

# Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA KIDS • SUMMER 2021

## Adaptations Through Challenges

India recently had the highest rate of COVID-19 in the world, peaking at an average of 412,000 new cases per day and over 4,200 daily deaths. For a long time after Prime Minister Modi's strict lockdown in March 2020, India had a relatively low infection rate. However, after the government became lenient on the precautions in late 2020, some large crowd gatherings in the spring undermined the COVID-19 precautions, which resulted in an alarming increase of coronavirus cases. An overwhelming number of patients were sent to hospitals that could not accommodate all of them. Prime Minister Modi responded by reimposing very stringent lockdown measures in the country on May 5, 2021. At the time of this writing, by God's grace, nobody in the Bethania Kids family has COVID-19.

*During this second COVID-19 lockdown, the staff and administrators in India continue to assure the children that they remain constantly in mind as valuable members of the Bethania Kids family.*

Although some children at our Nathanael and Deborah care centers in Kodaikanal developed cold symptoms and slight fevers, they recovered and are fine now. As a precautionary measure, the government first ordered that all children below 10th grade return home from all schools, orphanages, and care centers. The two community centers for the children of tribes people in Cilpajodi and Dholdholi of Odisha State are still operating, so these poor children can be fed. However, these two community centers may also be closed at some point as the government's priority is protection from COVID-19.

During the early spring, only a small number of older children were in our four homes, studying for exams until April 30, while most of the younger children remained at their family homes. At Grace Home, 12 girls in the 11th and 12th classes were staying there while attending on-line classes. At Angel Home, 11 boys in the 10th class were preparing diligently for 10th class examinations that are expected to be conducted in June. At Dayavu Home for Boys, there were eight boys in residence. In Shalom Home in Kodaikanal, only one girl with no living parents

(Continues...)



(Continued from cover)

was allowed to stay. Because of the increasing severity of COVID-19, the government insisted that all of the children return to the homes of their parents or relatives by May 3. While understanding that this is necessary to keep the children safe, it has been disheartening to send the children back into very difficult circumstances. Whenever possible, the staff has been communicating with the families to encourage them and to offer educational and public health support.

There is one note of hope. As you know, the new Shalom Home is currently being built in the town of Batlagundu on the plains below Kodaikanal with the intent of complying with all Indian building codes for orphanages and providing a home for children who have no parents or completely destitute parents with no means of support. We are nearing completion of both the building and the provision of furnishings, and the process of transitioning the girls' school and child welfare registrations is underway. The new Shalom Home will provide a warm, comfortable home for girls who desperately need a place to live.

Meanwhile, as we informed you in the cover page article of our Spring 2021 issue, the Indian government is starting to introduce more new strategies on how foreign Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can extend help to the Indian NGOs with which they are linked. We will keep you informed as new regulations are enacted that affect our children and families.

In addition, a new amendment to India's Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) altered its rules on foreign money received by charitable organizations in India to ensure that the money is spent on the purpose for which it is received. Although the goal is commendable, the new rules have meant that Dr. Gnanakan and the Indian Board of Trustees have had to adjust to many new procedures to ensure that we are fully compliant.

During this second COVID-19 lockdown, the staff and administrators in India continue to assure the children that they remain constantly in mind as valuable members of the Bethania Kids family. Several members of the Women's Empowerment Programs make masks for the children, and the staff keep in touch with the children by phone to determine if their needs are being met as well as possible under the circumstances. Among other things, staff members make every effort to see that the families of the children from our care centers are fed and proper hygiene is practiced. Whenever possible, help is given to the children who are struggling with their studies, which have now shifted back to virtual format through courses on TV or computers. Recognizing that the children will suffer setbacks from the deprivations and hurdles they faced during the pandemic, the staff is preparing to undertake complete assessments on the children upon their return. The goal is to train staff to implement a reset when the children are back in our fold. Meanwhile, some staff members have already been vaccinated, and the older children wait anxiously for their vaccinations. We will be ready to assist more children as locations are allowed to reopen again.

***So what can we do to show our support to the Bethania Kids family in India during this time of trial and tribulation?*** First, we can pray frequently and fervently that our loving Lord will deliver them soon from this present pestilence and let them know we are totally with them in spirit even though we are on the other side of the world. In addition, we can make generous donations, which will be sorely needed for resetting and regrouping once the children return to our homes and care centers. A training program for staff is in the planning stage, and outreach to new orphans may be on the horizon, resulting from the pandemic.

Bethania Kids will continue on the path where God has placed it as we continue to trust in Him to shine a light to guide us. We would be most grateful if you could join us on this journey!





## This Is Bhuvan's Life

Little three-year-old Bhuvan loved spending his days at Mahanaim Child Care Center. There he had friends to play with, teachers to care for him, food to eat, songs to sing and stories to listen to and enact. With the second wave of COVID-19 spreading rapidly throughout India, as of May 5, a new lockdown was announced, which required the closing of Mahanaim Care Center once again.

