the focused support from visiting UK teachers and the regular interaction with English-speaking visitors. As we have reported before, we continue to have success encouraging the local tribal community to send their children to our school. However, there are some tribal parents who live a nomadic lifestyle, which makes things

difficult. But Venkat never gives up! He has now arranged hostel accommodation for up to twenty children with alternative local schooling.



Although we provide only primary schooling, we continue to support secondary education in a number of ways. Here you see secondary school pupils who come to the project building in the evenings for extra tuition and help, especially with English and Maths. They make use of the project's lighting and do homework under the tuition and support of Venkat and Ramya. When not at work, Venkat's son Anand will also help.

The Farm

The monsoon rains have come early in Tamil Nadu, causing power cuts and localized flooding especially around the large cities. However, it should be good news for our farm produce and as these pictures show, everything has turned green. Rice paddy has been planted, our percolation rain water-saving lagoon is full, as are all our wells and the recently completed water saving ditches around the orchard area. We should have enough water now for some time!



Health Education and Support

Our regular weekly health clinics are supplemented by quarterly eye camps, often supported by the local Lions club. Venkat reports two big issues – cataracts, which when discovered are addressed successfully at local hospitals. More worrying is the increase in diabetes. The increased availability of some “fast foods” like noodles, an over-reliance on rice, a reduction in some manual labour, greater availability of transport options (meaning less walking) – all contribute to diet and lifestyle issues that we are well aware of in the West. We are already diagnosing and treating several quite severe cases and this will be an increasing focus for healthcare support and health education in the future.

UK News

We continue to receive invaluable support from friends here in the UK and visitors to the project, like Ray and Karen, who have just returned from another productive trip.

Another supporter is Adam Chadwick, who recently completed the coast to coast Hadrian's Way cycle ride from Ravenglass to Tynemouth. Adam and three colleagues completed the 174 miles in two days and raised over £1600. A huge thank you to all involved. They don't look nearly tired enough in this photo!

Another friend, Claire, who has Asbergers, has donated nearly 200 greetings cards that she has handmade. Her parents tell us that she has spent years making the cards. It is another amazing example of kindness and friendship. We look forward to selling these at upcoming fairs and talks.

There are too many examples to list here, but however you support us and show your friendship, thank you! If you have any questions or ideas please get in touch. If you are on Facebook, please follow us there and keep up to date with stories, photos and videos.



We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.