

News

A Beautiful and Welcome Sight



The sewage water recycling plant is now in successful operation behind the UCH kitchen area. Thanks are mainly due to the hard work of Sudhakaran under the guidance of Andreas Bickford, with the support of Auroville environmental experts.

Environmental Plans and Projects

Our Urgent Needs list this year is focused on a range of environmental sustainability projects. Please take time to look at the details of the projects listed on the back of Founder Dr Chandran's mid year letter and consider supporting one of these important initiatives.

These projects are critical for the health of the children and the nearby sensitive environment.



The biogas supply to the kitchen from the cow dung is also now functioning

UHCC Medical Services: The Pillar of the Foundation

The Uluru Health Care Centre first opened in 1998 and is the pillar upon which The East West Foundation was built. Whilst the Foundation over the years has evolved to also incorporate Education, Child rights, Community Development, and the Environment, the medical services offered to the local community of approximately 40,000 villagers continues to provide essential medical care for acute and chronic medical conditions.

A local graduate doctor originally from Pondicherry, Dr S Premnath, is currently running the Medical Unit with expert back up assistance from a long serving chief nurse, two senior nurses, a pharmacist and social workers to provide holistic type care for the community and the children and staff of The East West Foundation.



Dr S Premnath attending to schoolgirl from our Children's home

It is not unusual for the Medical Centre to see up to 150 patients a day and this is supplemented by a mobile clinic where the surrounding 24 villages are attended to in a medical vehicle by nursing staff and social workers providing medical, nutritional, and social work support. The Foundation has been hampered in providing this service because of its medical vehicle being stolen, however recently a generous donation has allowed us to plan and resume this service.

The East West Overseas Aid Foundation is purely volunteer driven. The implication of that is that its resources are limited. The patient numbers, severity of medical conditions (amplified by substantial poverty and nutritional deficiency) and cultural resistance to seeing a doctor until the disease process is well established, means that the Medical Unit is continually working under both time and financial pressures.



Patients quietly waiting their turn to see the "Big Specialist"

The local villagers however are very appreciative of whatever medical service can be afforded them, and whilst for nearly 20 years the service has provided free medical, nursing, medication and ancillary services, they have accepted that the service can only be maintained in the longer term if a small consultation fee is charged. Dr Premnath and his team also provide medications at substantially subsidised levels to accommodate the poor and disadvantaged.

The Foundation has also been able to attract medical practitioners from overseas (usually Australia or USA) who

generously provide their services in their relevant specialty to assist the local community. This can only at this stage be basic treatment because of a lack of facilities, particularly for minor surgical interventions. However it remains the goal of UHCC to establish a capacity to perform simpler, smaller surgical procedures once sufficient funds can be raised.

Medical students from Australia have also attended UHCC and have had unprecedented access to clinical teaching. Rheumatologists and Ophthalmic Surgeons from Australia have also visited the Centre.

The village community is in desperate need of such help and in particular the women folk require hygienic, private review conditions for obstetric and gynaecological procedures, preferably with a female medical practitioner. This need was highlighted by a visit to UHCC by Dr S Kumar a US gynaecologist and his wife in February. Dr Kumar was inundated with desperate female patients with disabling gynaecological conditions.



Dr S Premnath and Dr S Kumar (visiting gynaecologist) and UHCC staff.

The Government of India recognises the importance of rural health and has established a Corporate Social Responsibility platform for industries to support such initiatives. The East West Foundation meets all the regulatory requirements for being a beneficiary of Corporate Social Responsibility donations and it is hoped that this will, amongst the more general donations that have sustained the Foundation, provide the financial thrust to enhance and provide improving medical care on an ongoing basis to the villages.

I would urge you to consider supporting UHCC as well as The East West Foundation in general, both financially and personally. Medical, nursing, social work, physical therapy assistance is always appreciated and sought after.

Our primary and immediate goals are to fund a part time female practitioner with women's health a priority. The social workers have repeatedly told me that a strong healthy mother and wife are essential to the medical and psychosocial wellbeing of the village family unit. With what help we can generate I, and Dr. Premnath and the team at UHCC, aim to lessen the burden of these desperate villagers by attending to this and their general medical needs.

The patient volumes, the conditions, the challenges are significant but not insurmountable.

The sense of satisfaction one derives by either helping directly or indirectly cannot be measured. Remember, as Mark Twain famously said " ...the best way to cheer yourself up, is to cheer someone else up!"

