

*"A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child"*



## Arobanam Children Fund Newsletter – December 2021

<http://www.arobanam.co.uk>

Welcome to our closing newsletter. In this December 2021 edition we bring you an update with the activities and progresses of our work, over the past 12 months. The ACF Committee has missed not meeting and seeing you at our annual charity dinners for the last two years and look forward to entering 2022 with the eager anticipation of meeting you in person at our next main event. As everyone has continued to deal with the prevailing difficulties of Covid around the world, our brethren in Sri Lanka and South India have been managing their own share of challenges.

**Covid Assistance** - Over the first and second phase of Covid, ACF have, with the help of its partners and your financial support, delivered over 750 dry relief parcels to families who have been severely affected during the lockdowns ... primarily daily wage earners in the Jaffna and Mannar districts.

Over the second Covid wave, residents of several of our partner homes were identified as Covid positive and, in accordance with government procedures, were isolated in quarantine centres and returned to their respective partner homes when they were verified as negative. In our efforts to boost the residents' personal immunity and prevent further new infections, we provided essential nourishment by supplying them with milk, fresh fruits, flasks for hot water and vitamin tablets. Annai Illam and Welcome Home were in particular need of this support.

As you may have gathered already ...Covid related restrictions, Government-imposed curfews and safety concerns have made it very difficult for our Manager of Operations in Sri Lanka, to visit and monitor all the projects, as he has routinely done prior to the onset of Covid. Even so, when there has been a necessity, he has done so with safety in mind at all times.

Throughout the pandemic, even during periods where children were sent home from school, ACF made payments and ensured teachers and other staff who were already looking after the children, were paid regardless of whether some of them were having to stay at home during lockdown restrictions. When curricular activities were diminished and boredom was setting in among the children, several on-line workshops were held directly with the children and seen as a way to boost their morale, engage and entertain them.



## ACF's 2nd Partners Conference -

ACF is planning to hold its 2nd partners conference in January of 2022. Following the success of the 1st partners conference in April of 2021, we have decided to hold regular conferences of this nature, in order for us to continue to understand the changing needs of our partner organisations, and in the same vein, for them to understand the need to follow ACF's clear guidelines to, thereby, help us to support them and the children to our best ability.

## Memorial /Special Meals –

### Memorial Meal

In honour of ACF's founder patron, Rev. Fr. James Pathinathan, who passed away on 11 July 2019, an annual memorial meal event has been set up, starting this year. The first memorial meal was sponsored by ACF's committee members and served to the resident children, at Good Shepherd Convent in Mankulam, where Fr James worked tirelessly for many years. We would welcome ACF supporters to come forward to sponsor future memorial meals in the month of July.



### Special Meals

Throughout this year, with the support of our sponsors and supporters, we provided 30 special meal events at our partners' homes and often they have included a special lunch with a follow-on dessert. Some of these meals were served with cakes and evening tea. We have also provided special breakfasts and dinners with a fruit dessert. Thinking of celebrating a special event in your life! Think of enjoying it with some of our children as they will also be celebrating it with you when they are served a special meal that you have kindly donated towards. We look forward to welcoming new special meal donations, so if you are interested, please contact us with your requests.



**ACF are always in need of more sponsors to assist more children in need  
TO SPONSOR A CHILD PLEASE CLICK HERE: [Sponsor a child](#) OR contact a member of the team**

### Children's Day Celebrations –

In honour of raising their profile and increasing public awareness of the rights of children in Sri Lanka, the island nation celebrated World Children's Day on 1 October.

The children, in wishing to make the most of this day, took it upon themselves to plan an entertainments day and to perform to a live audience of invited local people. It was an opportunity for the children to show off their talents and gain much praise in return. In supporting them and as a contribution from us, the ACF committee funded the purchase and distribution of chocolate treats for the children.



### School Starter Kits –

In following on from ACF's provision of school starter kits to the foster care children in Mankulam; this year we extended the service to include the children of Mannar Foster Care and SPACE Foster Care, as the youngsters prepare for the start of the new school year in 2022.



### ACF Children's Individual Savings Scheme –

With the view of offering school leavers a one-off financial boost at the end of their academic journey, when they leave ACF's support system, ACF has successfully opened individual savings accounts for the children in the Mankulam Foster Care Scheme, whereby small amounts are deposited regularly.

From this year this initiative has been extended to include the children in the Mannar Foster Care Scheme and the Anaiyoor Foster Care Scheme in Madurai, South India and, over time, our intention is to expand this service to the children in the other projects also.

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## Academia -

Over the 18th period that covered both waves of the pandemic, schools/universities have had to relay their lessons/lectures over the internet, when lockdown restrictions have been in place. During this time many of the children/young adults, have to some degree, had to overcome difficulties in following and keeping up with their online lessons and study routines. ACF provided special assistance to university students with the set-up of on-line facilities and other tools. Also, to help with the other children's home study, tools such as laptops were provided in the partner homes, and as needed, mobile phones were provided for the students.

In October, an on-line conference was held for 32 university students, who are currently assisted through ACF. It provided the opportunity to identify their needs when they resume classroom-based lectures. As a result, each student will receive a one-off "back to university" support package. In addition, students, who are entering university for the first time, will receive a one-time financial package to assist them in becoming better integrated with the other students.

