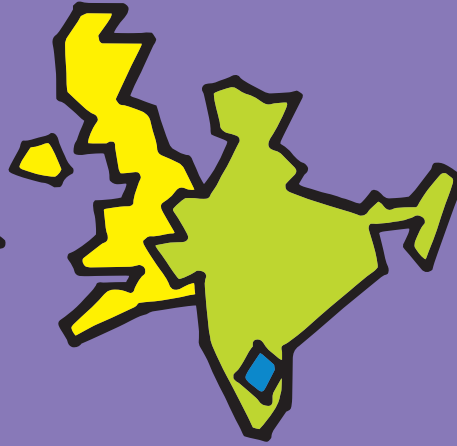


# Friends of Vellore<sup>UK</sup>



Registered with



FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

Promoting health and welfare of the poor and marginalised

## Breaking Barriers: Initiating cervical cancer screening in underserved communities

Friends of Vellore UK are funding a project to implement cervical cancer screening and palliative care for those living in the most deprived areas of Vellore town. Previously neither of these much-needed healthcare services have been available to this population. In fact, there is no government funded cervical cancer screening in India at all and ladies from this area have been asking Christian Medical College Vellore (CMC) if they could provide this.

These new services are being delivered by a team from CMC's Low Cost Effective Care Unit (LCECU). The team consists of a nurse, clinical psychologist, occupational therapist, project coordinator and a driver, with input from the medical staff. CMC cancer screening and palliative care specialists have trained the staff, and with funds that we sent, LCECU have purchased an ambulance and developed software for data capture.

For cervical cancer screening, the healthcare team conduct visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA) on women aged 30-60 who are willing. Those who receive a positive result are referred to the base hospital for colposcopy (magnification and illumination). If this suggests a positive result, a biopsy is performed to determine if cancer is present and thermal ablation is used to treat the positive area. If the biopsy suggests cancer, further treatment including surgery may be required.

During our visit to CMC Vellore in January, we interviewed three ladies who were attending the colposcopy clinic. CMC's community health workers promote the clinic



Ladies waiting at the colposcopy clinic

to eligible women in the community. The ladies we spoke to were very happy to be offered screening, understanding that it is much better to be treated early for cancer.

We asked them what their experience of colposcopy was like. One lady said: *"I was anxious but there was no discomfort; it was not a difficult thing to go through. I am very relieved and happy to have had it now. We will tell other women about it."*

This was the first time these women (aged in their 40s and 50s) had ever had undergone screening. Before this, they were not aware that you could be screened for cervical cancer. If they went anywhere else, they would have to pay, which would have deterred them from going. They are very grateful to receive free screening at LCECU, knowing that if CMC detect something abnormal, the treatment will be free or subsidised also.

# Dear Friends of CMC Vellore,

Thank you for your generous donations and prayers for the work of Christian Medical College Vellore (CMC) and its associated mission hospitals. We are so grateful for each one of you and thank God for your partnership in this work. We would love to see you at our annual supporters' meeting on Sunday 6 October (further details on page 11).



It was a privilege to visit CMC in January with Dayalan, our Chair of Trustees. We were able to see nearly all of the projects we are currently funding as well as exploring some possible new areas of support. It was so encouraging to see the impact of these projects on the lives of those who benefit. We start this issue with the work of the Low-Cost Effective Care Unit who are rolling out a new cervical cancer screening program and palliative care service. You can read more about this worthy project on page 4.

Christian Medical College Vellore seeks to be a witness to the healing ministry of Christ

through excellence in healthcare, education and research. Their dream is to never have to turn away anyone in need. Concessions and free treatment are given according to need using various CMC charity schemes, including Person-to-Person. We have several patient stories of those who have benefited from charitable funds that Friends of Vellore UK has contributed to.

We also have updates on several of our projects and news from CMC more generally. The personal stories and updates demonstrate how much your gifts are blessing the lives of people in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

We have recently produced a small leaflet giving an overview of our work. This is enclosed with this newsletter. Perhaps you have a friend or family member who might be interested, and you could pass it on. We are keen to expand the number of churches we are connected with so if you are part of a church who might like to support us, please let us know.

