

# Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA KIDS • FALL 2022

## Nurturing New Growth!

Dear Bethania Kids Family,

Once again, we write with excitement and thankful hearts to report on the wonderful work undertaken by our partners in India on behalf of the beloved children and families of Bethania Kids.

In our Spring issue of *Seeds on the Wind*, we presented a panoramic view of our four ministry areas (homes, care centers, disability centers and women's empowerment programs) as they were emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. **In this issue, we tour the special programs and activities being conducted throughout our ministries to continue equipping our children, families and staff for further recovery and growth.**

You'll see the evidence of God's faithfulness shining in the lives of Shalom Home alumna Kaviya Balaji, Balachandu of Angel Home, and young Jisnu of Deborah Care Center. Then meet our new Bethania Kids Board of Directors Chairman, Dr. Ernie Hahn, and learn of his passion for the children.

Truly the Lord is with us! As the psalmist proclaims, *"It is he who remembered us in our low estate. For his steadfast love endures forever."* -Psalm 136:23

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Bethania  Kids





APRIL

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Since April there has been a flurry of new growth throughout our ministry sites. More children have returned, and new ones have joined our numbers. With vision and encouragement provided by the Bethania Foundation CEO, Dr. James Gnanakan, and funding from the COVID Relief and Recovery Program, our dynamic, creative leaders quickly developed and organized highly meaningful programs for Bethania Kids staff, children, families, and communities.

With the worthy goal of nurturing the uniqueness of every child, a **3-day workshop on “Post-COVID Child Care Concerns — Academics, Health and Mental Health”** was given in April at the new Shalom Home for staff from all Bethania Kids projects. A panel of experts from the Bishop Heber College Department of Social Work of Trichy provided teaching and guidance.

Following this highly successful launch, Dr. Gnanakan and members of the Bethania Foundation India Board of Trustees traveled throughout the spring, summer, and early fall to visit subsequent workshops and encourage participants. In all, eight such events took place!

“The workshop was very beneficial for all of us. We learned about understanding the mental states of children from diverse backgrounds, guiding children in the right way, giving importance to children’s opinions, and how to recognize children’s strengths and weaknesses and act accordingly.”

– Project-in-Charge Mrs. Josephine Selvan



JUNE

In early June a pair of **community health and hygiene workshops** were held at our Child and Mother Care Centers in the tribal communities of Dholdholi and Cilpajodi, where over 100 children and family members attended in each location!



“Our Centers are a beacon of light to all the villagers, giving them courage and guidance in crisis times. The seeds we have sown here are very promising. I am sure God will transform them as mighty trees that shelter the whole community.”

–Dr. Gnanakan

In mid-July the children and families of Shalom and Dayavu Homes and the Kodaikanal Care Centers attended targeted workshops given by Bishop Heber College presenters. **Parenting sessions for mothers** focused on holistic development in their children, and modules for the children and adolescents included topics like knowing about myself, peer relationships, how to be an effective learner, and learning from mistakes.

Later in July and again in September, Bethania Kids teaching staff in the Kodaikanal region and at Grace Home, Nagercoil, joined workshops specifically focused on **“Developing Post-COVID Strategies of Educational Enhancement for the Children.”**

Wrapping up the summer months, a **series of health screening camps** was offered at Bethania Kids care centers in the Kodaikanal region. Dr. Isaac of Van Allen Hospital conducted health classes for parents, teachers, and after-school care children from all 11 care centers, and the children were given medical examinations.

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“This meeting was very valuable for me. Habitually we have given importance only to the outward appearance of our children ... we expect children to act as mini adult. But we miss what [this] expectation imposes on our children ... the stress they face because we expect too much. I realized that we should give as much importance to children’s emotional development as we do to their physical development.”

–S. Ruba, parent of a Deborah Day Care Center child



“I got the opportunity to make good friends and ... advice on obeying my parents and respecting elders. If I [had] not attended the workshop, I [would] be a big-headed girl. I will behave with love, and I won’t get angry with [my parents]. I humbly request you to conduct such [a] workshop at least once in a year for a poor child like [me]. Thank you.”

– G. Roseline Swathi, 7th Grade Student at Deborah After-School Care Center



“After the COVID pandemic these children are getting good examinations and health screening. Parents and children are being taught healthy living and disease prevention.”

–Dr. Ernie Hahn





AUGUST

(Continued)

On August 15 of this year, **India celebrated her 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day**, marking the end of British colonial rule. Bethania Kids celebrations expressing national loyalty were held across the three Indian states where our ministries are located.


