

# Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA KIDS • FALL 2021

## Bethania Kids Staff Appreciation

### *Well done thou good and faithful servants!*

Twice yearly, we receive reports from Bethania Kids' projects in India. The most recent reports reveal how the love of Jesus is being shared by our devoted staff amidst this deadly pandemic. It is moving to see Christ's love in action. Here are a few highlights:

**God's generous provision of basic needs:** The families of many of our children are in dire straits as jobs have been lost due to the government-enforced lockdowns. Many of the poorest are day laborers, and because they cannot leave their homes, they have no income. No income means no food. The Bethania Kids staff have stepped forward during the past year helping to provide our children and their families with food, medical support, learning materials, and prayerful encouragement. At each project, staff pray twice daily for those who are sick.

**COVID-19 awareness and support:** Our staff members in all our projects have visited the homes of children and families wherever possible, educating them on COVID-19 safety measures, such as mask wearing and social distancing, as well as informing the families where to get vaccinated. Thus far, 90% of our staff have been vaccinated. We appreciate the Indian Bethania Foundation Board of Trustees,

Dr. Gnanakan, and the North American Bethania Kids Board of Directors for encouraging and supporting the vaccination efforts.

**Focus on education:** Education has been disrupted in India just as it has in North America; however, many of our Bethania Kids children have lacked the resources to continue learning on their own. Staff members of Bethania Kids Care Centers have reached out to the children, distributing their school books so they could continue to learn at home. Online Vacation Bible School was conducted for the children who had laptops at home. In remote Odisha, where our Cilpajodi and Dholdholi Centers remained open until a recent lockdown, Bethania Kids staff fostered learning by conducting essay, history trivia, and debate contests. Meanwhile, staff in our homes in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have been actively planning for the children's return to the homes and to school. Education authorities in both states have ordered in-class instruction to begin September 1 for students in the upper grades; lower school students in Andhra Pradesh will also attend classes on an alternating schedule. Staff in both the homes and care centers have been preparing to meet the children's physical, emotional and educational needs as lockdowns are lifted.

(Continues...)



**Bethania**  **Kids**

(Continued from cover)

Bethania Kids staff members have also made use of this time during the pandemic to improve their English skills. This will enable our staff to better assist our children in their English studies. English classes have been conducted for staff at Kodaikanal thanks to Dency Michael and Mrs. Devi. We are grateful to have such talented staff members who can share their knowledge with others.

Finally, Bethania Kids staff members at our homes, care centers and women's empowerment centers around Kodaikanal have spent time cataloging their libraries, thanks to the help of Packiadass, who is also a librarian at the nearby Kodaikanal International School. Strengthening library resources benefits our children, their families, and their communities.

**A network of support:** Finally, Bethania Kids staff have used this time to work on strengthening bonds with Bethania Kids alumni, reaching out to register them in our new database. Thanks to Board of Trustees member Joseph Kumar, alumni are being connected to Bethania Kids and to one another via the WhatsApp platform. Strengthening alumni bonds will help to build an indigenous network of future support for the Bethania Kids ministry.

*Please continue to pray for the staff of Bethania Kids in India, who have dedicated their lives to the well being of those in greatest need. They are truly acting as the hands and feet of Jesus, spreading His love to others.*



## In Honor Of

Tristen & Steybi Benitez  
Joanne & Otto Bergman's 50th wedding anniversary  
David & Susie Granner's wedding  
William Hagstad  
Lisa Smit  
Finley & Beckette Stemmler  
Keira Swientoniowski  
Blake Swientoniowski  
Larry Zimmerman  
Larry & Susan Zimmerman

## In Memory Of

Marian Etzler Stup  
Warren & Barbara Geissinger  
Gene Hennig  
Isaac Eduman  
Maxine Korb  
C. Nelson  
Mary Oesterling  
Jeevan Paul  
Rama & P.C. Kala

# New Shalom Home Update

The new Shalom Home has been on a slow but steady journey to reality since construction started in early 2020. As its name implies, this home for orphan and semi-orphan girls is meant to be a place of peace, learning, and safety that provides convenient access to water, education, healthcare, and more. The single-story dormitory is 85% complete with the outer structure, interior walls, and flooring finished. The interior utilities are being installed, and the plumbing for the kitchen and bathrooms is in progress. We eagerly await the announcement of a move-in date.