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and are encouraged by the wonderful work going on.

**Ruth Tuckwell**

*Charity Manager, Friends of Vellore UK*



## Person to Person: You bridge the gap

Each year, Friends of Vellore UK gives £40,000 in support of the Person-to-Person (PTP) programme at Christian Medical College Vellore (CMC). The fund enables donors to pay for the cost of an individual patient's treatment. For every £1 you give, CMC gives £4. It is a very cost-effective and personal way of supporting someone who might not otherwise be able to afford essential medical treatment. CMC Vellore sends a monthly report to all the donors with a patient story and a summary of those who benefitted. Below is Ganga's story:

28-year-old Ganga\* from Vellore has been struggling with difficult health challenges. Eight years ago, she developed paraplegia due to a spinal tumour. Rehabilitation in CMC helped her to get back on her feet. She cares for her 3-year-old daughter and is now expecting her second baby. She visits CMC regularly for her prenatal checkups. Her husband is a daily wage labourer and the sole bread winner of the family.

A few days before Christmas, Ganga had high fever and vomited 7-8 times. Worried, her husband rushed her to the A&E department at CMC. She was immediately admitted to the



*Ganga with her mother*

High Dependency Unit. After she stabilised, she was moved to the general ward.

Unfortunately, Ganga's haemoglobin and blood pressure dropped due to an infection in her kidney. Over the next couple of weeks, she was in and out of critical care. Her ICU admissions and treatment costs were subsidised by PTP and CMC's other charitable funds. After three and a half weeks in hospital she was well enough to go home.

Ganga is very grateful for the financial support she was given. Your generous contributions make it possible for CMC to help patients like Ganga. Thank you!

*\*Patient details shared with consent & name changed to protect their privacy.*

# Review of 2023

In 2023 Friends of Vellore UK received £251,572 in donations including gift aid. We received an additional £105,445 income from investments. We sent a total of £371,074 in grants; £279,743 to CMC Vellore and £91,332 to Indian mission hospitals working in partnership with CMC.

The charity's total income in 2023 was £357,017 with expenditure of £415,476. The running costs amounted to £44,402 and were covered by our income on investments, allowing every penny of your donations to go directly to funding charitable projects.

During 2023 Friends of Vellore UK supported the following projects at CMC Vellore:

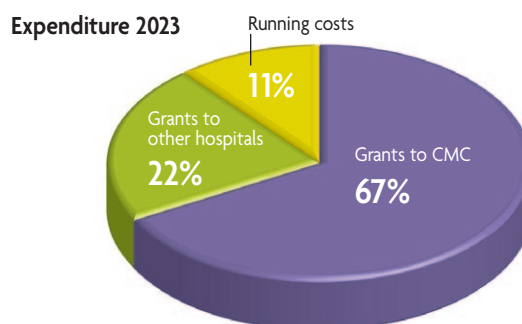
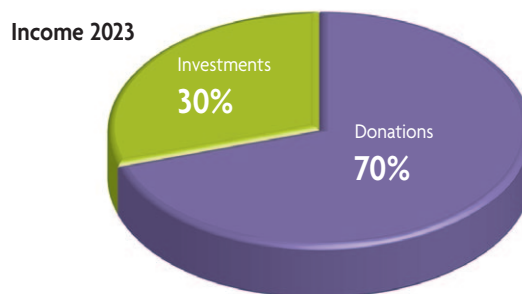
- The Person-to-Person Scheme (£40,000)
- CMC's Hospital Free Bed Scheme (£25,000)
- Projects at CMC's Low Cost Effective Care Unit
  - The patient support fund (£26,000)
  - A cervical screening programme (£22,783)
  - A new palliative care service (£16,563)
- The Palliative Home Care Team (£2,380)
- Projects supporting CMC's work in the Jawadhi Hills
  - Funding for 11 Community Health Workers (£10,208)
  - 7 student scholarships for healthcare training (£3,246)
  - A youth programme aimed at preventing alcohol misuse (£4,573)
  - Funds to build the new maternity unit (£600)
- Projects at the Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs
  - Elderly welfare centres (£10,285)
  - Children's play centre (£4,051)
  - Sustainable farming (£3,394)
  - Women's vocational training (£8,070)
  - Adolescent life skills education (£2,076)
  - Promoting healthy living (£1,600)
- Projects in support of children
  - Cochlear implant surgery for three children (£21,891)
  - An audiologist to support children with hearing loss (£3,905)
  - Treatment costs for 10 children (£10,024)
  - The Bridge house project providing accommodation for patients and families (£21,485)
- Training and scholarships
  - Senior Training Fellowship support for 2 doctors (£6,000)
  - CMC student scholarships for 6 nurses, 1 paramedic, 1 allied health student (£3,984)