Dr Roy Karna

Late news : Thanks to the tireless efforts of Dr Roy Karna UHCC will now have a visiting gynaecologist once a month who will see 30 patients for a six hour session.



twitter.com/TEWFIndia



facebook.com/TEWOAF



instagram.com/eastwestfoundation

THE EAST WEST OVERSEAS AID FOUNDATION 2016 REPORT

At the end of another financial year we can review our progress in laying a sound foundation for the future of TEWFI'S projects in India. Economic times, including a significant drop in the value of the Australian dollar, have required TEWFI'S main projects, the Uluru Health Care Centre and the new Uluru Early Learning Centre, to become more self sustaining and therefore not totally reliant on donations as has been the case in the past.

Dr Roy Karna, one of Australia's leading Rheumatologists and TEWFI'S honorary Medical Director, has worked with UHCC's Dr Premnath to create a new system which provides high quality medical and ancillary health care to the local communities, but with the patients who can afford to do so contributing financially to their own care. The evolution is from free health care and medication to the imposition of fees on a cost, rather than a profit, basis that will still be well within the financial resources of the community members. Reduced fees or free health care is available for those below or on the poverty line. The new arrangements have been well received by the community.



Dr R Karna with Melbourne University Medical student.

Dr Roy brought about the change by initially organising funding for the transition and improved equipment at the UHCC by raising funds from his medical colleagues in Australia and a lunch he organised with the famous Indian cricketer V.V.S.Laxman as guest speaker.

Dr Roy aims to employ a female doctor and seeks to access ultrasound diagnostic imaging to support the women using the services of UHCC. Dr Roy cannot be thanked enough for this initiative.

The other critical element in this transition is the support of Dr Premnath, the Medical Director of the Centre, who is an outstanding doctor from the local community. Dr Premnath's popularity at the personal and medical level has been reflected by the extraordinary number of patients lining up to see him day after day. Nurse Shenbhagam at the Centre ensures the tally of monies, management of the new computer systems, the unit's earnings and expenses. All of which supported the Centre's reforms.

The second major transition at TEWFI is the Uluru Nursery and Primary School (UELCS) which was set up in 2012 to provide a modern and creative English stream education to the children from UCH and the local community. Many local rural community children who lack English speaking skills are developing English proficiency from an early stage, engaging in interactive, multi media devices from the Vicki Standish IT Centre and environmental initiatives. Research carried out by TEWFI showed that an English stream education was number one on the wish list of the local community members for their children's education. We now operate from preschool to level four and are in the process of employing high quality English speaking teachers for the children.

The self-sustaining principle employed at the UHCC is also being carried out into effect at UELCS with progressively increasing school fees on a cost, rather than a profit, basis. The community response is similar to that at the UHCC i.e. strong support on the basis of an appreciation of the high quality education that the children will be able to receive. Special scholarships with free education will be provided to local community children. Of course, the Uluru children from the Home receive a free education.

Our volunteer Arjan Cheema has made an extraordinary contribution to these two transitions. Arjan completed a Master of Development Studies at Melbourne University which provided him with a theoretical understanding of factors that create successful, sustainable and effective projects. His unique skills have enabled him to work cooperatively and cohesively with TEWFI staff and the local community. Arjan has been constantly exposed to the many differences in theory and practice and his role of thinking outside of the box is unique. We cannot thank Arjan enough for his organisational capacity and dynamic thinking.



Arjan Cheema and Gowrie. Arjan believes that effective cross-cultural communication is essential in development projects. He has travelled quite extensively, including one year in India. This enabled Arjan to experience the varying cultures across India, and helped him hone his communications skills with people from all walks of life. Arjan has shown us how culturally aware he is, proving to be an extremely popular and effective TEWFI volunteer. We are very grateful for his time and skills.

Davy Krishna, a long time supporter of TEWFI who has been involved with UELCS from its inception is working with Arjan to maintain the excellence of the Centre.



Davy Krishna. Davy goes almost every March to TEWFI to spend the hot and steamy months there with the children until the end of July. She takes tuition classes, teaches devotional songs, helps in exam preparation for state wide exams, and organizes prayers before the exams, an important Indian custom. Davy also guides the children to secure further education after finishing their high school. Her contribution to the growth of the Uluru Nursery school has been valuable.

Usha Jaganathan, the Unit Head of TEWFI's office and finance areas, has continued to employ her considerable skills in ensuring that the financial outcomes of the two transitions are being achieved. TEWFOAF thanks Usha for her continuing excellent support.