The new facility is being built in Batlagundu, on the plains, just before heading up the mountain to Kodaikanal, where the undersized Shalom Home is currently located. Generous funding from over 410 Bethania Kids donors has provided the \$550,000 needed to build and furnish the 14,000 square foot new Shalom Home, which anticipates lodging 48 girls in six bedrooms, each with eight girls per room.

Batlagundu is located near the town of Dindigul, a commercial and textile center. Both Ruby Kumar, Shalom Home Director, and Josephine Selvan, Director of Care Centers in Kodaikanal, are currently registering the students with child welfare and local schools in preparation for the move. The staff has identified a Catholic school as the best available source of academics for the girls.

It is our fervent hope that soon after COVID is brought under control in India, the new Shalom Home will be dedicated in the presence of residents, family, alumni, staff, Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, local community members, regulators, and friends of the Bethania Kids family in India. A journey of love and hope for the future has certainly brought Shalom Home to this point.

Prayers of thanks go to God and His work through Mr. Joseph of Prudent Construction, Dr. Gnanakan, Dency Michael, the late Isaac Eduman, Josephine Selvan, Ruby Kumar, and all who helped make this dream come true. As stated by Larry Zimmerman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bethania Kids, “We have been led at each step and blessed beyond measure.”



# Tribute to Isaac Eduman

With profound sadness, we inform you that on June 8, Bethania Kids lost a beloved family member, Isaac Eduman, director of Dayavu Home for Boys in Kannivadi. In late May, he contracted COVID-19, which turned into a chronic cough and fever. He was first admitted to a local hospital and then to a hospital in Madurai, where he was placed on oxygen. Although his condition seemed to be improving at first, Isaac died the next day. As with many COVID deaths in India, his body was cremated and buried immediately.

Our deepest condolences go first to Isaac's widow, Dhanalakshmi, his son Gideon (age 17) and his daughter Pauline (age 10), who have suffered a heart-wrenching loss to their family. We also send our sympathy to the 32 boys at Dayavu Home, who looked to Isaac as their surrogate father since many were orphaned or fatherless.

Those who were fortunate to know Isaac described him as a soft-spoken, humble man who was filled with compassion for all people in need, particularly children. In his determination to be a good role model for the boys at Dayavu, he supported them with loving care but also instilled discipline and a daily routine. He provided many opportunities for developing their innate talents in music, art and sports. Knowing the importance of education, he first visited the boys' school, then helped to transform the curriculum at a school closer to the Home so that the quality of



the boys' education was improved, and their bus ride shortened.

Isaac's stewardship of the Dayavu Home property was exemplary. With great foresight, he decided to expand the vegetable and fruit garden, enlisting the assistance of the local government in tilling the land and building rainwater catchment berms to guard against drought. Steve Meinzen (from Field of Hope) lent his aid and was very impressed with Isaac's hard work on the project. Steve noted Isaac's insistence that the boys learn to plant and cultivate numerous fruits and vegetables and then sell the excess produce locally to earn money. To safeguard the garden, Isaac also made certain that a protective wall was built to keep out hungry animals. The house where Bethania Kids founder Dayavu Dhanapal and her daughter Priscilla (Dhanapal) Mohl had lived was renovated to serve as a guesthouse for visitors. Bethania

Kids CEO Dr. Gnanakan gives Isaac highest praise for obtaining "Patta" for the Dayavu property, which was long pending. Because of Isaac's perseverance, Bethania Kids now possesses the permanent documentation for the land.

During his tenure at Dayavu Home, Isaac significantly influenced the development of Bethania Kids projects taking place nearby. He helped to oversee the off-site construction of the new Shalom Home for girls and played a significant role in founding the newest Women's Empowerment Program—the local Annapoorani Tailoring and Embroidery Centre—so that women in the community could sell their products in nearby Dindigul, a foremost textile center.

Dr. Gnanakan shared that Isaac's favorite Bible verses came from Psalm 23, focusing on the Good Shepherd, which seems very appropriate since Isaac patterned his own life accordingly. Larry Zimmerman, Bethania Kids Board Chairman, characterized Isaac as a man of action, doing his utmost to improve the lives of those most in need. Like the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7, Isaac could rightfully have claimed, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." May we all be inspired to follow the marvelous model of Isaac Eduman's life.



