

# The East Sheen Chengannur Trust

Registered Charity No 293567



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NEWSLETTER No. 99

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Welcome to our latest newsletter which will also be available to view on our website.

## NEW PROJECT – ARTS/DANCE CLASSES

Jacob (our project director) has initiated a new project to help a young man into employment whilst at the same time giving poorer children the opportunity to learn various forms of Indian dance which is still a popular pastime.

RAHUL RAJ is a young man aged 27 who has been through some tough times. While playing cricket at the age of 13 the ball hit his left eye with great force. He had some swelling then but the Doctor said that he was okay. At age 17 his eye pain increased and he developed swelling and bleeding. On examination it was found that he had lost his eyesight in that eye. The other eye also seems to be weak.

His father developed heart problems and sadly passed away in March 2019. They had borrowed quite a bit of money for his treatment which is still owing. His younger brother Vishawaraj aged 23 has gone to the Gulf seeking some sort of employment. They were also badly affected by the floods in August 2018 when water reached their roof top and caused damage to their house. Sadly when others around received some compensation from the government his family hardly received any. They rear a cow, two goats and a few hens and this is their only current source of income.

Rahul is now under treatment at a nearby hospital but has to pay for his treatment. His left eye was removed in 2015 and he now has an artificial eye. This needs to be changed every year otherwise it can lead to infection and other side effects. The approximate cost of this is about £500 each time. He has changed his eye four times now, one with his own funds and for the rest he had to find sponsors. He has approached us for some help and whilst our constitution does not allow us to provide direct medical aid we have started assisting him into employment.



Rahul is a gifted youngster and has won prizes in Kathak, (classical Indian dance) folk and muslim song at state level competitions conducted by the Kerala State Youth Welfare Board. For the last 3 years he is the Kala Prathibha (Top scorer in arts competitions) at the district level. He goes around judging competitions and also accompanies some other senior teachers in taking arts classes at various schools and clubs but does not get paid.

Some local schools are now keen on having Rahul as a tutor for some of their talented children in the arts forms that he knows. The children have fun and also may be able to compete in some competitions.

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The Headmaster of one school has started Rahul twice a week to train about 15 talented children from different classes. This is a government school where people of the lower strata send their children. Jacob discussed it with Rahul and we have agreed to pay him a small amount per class. This way it will be an income for him (as he does not have any now), could help him develop a career and should be an ideal project to encourage a few less fortunate children with their talents.

Jacob sent the following report on the start of Rahul's classes: *"It got off to a splendid start on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> when we had a formal inauguration. Earlier the teachers and Rahul selected the best from each class and we had about 25 children (including 2 boys) and their parents for the meeting. We have decided to have the classes on Wednesdays and Fridays from 3 to 4pm after the regular school hours when Rahul would be teaching them different dance forms from Kerala and other parts of India, something that he is good at and has learned himself and has won prizes at various levels.*



*I gave a small talk and told the children it is going to be fun for them! I promised them a prize for full attendance for 25 classes (roughly three months classes). Perhaps we can think of some snacks per class as the dance steps are hard work! Rahul would train them to go for inter schools and other competitions and I promised them we would provide dresses (hired) and make up which is much needed for these occasions. The children were very happy.*

*As a token of respect and gesture of thanks each of them made an offering to Rahul of a small amount of money in a beetle leaf as is the custom here. I also went on Friday (it is hardly 1km away from our house and so that is handy) when the classes were in full swing. Rahul was suggesting we could also have persons who are good at sculpture, clay modeling etc once in while to teach these children too"*



*Rahul has now started dance classes with another set of children at the Govt. Junior Basic School in Mundencavu very near Chengannur. The children were enthusiastic to start the classes as can be seen in the photo.*

### **KITCHEN GARDEN FOR SCHOOL**

One of the schools that Rahul is helping has also asked for some reading material and also help to start a kitchen garden in school in which the children will have full participation. Jacob is now working on this and we'll hopefully have further news in our next newsletter.

### **HUNGRY FUND**

As most supporters will know, on a regular basis, we give out provisions to a few destitute older people.



The arrangement is that Jacob gives them a slip stating that they can buy provisions for Rs.1500 (about £18) and they take it to a particular shop from where they can buy general food provisions and Jacob settles payment with the shopkeeper later. Usually they buy items like 10kg of rice, oil, coffee powder, sugar, wheat powder etc which should last a family of three for almost a month.

In the picture are a very needy family seen with their supply of provisions. The mother is Pankajakshi standing in the back aged 78 and her sons Soman (48), Sasi (55) and daughter Sreedevi (43) are sitting down in front of their house. None of the children are married and Sasi is not very stable mentally. Their only income was from two milk giving cows, both of which died recently due to some illness. We have promised them some supply of provisions every month as they seem to be very helpless. Replacing a cow may be costly but Jacob did tell them to look out for a goat or two which we could buy for them. They were very

pleased. Jacob saw them around 11am and he realized that they had not even had a breakfast so this help will mean a great deal to them.

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**JAYASREE** is a disabled young girl. Her parents find it difficult to look after her particularly as they only have a small income. We helped her by constructing a toilet for her own use inside their house and also gave her a `mixi` (as they call them) - a vegetable/food grinder/processor. She is seen here with her mother Ambujam.

**TREE PLANTING** At the same school that Rahul teaches we've started the children gardening. Some unused land of the school has been cultivated. The children tilled the land and then planted banana tree saplings with much excitement. It was a fun day for them.



### **OTHER AID GIVEN**

Over the last six months since our last newsletter we have continued to help many people in different circumstances and in different ways. There isn't sufficient space in this newsletter to cover all this work but every penny of the money donated to us is used with great care and to great effect by Jacob.

**If you would like to donate to any of our projects please send any amount to us however big or small;**

- **Cheques can be sent to the address above.**
- **You can send by bank transfer direct to our Lloyds Bank account number 61385660 Sort Code 77-91-48 (a follow up email to us would be helpful to identify payments and if you wish the donation to be used for a specific fund)**
- **or you can pay by Paypal and debit or credit card by clicking on the Donations tab on our website.**

**You're welcome to specify where you would like the money spent. We have Building, Education, Hungry (food aid) funds and a General & Emergency Fund. If you don't specify we'll put it in the latter.**

**Thank you very much to everyone who has generously contributed to our sponsorships and other causes during the year.**

**We wish you all a very Happy Christmas.**