Regretfully Vijay Kumar has resigned from TEWFI to take up a Tamil Nadu government position. His dedication in developing the Vicki Standish IT Centre together with the eCow initiatives will be missed but Vijay has generously offered to continue to assist in a voluntary capacity.

On the local front, TEWFOAF welcomes Sue Kennedy as our new Administration Officer. I also acknowledge the extraordinary dedication of members of TEWFOAF'S Management Committee, the Thursday Working Group, the Master Plan committee, the Dinner Dance committee and the Golf Day committee, all of who cannot ever be thanked enough. Sometimes difficult cross-cultural situations arise and at other times members are required to communicate regularly with TEWFI and there are others who work arduously in raising funds. All are invaluable to the success of the programs implemented by TEWFI which benefit the children at Uluru and the surrounding communities at Alamparai, Tamil Nadu.

Finally thank you Drs Chitra and Chandran for providing us with the opportunity to work with TEWFI and thanks too to TEWFI'S Unit Heads for assisting us in achieving our goals.

Professor Graham Dene Burrows AO CJSJ



*First Patron of The East West Overseas Aid Foundation
17-6-1938 – 10-1-2016*

“Throughout his career, Graham combined academic psychiatry with advocacy for the mentally ill through his involvement with the AMA (Victoria), membership of numerous Government committees and advisory groups and voluntary organisations. Graham, with

others, established the Mental Health Foundation of Australia in 1981. He was a strong promoter of community education and destigmatisation of mental health. He was also influential in the establishment of support groups for Eating Disorder, Mood and Anxiety Disorders and family support groups.

He made numerous contributions to research in depression and anxiety, authoring or co-authoring more than 104 books/chapters and publishing over 743 scientific articles. In 1981, he received the RANZCP Senior Research Award. He was the first psychiatrist to be awarded the doctor of science degree from the University of Melbourne in 2004.

In 1989 Graham Burrows was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO). He was a president of Alzheimer's Australia (Vic), foundation chairman of the Mental Health Foundation, foundation president of Mental Health Foundation Victoria and a knight commander of justice with the Order of St John of Jerusalem. He was also patron and benefactor of the East West Centre and The East West Overseas Aid Foundation where a wing is named after him at the boys' orphanage. A keen horseman himself, he was medical director of Riding for the Disabled.

A man with a wonderful sense of humour, he was generous and compassionate, with a door that was always open to patients, staff, colleagues and friends.

Graham Burrows is survived by his wife of 48 years, Barbara, children Kerryn and Paul and their families.”

Extract from Graham's obituary in 'The Age' 12th March 2016

The 2016 Uluru Health Clinic Eye Camp

The staff of our Uluru Health Care Clinic identified the need for an eye clinic as the most recent had been in January 2014. The 2016 clinic was conducted in February.

The preparation for and notification of the eye clinic to the 24 surrounding villages by our staff was extensive. The staff printed 120 posters and distributed 5000 notices for distribution in surrounding villages and schools with a resulting attendance of 372 people. This was an amazing turn out and all of these people were examined by the staff from the Aravind Hospital who worked for six hours without a break.

Of the 372 patients examined, 19 were identified for cataract surgery, which will be conducted at Aravind Eye Hospital in Pondicherry. The children from our Uluru Children's Home were also checked for eye/vision problems.



The TEWFI staff all worked together on the preparation and practical logistics on the day on this successful initiative.



The staff would like to publicly express their gratitude to the Doctors, nurses and the camp organiser from the Aravind Hospital who consistently demonstrated kindness, patience and selfless service to those who they saw on the day.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to Dr Murali Sivarajan from Seattle who donated all costs for this camp. Without his generosity it would not have been possible to conduct the camp. Mr Krishnamurthy should also be specially thanked for his support. He not only arranged the funds, but also personally participated with TEWFI social workers on the ground when the camp was conducted.



This is what it is all about!



Uluru Children's Excursion March 2016 to Auroville with the kids from Udhayam Educational and Cultural Centre.



Happy Day! Our Uluru children with the Udhayam kids! A colourful garden of children mixing beautifully together at the Auroville Botanical Gardens in South India.



