

Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA KIDS • FALL 2024

A Greeting from the President

Dear Friends,

I have the honor of writing to you as the new president of the Bethania Kids Board of Directors. As the child of Lutheran missionaries, I grew up in India and went to boarding school in Kodaikanal, where many of the Bethania Kids' care centers and women's empowerment programs now exist. My childhood as a missionary kid has made me more aware of income inequality throughout the world and motivates me to help when and where I can. It is a privilege to serve in this new capacity and a joy to share with you the good news of God's work in the lives of the children and women we minister to in India.

I hope your heart will be touched by the compelling stories in this edition of *Seeds on the Wind*. In the next pages, you will read of the radical transformation of little Mohan's life after he was welcomed into one of our care centers and of Runima, a young woman growing up in poverty in a remote tribal region of India, who, by God's grace and with the help of Bethania Kids, is pushing past the barriers that would keep her in poverty.

As you read these stories of young lives touched by Jesus' love and the compassionate care of his servants, would you join me in praising God for the good work he is doing? Would you also prayerfully consider a special gift to Bethania Kids to further this work? Every gift, large or small, allows us to reach more children like Mohan and Runima with the love of Christ and help them escape the cycle of poverty.

In His service,



Ron Koepke
President



Bethania Kids

God's Love Transforms: Mohan's Story

Bethania Kids staff learn of struggling families and children by regularly reaching out in their communities. Often these children go for days unsupervised from a young age and even spend stretches underfed.

This is how the staff first met little Mohan at his home this past year. His father works as a day laborer, and his mother is a homemaker, having a disability from childhood polio. Mohan was noticeably underweight and seemed unable to communicate well. He had an evident lack of hygiene. It was clear he would benefit greatly from the care, meals and teaching at Bethania Kids' Joshua Day Care Centre, and his parents were eager to send him.

When Mohan first began attending the care center, he cried and would not interact with the other children, but soon, by God's grace, a remarkable transformation began. With regular nutritious meals, the staff saw him gain weight right before their eyes. They taught him good hygiene habits such as washing his hands and brushing his teeth. With their encouragement and help, his speech improved, and he started to play with the other children. He caught on to all of it so quickly. What a joy it must have been to watch!

It wasn't long before Mohan began participating enthusiastically in all the center's activities: engaging eagerly in his lessons, listening to Bible stories and sharing with everyone. Our incredible onsite staff is teaching him about Christ's love in many ways. His parents report that he shares what he learns with them when he goes back home and reminds them to pray before meals. They say that each morning he eagerly asks for his uniform so he can come to the center with his friends and cheerful teachers.

When asked what he wants to do when he grows up, Mohan said "I am definitely going to become a doctor..." (This, at age 5!) He says he wants to help those in need, like he himself was not long ago. With God's abundant provision and the support of many generous donors, Mohan has a real chance. He now has the nurturing, sustenance and encouragement that all children need. Bethania Kids care centers show Christ's love by giving Mohan and so many other children hope and a real path to a better future.



Celebrating a “First” in Cilpajodi

Runima is a lovely young woman who calls Cilpajodi home in the state of Odisha, a very poor and remote area of India where most families depend on farming for their livelihood. Unfortunately, work in the fields yields very little income, making it difficult to provide for a family of seven, like Runima’s. As the eldest of four sisters and one younger brother, Runima had very little hope of improving her life circumstances in a community where literacy rates are low and many suffer from poor hygiene and a lack of medical care.

When Bethania Kids reached out to the families of Cilpajodi in 2012, life began to change for its children, including Runima. Now 18 years of age, she recently completed 12th grade as an “extended education” student supported by Bethania Kids. (The local school in Cilpajodi goes only through 9th grade; therefore, students must receive room and board to extend their education beyond that level.) Runima is the first child in her village to achieve this high mark, making her parents extremely proud. She hopes to go on to college to become a teacher.

Runima is filled with gratitude to Bethania Kids for giving her this “extended education” opportunity, providing her with a promising future.



In Memory Of

Larry Owen Bumgardner

Glen Childs

Carol Frykenberg

Al & Polly Hennig

Gene Hennig

Mark Hennig

Robert Hennig

Katherine Kleindienst

Betty Long

Jeevan Paul

Naomi Peterson

Marian Etzler Stup

Join Our Team

Did you know there’s a job you can do to help Bethania Kids? You can do it right in the comfort of your home, and it involves almost no effort. It’s true—we need you to help us spread the news of our ministry to your family and friends.

Join the Bethania Kids Social Media Team. No application needed. No time-card required. **Simply follow us on Facebook (Bethania Kids Foundation) and Instagram (@bethaniakids).** Then like and share our posts. These simple steps, a couple clicks on your phone, will enable us to tell more people about the exciting work Bethania Kids is doing with children and women in India.



Nurturing and equipping the children and women of India to change their world through Jesus' love.

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

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“Lip-Smacking Good!”

Among the many “unsung heroes” who daily serve the ministries of Bethania Kids are the remarkable women who purchase, prepare, and serve the food that sustains the hundreds of children in our programs as well as their fellow staff. Rising early and retiring late every day of the year and working in hot, rudimentary kitchens, these humble servants of Jesus are the hidden backbone of our ministry.

For three days in May, fourteen cooks from Bethania Kids homes and care centers participated in professional kitchen management training at the GTN Arts College of Dindigul. Among the many topics covered were workplace hygiene, food safety, kitchen safety to prevent injury, staff management, menu planning, and inventory control. Professional chefs taught these women how to reduce valuable nutrient loss during cooking and demonstrated the use of modern kitchen equipment. Our staff were able to try new recipes and plan how to incorporate new foods and flavors into their daily menus.

These grateful cooks learned alongside regular students of the GTN program. This first experience in a college classroom “was like a dream” for them. As one trainee shared, “We thank our Bethania Foundation CEO for organizing this certificate course for us, and [we] also thank the professors of GTN College for the theory and practical training.”

Recent reports confirm that our Bethania Kids cooks quickly applied what they had learned. New vegetables and fruits, milk, healthy grain porridge, eggs twice a week, and non-vegetarian protein sources have been added to their menus with enthusiastic response. In-Charge Josephine Selvan now applauds “curries that are lip-smacking good and charmed with delicacies!”



Call to Action

Poverty has devastating consequences for countless children in India. Malnutrition and a lack of sanitation take a toll on children like Mohan, and for too many, the door to education remains shut. Bethania Kids is passionate about attending to daily physical needs and ensuring access to education for children living in poverty. What a blessing and a privilege to be able to impact the lives of these children in Jesus' name!

Won't you join us in caring for those in need? A gift of \$50 per month can radically change the life of a child in India. To be an agent of change, please go to bethaniakids.org/donate or return a check with the enclosed envelope.