**This year also marks a special anniversary for Bethania Kids.** For 35 years, God has been profoundly touching and changing lives forever through our ministries. And it's amazing to see the growth God has brought about in these recent months after such a devastating pandemic!

**Bethania** Kids  
*Celebrating 35 Years!*



**We are deeply grateful for you**, our donors, and your partnership in nurturing and equipping the children of India to change their world through Jesus' love!

In His service,

Dr. Ernest Hahn  
*Chairman*

Kate Hennig Teece  
*President*

**In Honor Of**

Steybi Benitez  
Tristen Benitez  
Janet Burton  
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Kristin DeHaven  
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Don & Carol Hart  
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**In Memory Of**

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Al Hennig  
Erna Polly Hennig  
Gene Hennig  
Robert Hennig  
David Learman

Rev. Gerhard & Nellie  
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Francis Olejniczak  
Jeevan Paul

# Welcome, Dr. Ernest Hahn!

As we all know, life is full of changes and challenges. One of those instances came this past June when the term of Larry Zimmerman as chairman of the Bethania Kids (BK) Board of Directors in North America came to an end and we were challenged to name a new chairman. Once again, our loving God provided.

**We welcome Dr. Ernest Hahn as the new board chairman.** Ernie grew up in India, where his father was a missionary to Muslims. Because of his background, he has an inherent love for Indian people, particularly children. For 30 years he has been a family doctor in Waterloo, Canada, but has taken the time to visit India as often as possible, particularly since joining the BK Board of Directors in 2015.

On his first trip to Bethania Kids facilities in India, Ernie was inspired by the pure joy on the faces of the children, who warmly welcomed him. Being acutely aware that many of them had been “street kids” before being rescued, he made a point of getting to know the leadership and staff in India, who were primarily responsible for the children’s transformation. He was extremely impressed by their incredible competence, commitment, and compassion towards the children, reflecting God’s unconditional love.

Having some insight into the need for addressing “taboo” health issues in India, Ernie used his medical expertise for educational purposes, initiating two healthcare conferences for the Bethania Kids staff, children, and community women in Kodaikanal. In 2018 he organized a 2-day conference on mental health and in 2020 another 2-day conference on women’s health. The attendees were very grateful for the open discussions and educational benefits of these conferences.

When asked what goals he has as the new chairman, Ernie said that he will do whatever he can to facilitate the process of lifting needy children out of poverty into a new life of meaning and purpose through the love of God. He expressed the hope that the BK Board of Directors in North America will continue to convey to the Bethania Foundation staff and Board of Trustees in India how much they are appreciated for their tireless efforts to comply so well with the Lord’s directive to “let the children come to me.”



# Tribute to Larry Zimmerman

As a board member for 9 years and chairman of the board for the past 3½ years, Larry demonstrated a deep dedication to our mission. Especially outstanding were his success in fundraising and his determination to guide projects through to completion. Because of his vision and leadership, the successful million-dollar Comprehensive Campaign has provided two new community centers in Odisha, a new Shalom Home for Girls, enhanced salaries and education for staff, libraries and books for the children, an endowed scholarship fund, better equipment and instruction for the women’s empowerment programs, an alumni relations program, and food security for all our locations. Recently, his fundraising talents resulted in a large COVID Relief and Recovery Program. **Very well done, good and faithful servant!**





# Shalom Home Alumna Strives for Excellence

Friends describe Kaviya Balaji as a very social person, who interacted well with her fellow residents at Shalom Home for Girls. Despite coming from impoverished family circumstances, she always encouraged others in the home to study and stay disciplined. She lived up to these goals herself and studied well in the safety of a place where the atmosphere was happy and healthy. The faithful staff at Shalom Home inspired her to pray, read the Bible, and embrace the love of Jesus.



Kaviya came to Shalom Home when she was ten years old. Her father was a tailor, who died from leukemia when Kaviya was only 2½ years old. His death thrust the family into poverty. An additional challenge was that Kaviya's elder sister had a severe case of cerebral palsy and



required rehabilitation. As a result, her mother decided to enroll Kaviya in Shalom Home.

Kaviya is now 26 years of age and works as an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife in a Primary Health Center near Kodaikanal. She is happily married and has a 10-month-old daughter. Her husband works in a Kodaikanal hotel as a chef. God has richly blessed her family!