Planting trees along the TEWFI main road



Gardening and maintenance staff

Visit by Dr Surider Kumar and his wife Shiela to Uluru

Dr Surider Kumar is a practicing Gynaecologist in Kansas, USA and his wife Sheila is a passionate social worker who is involved in many NGOs in India. On their last visit to Melbourne a couple of years ago Naga Nagasundaram's wife Maithili introduced the couple to Dr Chandran. In February this year they were able to visit the Medical Health clinic with Dr Roy Karna coordinating the visit from Melbourne.

Dr Kumar saw some 35 ladies for their gynaecological problems with his wife interpreting as she speaks Tamil. Dr Kumar notes that anaemia is the most common issue with the village women and recommended preventive action with vitamin and iron supplements. Sheila has also suggested locally grown Moringa Olefera, a very common plant, for appropriate nutrition to fight anaemia.

Dr Kumar has made a number of useful suggestions which Dr Karna is currently following up on.

Dr Kumar noted after the visit that "Sheila and I had the good fortune to visit Uluru over a three day stay. Naga made all the great arrangements and we received the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Beth Charles. We also visited the children's Home. It was a delight to see children so well cared for. On Saturday I attended the clinic and Dr. Premnath introduced me to clinic staff. He had picked about 35 patients with gynecological problems for me to see. My wife acted as translator and loved this job.

Arjan Cheema was a delight to be around and was our tour guide. His enthusiasm and love for children was apparent to us. Children mingled freely with us. Sheila attended the dance class of the students. Having learnt classical dance, she was impressed by the quality of the instructor and equally with the enthusiasm of the students. Sunday morning we shared breakfast with the children. We had a memorable experience and very much would like to return in the future. We thank you and the East West Foundation for giving us this opportunity".

Sheila also noted " As to my experience, it was one of love and dedication to the children. This is the best children's home I have seen in India, and believe me, I have visited quite a few. I realize that such a facility, in addition to love and dedication, requires a lot of funding. But even with funding, sometimes things are not done well."



CRICKET DINNER WITH VVS LAXMAN AND HARSHA BHOGLÉ

The Foundation was thrilled to welcome its ambassador Test cricketer icon VVS Laxman and renowned Indian commentator Harsha Bhogle, to a fundraising dinner during the Indian Cricket Team's Tour to Australia in January 2016. The event attracted 65 supporters who enjoyed an informal evening with the guests who discussed cricket whilst mingling with the crowd, signing autographs and posing for pictures.



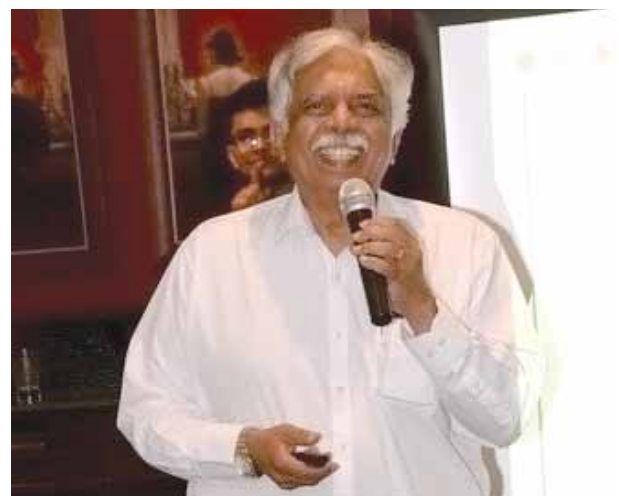
The event was aimed at raising funds for the medical component of the Foundation's work in India, in particular improving the medical centre conditions, staffing and equipment levels.

Harsha Bhogle took to the stage and interviewed VVS Laxman about his numerous encounters as part of the Indian Test Cricket Team against Australia and in particular his innings of 281 made against Australia, in Kolkata in 2001. Laxman, in turn, commented on his admiration for the competitiveness of the Australian Cricket Team and was grateful for the warm hospitality and friendship extended to him on his many tours to Australia.

Laxman recounted his visit to the Children's Home in Uluru in 2012 and spoke passionately about his admiration for the work the Foundation has done with the children and the medical centre. He recounted seeing the children put on a cultural show in his honor, and visiting the Children's home, the Eco Centre and the Medical Clinic during his visit. He was all praise for the efforts of the volunteers who selflessly give of their time, expertise and money to better the lives of the socially disadvantaged at Uluru.



Chandran thanked Laxman for his continuing support as Ambassador for the Foundation and for raising the morale of the children, staff and local community during his visit to the centre.



