

Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA KIDS • SPRING 2020

Love in Action

WRITTEN BY KATE TEECE, *PRESIDENT*

Last November, my Bethania Kids journey with family and friends turned out to be an inspiring path of discovery. On a hot day in Batlagundu, we joined with the boys from Dayavu Home and girls from Shalom Home—Bethania Kids siblings—in a beautiful Thanksgiving service. We gave thanks for the many generous donors who have made the new Shalom Home project possible. The children sang, danced, and re-enacted a true story from one child's life before Bethania Kids. Our group from Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis sang the Tamil doxology, "Tandanei," and I shared a short message...at the end of which I was the one to declare "Let the construction begin!" A short time later a backhoe shovel was plunging into the earth. We can hardly wait to see this building project come to fruition!

As my friend on the trip, Lora Dundek, wrote: "We have seen so much Christian love and compassion in action and have had an opportunity to sit with children and adults who do not look like us, speak the same language, or even view the world in the same way. We sang with them, watched them dance and sing, introduced them to Jenga and card games, and read a story about snow, all the while knowing that we are all held in the love of Christ that does not recognize the boundaries that we often draw around ourselves."

This would not be possible without your support. Our vision for Bethania Kids is to honor God by providing high-quality care for 1000 children and their families in India. We strive to raise funds through the Comprehensive Campaign, Sponsor A Child, church partnerships, grants, Giving Tuesday, and end-of-the-year appeals. We maintain our promise that 100% of donations go directly to India. Thank you for each and every gift!

Kate Teece



Bethania Kids
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Angelic Benefactor at Angel Home

It is always a happy day for the boys at Angel Home when Mark Lee comes to visit. Mark is a member of the Bethania Kids Board of Directors, and his company, Solix Technologies, and their foundation, Touch-A-Life, have given scholarships to two boys from Angel Home. In sharing some of his experiences during a recent visit, you can see the impact Angel Home makes in the lives of these boys.



“One of the highlights from this trip was my opportunity to meet with Praveen, one of the students that Solix and Touch-A-Life are sponsoring. He is pursuing his BTech in engineering at a nearby college called GIET and is doing quite well. Praveen’s story is like many of our boys. When he was 5 years old, his father abandoned the family. Praveen, his younger sister and their mother were left with no resources and no way to support themselves. Through the grace of God, Praveen found his way to Bethania Kids and Angel Home, where he grew up. He became a top student and did very well on his exams. Now, because of Bethania Kids and with the help of Touch-A-Life, he is taking the next step in his education and he has a chance for a very bright future.



I met many of our newest boys on my most recent visit. It is amazing how well the older boys support and nurture the newer arrivals. They really become a big family. I was last there about a year ago and remember a little boy named Santosh. He had just arrived and was clearly traumatized by what had come before in his short life. He would stand away from the other boys and would not engage. This time, the transformation was amazing. He was happy, playing with many friends, and seemed to be completely adjusted. He gave me a big hug when I was leaving.



We had some fun playing cricket again. I do pretty well against the 8- to 10-year-olds. The older boys are much tougher competition.



The boys call me “Mark Uncle.” It is great to have so many happy nephews, and it is a privilege to do some small part to support them.”



Thrivent Choice Dollars continue to be a good source of funds. If you are a Thrivent member, please designate Bethania Kids as your preferred charity.

Thrivent Action Team Grants (\$250 each) offer a good way to support fundraising efforts. If you are a Thrivent member, you can organize and host a local event to benefit Bethania Kids—perhaps a bake sale or spring walk with breakfast—and apply for an Action Team Grant to help buy supplies or materials for the event. You are eligible for two per year. Contact Wendy at wendy@bethaniakids.org for ideas and help. These funded events are a great example of “multiplying the ministry.”



Model of Stewardship

“The very creative, active use of materials and space was present everywhere.” This was an observation made by Walt Hinck after visiting Bethania Kids ministries in November. Similar comments are often made by those observing our ministries in action. As stewards of the funds you contribute to Bethania Kids, we place a high priority on earning your trust by using those funds judiciously and responsibly.

For the most part, the cost of living in India is significantly lower than in North America. As a comparison, the one dollar we might spend on two oranges at the supermarket or a snack from a vending machine could provide the following items to the children at Bethania Kids:

- Health care expenses for one child for one month at a Residence Home;
- Three meals at a Residence Home;
- School supplies for one child for one month at a Residence Home;
- Food for one day (one meal and two snacks) for 5 children at an Early Childhood Center; or
- After-school snacks for 15 children at a Center for After-School Care.

When so much can be done with just one dollar, imagine the potential impact and life-changing consequences possible with larger donations.

Our CEO, Dr. Gnanakan, underscores that we are resourceful with our gifts by choosing less expensive, simpler lifestyles without compromising quality. Where we may see a small area of grass, our staff sees a playground. Two rooms can be used as a daycare for 35 children. A room at the top of a very steep stairway provides training space for 15 women to earn a living. Open ground space is used to plant vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

Additionally, all staff salaries are set to be fair yet modest, as we rely on finding candidates who are motivated primarily by their compassion for children. Finally, whenever free offers are made for needed supplies or services by either local communities or other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), after careful vetting, we often gladly accept those offers and use them for the most beneficial purposes.

Thus, you can be assured that appreciation for your support is honored with the deepest respect as we continue to make maximum use of all available resources.



In Honor of

The Armstrong Family
Dave Banks
The Bandaru Family
Sara & Peter Bastke
Thor & Elaine Boaz
Ted Christner & Claudia Trautmann
Kristin Dehaven
Allen John & Lora Dundek
Lora Dundek
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Bethania Kids wishes to thank Claudia Trautmann, who faithfully led our Publications Committee for the last six years. The Seeds on the Wind newsletters that we have enjoyed are the direct result of her beautiful words, artistry, and vision. We have especially valued her perspectives as one who grew up in Kodaikanal. We are grateful that she remains a writer on our team.

Thank you, Claudia!

Bethania Kids is a Christian mission bringing wholeness and hope to poor, abandoned and disabled children in India, equipping them to share God's love.

We channel 100% of every penny donated into our ministry for children.

Bethania Kids is an IRS-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit and benevolent organization.

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Call to Action

We are happy to report that Bethania Kids has come a very long way in raising the \$550,000 needed for the new Shalom Home for Girls. Although we are not finished yet, we are over 90% there—just \$53,000 more to go! The primary reason we have been able to undertake this significant, critically important project is because of your very generous support. There is no stopping us now! Will you join us on this last leg of our journey?

As we've widely reported, our Shalom Home, which provides full-time residential care for 29 girls in Kodaikanal, has been forced to move to multiple rental properties over the years, none of which met the minimum space requirements of the Indian Juvenile Justice Code. In the past few years, Bethania Kids has been heavily invested in fundraising, planning, and now constructing a permanent home in a town called Batlagundu, which is on the plains at the foot of the mountain leading up to Kodaikanal. We are grateful to God for guiding us to this ideal property location with its many assets (e.g., good community and local schools), where our girls will have the best opportunity to thrive.

Please consider a gift towards the Shalom Home project. The easiest way to do this is to visit our website at www.bethaniakids.org, click on "Donate Now" under Comprehensive Campaign photo, and select "Shalom Home" from the drop-down menu under "Designation."

Join our incredible team of supporters who are collectively bringing the Shalom Home girls to the last home they will need before graduation!



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