What does this mean for a child like Bhuvan? His parents work as day laborers, which means they find work on a daily basis as it is available. His father is an alcoholic who spends his earnings on alcohol, which leaves only Bhuvan's mother to support the family by weeding agricultural fields. With the lockdown, she is able to find work only once or twice in a week.

Before leaving for work in the morning, Bhuvan's mother cooks food, which has to last throughout the day. It is a monotonous diet that contains little nutrition. Bhuvan and his older brother Lokesh (a 1st grader) are often left on their own at home during the day. If they eat at all, the food is cold. With minimal adult supervision, there is no structure to Bhuvan's day, and he spends it sleeping or playing with the cat. He feels very lonely during the day without his mother and without his friends and the loving care he experiences at Mahanaim Child Care Center.



The city of Kodaikanal is a major tourist center with its cool climate and beautiful mountain vistas. April-June are the busiest months for tourism, so with the recent lockdown in early May that prohibited all tourism in Kodaikanal, every financial sector is adversely affected. The families of the children who attend our care centers in Kodaikanal are there because they are the most poverty-stricken and already live on a subsistence level. During this second lockdown, all of our children and their families are experiencing circumstances similar to Bhuvan and his family. While life is so uncertain and difficult, it is the continuing prayers and support they receive from Bethania Kids that help sustain them.





## Meanwhile... Construction Updates

Thank you very much to our donors who have supported the fund to restore **the chapel at the Dayavu Home** in Kannivadi. After nearly 30 years of worship, prayer, music and art, the chapel fell into disrepair from mold, cracked concrete, and peeling plaster. Now we are excited to watch the restoration of this well-loved chapel. Soon it will be a beautiful haven to praise God once again. We cannot do this without your help!

Many thanks to our generous donors for furnishing the new **Shalom Home**! As walls are plastered and painted, the leaders of this home eagerly anticipate purchasing new bedding, place settings, bookshelves, playground equipment and more. After relocating to seven different rental facilities, the girls can hardly wait to move into their spacious new permanent home. At Shalom Home in Batlagundu they will have better access to water, higher education, and any needed hospital services. Your gifts are making this dream a reality!







**In honor of:**

Elizabeth Benitez  
Tristen Benitez  
Steybi Benitez  
Allen Dundek  
Priscilla Mohl  
Dave Smit  
Ravi Srinivasan  
Finley Stemmler  
Beckette Stemmler  
Black Swientoniowski  
Keira Swientoniowski  
Claudia Trautmann, on her  
birthday  
Ansel Raymond Walker  
Larry Zimmerman  
Larry and Susan Zimmerman

**In memory of:**

Bob Coleman  
Marian Etzler Stup  
Helen Graham  
Al Hennig  
Gene Hennig  
Rudy and Barbara Keyl  
Maxine Korb  
Pia Massey  
Joyce Millhagen  
Helen Spitzack  
Carol Warner



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.

## Bethania Kids Administrative Offices

PO Box 2140 • Winchester, VA 22604-1340

Phone (540) 450-2729/(800) 993-5179

[www.bethaniakids.org](http://www.bethaniakids.org)



*A higher standard.  
A higher purpose.*

FIRST-CLASS  
PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT # 229  
ANN ARBOR, MI

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## Call to Action

As you've been reading, COVID-19 has devastated India with this latest surge of infections. Our Indian CEO, Dr. Gnanakan, paints a grim picture: "People are just dying away. While hospitals and vaccine centres are overflowing with patients, medicines and vaccines are very scarce."

Many of you have asked, *What can we do?* On a large scale, many countries around the world are sharing their supplies of hand sanitizer, face coverings, oxygen, and ventilators with India. The main problem has been the coordinated distribution of these essential items. Often in catastrophic cases like this one, we want to do something — but how can we know that our contributions are truly helping the problem?

Bethania Kids is ready to respond to the increase of new orphans and semi-orphans expected in the wake of COVID-19. We are in good standing with the national government to receive and care for those children. The staff at each of our locations are contacting their local child protection agencies to let them know they will have openings available as soon as our homes and care centers are allowed to reopen. Increasing the number of children that we care for will increase our costs, and we will need resources.

Psalm 10:17-18 reads "You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror." As you read this, you may find yourself in the right position at the right time to help. Please consider a gift to our India Fund. Visit our website at [bethaniakids.org/donate](http://bethaniakids.org/donate) or return a check with the enclosed envelope. You can be assured that 100% of your donation will go directly to our ministry for children and families in India.

*Thank you for your generosity!*



*"You, Lord, hear the  
desire of the afflicted;  
you encourage them, and  
you listen to their cry,  
defending the fatherless  
and the oppressed, so that  
mere earthly mortals will  
never again strike terror."*

*Psalm 10:17-18*