The night was enjoyed by all, as both Harsha and Laxman recounted their cricketering experiences over the years and spoke passionately about the admiration they had for those supporting the Foundation. Laxman autographed a Test cricket shirt which was auctioned to raise funds for the medical centre.

The Foundation members look forward to their next chance to interact with their Ambassador when he next visits Australia with his cricketering media commitments.

THE 2016 GOLF DAY BREAKS THE RECORD

TEWOAF's 8th Annual Golf Day took place on February 26th at the Southern Golf Club, Keysborough.

The weather gods were kind to us and we had a highly successful day. Beating all previous efforts, we raised close to \$50,000. This will assist enormously, enabling us to continue to provide health care, educational opportunities, relief and refuge for destitute children and the overall development of sustainable, vibrant local communities in South India.



Our generous sponsors, donors and participants enjoyed themselves and at the same time helped raise funds for the Uluru Children's Home and Uluru Health Care Clinic.



As our events are for the most part organised and staffed by volunteers, TEWOAF's overheads are kept to an absolute minimum. We can therefore direct the funds to those most in need.

Sponsors for 2016 included the ANZ bank, Financial Index Wealth Accountants, Jellis Craig, Ladbrokes, Nelson Alexander, Radisson on Flagstaff, Riverina Oils and Bio Energy, River Capital, Seasol International, Shaw and Partners and ULR Land Rover.

We would be delighted to have your involvement and assistance in the 2017 event to be held on Friday, February 24th. Even if you don't play golf, there are a number of ways you can help.

Please contact a Golf Day Committee Representative for further information.

John Shuster · 0419 887 295

Judy Nutbean · 0402 324 557

Gwenda Flintoff · 0402 413 978

or Sue at The East West Overseas Aid Foundation office on: 03 9650 0514

2017 Golf Day Friday February 24.

Save the Date!

SAVE THE DATE

24th Annual Dinner Dance Friday, October 7th 2016 7 pm



Diamonds, Dazzle and Dancing is the theme of the 24th Annual TEWOAF Dinner Dance.

So put on your best bangles and bling and join us at Lincoln of Toorak, Level 2 Trak Centre 445 Toorak Road Toorak.

You will enjoy wonderful food, dancing and entertainment and also be part of our raffle and auction, with the proceeds enabling the Foundation to continue financing programmes that cover healthcare, relief for children at risk, education, community development and environmental sustainability.

Your invitation is enclosed with this newsletter. We look forward to seeing you!

The East West Overseas Aid Foundation

Day Sponsorship Program

The Day Sponsorship Program has continued to play a key role in assisting the Foundation to keep operating over the years. We aim to have 365 days fully covered in the future. We currently have 130 full days and 44 half days covered and are planning to distribute quarterly updates to our supporters via email.

The nominated day can be a birthday, wedding anniversary or in memory of a loved one. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination. The name of the donor is placed on a notice board in the children's dining area on the nominated day to provide a visible reminder of the support that is given to them.

Our generous corporate sponsor, Seasol International continues to run the administration costs of this initiative by providing a staff member and payment of costs involved.



Please consider joining the Foundation Day Sponsor 'family'.

The money received goes some way to cover the running costs of the Uluru Children's Home, which cares for a particularly vulnerable group of children, providing them with a safe and caring environment. It also supports the Uluru Health Care Clinic where work assists in overcoming deeply embedded community issues such as inadequate hygiene, and provides medical and health education to the surrounding population of 32,000 people.

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We again wish to thank Lisa Boyd and Seasol International for their ongoing support of the Golf Day, the Day Sponsorship Program and its administration, as well as the cost of printing this newsletter. This dedication to supporting TEWOAF and TEWFI continues to be critical to our capacity to provide support for the UCH children, the local community and the wonderful and extremely important local natural environment. Seasol has a special interest in environmental issues and is a family owned company dedicated to organically based water saving horticultural products.

We Welcome Sue Kennedy as TEWOAF Administrative Officer

Sue comes to us with significant experience across a variety of industries. She has been a TAB manager and a bookkeeper for medical research organizations, trade unions, an entertainment group and at the Darwin Casino as a night auditor. Sue is a busy mother and grandmother and in her 'spare' time spends it with family, her Super Coach team, follows her beloved Demons, and cares for her garden, cat and turtle! Sue tells us she is enjoying the role, enjoys working with her TEWOAF colleagues, volunteers and donors and values the good feeling of making life better for our Uluru family.