**Grade 5 Scholarship Successes** – 4 children from the Mankulam Foster Care Scheme passed and attained scholarships to further study in school.

**GCE O' Level Successes** – 28 of the ACF supported children have worked really hard and done extremely well in passing their O'Level subjects. They now proceed to follow their A'Level studies.

**GCE A' Level Successes** – Of the 16 children who sat their A'Level exams, 15 passed and 7 of them have been accepted to follow university degrees. ACF will continue to assist such deserving children through its university assistance scheme

**Post Graduate Successes** – 5 university students completed their degrees.

## A Special Mention -

A student, specialising in Tamil Language, at Jaffna University and who was receiving university assistance from ACF's university scheme, has recently and voluntarily given up this allowance, in favour of offering it to a new university student. He had decided on this action as a result of his improved financial position through paid work outside university study. Being a caring, diligent and proactive student, he used his entrepreneurial skills to secure donations to fund and set-up a tutoring in the Mankulam area, at which he teaches younger students.

ACF greatly admires this student's philanthropic nature and his commitment to help the younger generation. We wish him all the success with his future endeavours and trust he will remain an exemplary role model to all ACF beneficiaries.

## Zoom Workshops -

Between May and August of this year we held several workshops at Annai Illam, in Mannar and Bharathy Illam, in Mullaitivu, using zoom technology. Rajee, a primary school teacher from Paris, conducted these workshops where all such sessions were sponsored by her family members. Workshops consisted of educational quizzes, physical exercises such as yoga and gymnastics, singing and dancing, and children demonstrating other cultural activities. In addition, this provided an opportunity for the children to demonstrate their talents with stories/essays and poem writing. Children stated that such workshops provided them with good entertainment at a time where they were unable to go out due to covid lockdowns. These workshops enabled ACF to connect directly with the children and to understand their outstanding talents. Enthusiastic young children from Europe joined, entertained the children and enjoyed the workshops.



For further information, please contact one of our committee members at:

Arobanam Children Fund, 29 Helmsdale Road, London, SW16 5UT, E-mail: [arobanamchildrenfund@gmail.com](mailto:arobanamchildrenfund@gmail.com)  
Together We Can Make A Difference

## Fundraising -

At a time, when we were unable to gather and raise funds in the usual way, three friends from Norway ... Puvana, Eric, and Kugan came forward to run the Tromso, Norway's Midnight Marathon. In this being our first ever overseas fundraising event, they campaigned tirelessly and raised over £3,500 surpassing their initial target of £3,000.

## Public Donation Benefits –

Through the kind and generous donations of several sponsors and supporters of ACF, we were able to provide the following additional assistance:

Annai Illam in Mannar – In accepting a specific public donation request, dresses were purchased for all the children and staff members, in time for this year's Theepavali celebrations.



## Home Garden Initiative –

This gardening initiative, successfully piloted in early 2021 by ACF's Manager of Operations in Sri Lanka, Mr Dinesh Thiruchelvan, was expanded to 80 families in the Mankulam Foster Care Scheme and it yielded a good harvest for most of the families during the second lockdown. On the success of this first phase of gardening opportunities, a second phase is already being planned to help the children and families of Bharathy Illam in Mullaitivu and Good Shepherd Convent in Mankulam. Overtime this initiative will be further expanded to include the other projects of ACF.

As turmeric has been in very short supply throughout Sri Lanka, we are seeking to purchase turmeric seedlings with a view to adding this tuber as another good herbal food source for the family and a possible income generator.



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### **ACF's Expansion Plan (Lookout for Potential New Projects) -**

Foster care schemes in Muthur, in Trincomalee and Anaiyoor, in Madurai in South India have already been identified and been initiated to assist children and their guardian families.

In Sri Lanka's Hill Country region, a reliable partner has been identified and work will commence to set-up foster care and university schemes in early 2022.

The Sivapoomi university scheme, which is already up and running, is a new project that started in January of this year and plans to set up a further foster care scheme via the Sivapoomi Trust is also underway.

### **ACF's Exit from Home of Joy –**


ACF has been assisting Home of Joy, in Mankulam, since its inception in 2017, but due to operational difficulties and the organisation's diminishing occupancy, ACF exited from the project in October 2021.

### **ACF Committee Needs You –**

ACF's current committee consists of 11 volunteer members, ranging in ages from mid 20s to late 60s. The committee's commitment and passion to help parentless children and families, who need support and understanding is its number one priority. However, the increasing workload requires the help of extra pairs of hands from new people who are of a similar mindset to us and whose support will continue to further our assistance to those who are in real need.

We are interested in bringing in young, energetic individuals, but people of all ages are welcome to contact us. No assistance is small ... please come forward to help. We await your call. Please contact us on [arobanamchildrenfund@gmail.com](mailto:arobanamchildrenfund@gmail.com) or mobile 07979 837658 (Thenuka Prince), in the evenings after 6pm.

Thank you



Arobanam Children's Fund  
would like to wish you and  
your families a safe and  
happy Christmas.

May 2022 bring you much  
peace, joy and happiness.

From all of us at ACF