# Forever in Our Hearts

Manjula was one of those people who, when once met, is never forgotten. Who could ever forget her brilliant smile? But it was hearing her story and STILL seeing that smile on her face that revealed her courage, determination, and inspiring spirit.

At 1½ years old, Manjula was rescued after her mother, who was mentally unstable, dropped her into a 500-foot well. Manjula's father then left her in the care of his mother, who cared for her until she was referred to Bethania Kids at the age of 14. When Manjula arrived at Shalom Home in Kodaikanal, she was very thin, frightened, and confused, crying constantly. She was taken to the CSI Rehabilitation Center for assessment and diagnosed with cerebral palsy, right hemiplegia, and moderate intellectual disability.

Every morning Manjula left Shalom Home for the CSI Rehabilitation Center for vocational training. She learned to make cups and plates out of leaves from a native tree and to make bags out of newspapers. She earned a small income for her work (about \$7.15/mo.), which allowed her to feel valued. Mrs. Lydia Rajan, the Center coordinator, says "Manjula took a month to learn all of her tasks, being an obedient and well-disciplined student. She cared for the other children with love and compassion..."

It was with her sisters and the staff at Shalom Home that Manjula's loving and caring heart shone most. She would ask how the other girls' day went, and when a child was sick, Manjula was there to comfort and care for her. She always looked for ways to help by cleaning rooms, cutting vegetables, assisting with laundry, or washing dishes. But Manjula also had her unique quirks. She hated to be late, so she was always 10 minutes early for the bus and insisted that the other girls be on time, too. And she could draw a straight line without a ruler, which her sisters at Shalom Home found to be an amazing feat!

During the most recent COVID lockdown in India this spring, Manjula was required to return to her family. She became ill with stomach pain and vomiting, unable to eat or even drink water. The doctors were unable to

find the cause of her illness, and on June 25, she left this earth to be with her Lord. In a telephone conversation with Mrs. Josephine Selvan earlier in the month, Manjula had said she was looking forward to returning to Shalom Home when the lockdown was lifted.

Words from those who knew her best reflect the love—and loss—she left behind:

"Manjula was a very blessed child in our Bethania Kids family. She was a very good prayer warrior. ... The smile on her face, her happiness, hard work, sense of duty, positive thinking and true love are such great memories in our hearts." Shalom Home staff

"She loved to play outdoor games with the children at Shalom." Shalom Home children

"We lost a good child. The children and staff were moved to tears when we heard the news of her death." CSI Rehabilitation Center staff and children

We thank God for the love, kindness and inspiration Manjula gave to this world during her short life. How is it possible that a baby abandoned in a well could not only survive but grow into a girl with a big, beautiful smile and heart? It reminds us that every child is God's child and is deserving of our care, love, and compassion.





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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## **Call to Action**

This edition of Seeds on the Wind has been heartbreakingly to publish. Bethania Kids was spared of serious illness for many months. However, in the month of June alone, we suffered the great losses of Isaac to COVID-19 and Manjula while in lockdown. Isaac and Manjula were truly remarkable persons who changed the world through Jesus' love.

Globally, we have come a long way over the past 18 months, yet experts tell us that immunity needs to dramatically increase before the world can rest. This reminds us of King David, as he cried out in the midst of all of his pain and fear, "How long, O Lord?"

Because of you, Bethania Kids continues to support nearly 1000 children, women, and families through the pandemic. While the ministry model needed to change during periods of lockdown, not a single child has been forgotten. Moving forward, Bethania Kids is bringing together experts in health care, education, and mental health to help the children recover from this crisis. Your continued support has been vital to this work. Please continue giving to the COVID Relief Fund at [bethaniakids.org/donate/covid-19-relief](http://bethaniakids.org/donate/covid-19-relief). Be assured that 100% of donations go directly to India and will be spent promptly to address the crisis.

David ends Psalm 13 with the words: "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me." May we also trust, rejoice, and sing praises to God with full assurance that He loves us and sees the bigger picture far better than we do.

**Thank you for your ongoing support and love!**

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