Kaviya's profession as a nurse midwife is also a God-given vocation. She uses her gift of encouragement to show compassion and provide preventative care and treatment to the pregnant ladies in the village and their children. In this role, she reflects both the love of Jesus and the examples of kindness shown to her by her caretakers at Shalom Home.

Kaviya prays that she will always give more than she has received. Her goal is to be a witness and an ambassador for Bethania Kids ministries. She is truly an example to us all!

## Meet a Future Bank Officer!

Before Balachandu came to Angel Home in 2018, his life was difficult. His father was physically and mentally abusive, and Balachandu sometimes witnessed his mother being badly beaten. Thankfully, his life changed dramatically when his grandparents and uncle rescued Balachandu, his brother, and their mom from his childhood home. Soon after that they arranged for Balachandu to be accepted at Angel Home for Boys, which was 30 miles from his village.



Angel Home restarted Balachandu's life and gave him purpose. He feels the love and care of those who surround him with support and respect. He has learned good manners and is eager to succeed in school. He is now in the 9<sup>th</sup> standard level with high hopes to study well and become a bank officer one day. Although his future once looked bleak, there's no doubt now that Balachandu has much to look forward to!

# Loving Day Care for Jisnu

Jisnu has not reached his fourth birthday, and yet he has already known much trauma as well as salvation in his life. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Jisnu and his mother lived with his grandparents after his father's drug addiction drove them out of their family home. The separation, the pandemic and the increasingly desperate poverty of the family left his mother emotionally ravaged. It was difficult for the family to manage even a single meal a day. Young Jisnu suffered greatly, and his family was terrified for their future.

The staff of Bethania Kids Deborah Child Care Center learned about Jisnu and his family during the lockdown and helped them with COVID Relief food packets and counseling. Jisnu was able to join Deborah Care Center in August 2021 when the



centers re-opened. Here he was provided with healthy food, medical attention, and a sound pre-school education. Most importantly, Jisnu experienced the love of Jesus from his care center teachers, who noted that he now maintains a regular routine and enjoys playing with the other children.

Regarding his attendance at Deborah Care Center, Jisnu's mother says, "He is so happy to go to the center. We can see the improvement as he loses his fear and loneliness. Bethania Kids provided the mother's and father's care in my son's life, which we were not able to provide at the time. After going to Bethania Kids, he prays before he eats, and I observe good moral values in him."

She extends her gratitude to Bethania Kids as she now sees a happy and healthy son.



## We're Digital, Too!

You can keep up with latest news and happenings at Bethania Kids by following us on Facebook (Bethania Kids Foundation) and receiving our monthly e-newsletter, The Vine. To subscribe to The Vine, visit [www.bethaniakids.org](http://www.bethaniakids.org) and scroll to the bottom of the home page or e-mail [administrator@bethaniakids.org](mailto:administrator@bethaniakids.org) directly.

Not seeing The Vine in your inbox? Check your "Spam" or "Promotions" folder—sometimes it hides in one of those!



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 direct ministry for children.*

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

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## Your Prayers Matter!

Over Bethania Kids' 35-year history, God has changed many children's lives through the power of prayer. As Jesus taught us in Matthew 21:21-22, He is faithful to provide whatever we ask for when we believe in Him. In India, group prayer is a routine part of each day. Praying along with the Bethania Kids children is truly a meaningful experience. They remember you, our generous donors, in their prayers of thanksgiving. Therefore, one important way that you can help our ministry is through prayer. Please pray for:

- Health, particularly that the illnesses identified in the recent screenings would be healed
- Schools to stay open and for students to recover the learning lost over the past two years
- Economic development of the tribal communities in Odisha, including consistent electricity
- Renewal for our India board of trustees, leaders, and staff
- A clear vision for the right next steps for our ministry

We thank and praise God that He has answered our prayers for the safe return of the children and women to our programs, the completion of the Shalom Home, provision of funds, and our good standing with local government agencies. May God be praised for each and every child who has received a foundation upon which to build a successful adulthood. Your prayers matter to God and directly assist these precious children. Thank you for remembering Bethania Kids in your prayers.

*All printing and mailing costs associated with this publication are 100% funded by Bethania Kids Board of Advisors and Board of Directors.*



### To make a gift to the ministry:

Your financial support is also crucial to the success of our ministry. To donate, you may click on the QR code, visit [bethaniakids.org/donate](http://bethaniakids.org/donate) or mail a check using the enclosed envelope. We are most grateful for your help!