- The Community Lay Leaders Health Training Course (£1,080)
- Various alumni batch funds and projects (£28,222)
- Nutrition support for TB patients (£1,835)
- CMC's Emergency Fund (£488)

The charity also sent £91,332 in grants to five smaller Indian mission hospitals working in partnership with CMC:

- Karigiri Hospital (£10,000) for an effluent treatment plant
- Baptist Christian Hospital Tezpur (£3,695) for cardiac monitors and infusion pumps
- Evangelical Hospital Khariar (£24,305) for an oxygen plant
- Asha Kiran Hospital Lamtaput (£25,000) for a women's hostel
- Christian Hospital Berhampur (£28,332) for an ambulance

**We are so grateful to everyone who donated and enabled our support of these projects. Thank you!**



## Promoting health and welfare of the poor and marginalised

### Vision

Friends of Vellore UK supports projects at Christian Medical College Vellore, and other mission hospitals working in partnership with CMC. The charity seeks to follow Christ's example in showing compassion towards those who are vulnerable and marginalised. We want to ensure that everyone can receive appropriate healthcare regardless of their ability to pay or their faith.

### Mission

We strive to fulfil our vision through the following activities:

- Raising funds to support healthcare, education and development projects at CMC that benefit the poorest and most excluded patients and communities
- Encouraging CMC in its partnership with smaller mission hospitals across India
- Promoting the work of CMC and sharing news and information for prayer

# Transforming healthcare: a comprehensive approach

The Low Cost Effective Care Unit (LCECU) is the urban health centre of Christian Medical College Vellore (CMC) which provides primary and secondary care to the urban poor at low cost. The base hospital serves a population of 200,000 from Vellore town. There is a 48-bed inpatient facility, in addition to outpatient, laboratory and pharmacy services. Around 250 outpatients are seen every day. Patients are referred to CMC Vellore's main hospital for tertiary care if needed. Consultants from various CMC departments visit routinely to provide expert opinion and management.



The team from LCECU

In 2016 Friends of Vellore UK provided funding to establish community oriented primary care in seven under-privileged areas of Vellore town. A population of 12,000 now have access to weekly clinics and community engagement enabled by community volunteers, community health workers, social workers and a community health nurse. This initiative has brought about a paradigm shift in the management of chronic diseases in the community, from screening to treatment to follow up of these patients.

To strengthen the care provided, LCECU are now initiating community based palliative care and cervical cancer screening. This will be facilitated by a multidisciplinary team. Most of the team have been recruited: a nurse, clinical psychologist, occupational therapist, project coordinator and a driver. However, LCECU have struggled to recruit a medical officer – please pray that they would be able to appoint someone. In the interim, medical staff from LCECU are covering this.

The team will provide community based palliative care in the mornings and cervical cancer screening in the afternoons. Each arm of the project has the following objectives:

## PALLIATIVE CARE:

- Identify people with chronic illness using a tool for integration of palliative care in chronic disease management.
- Assess the symptoms of those identified using the Palliative Care Assessment Tool.
- Plan holistic management of patients identified with palliative care needs.

- Integrate care of patients with complex needs with the specialist palliative care team.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of palliative care within the community, thus improving community support.

## CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING:

- Create community awareness regarding cervical cancer, screening and treatment, and the HPV vaccine.
- Motivate eligible women to participate in the screening.
- Screen women aged 30-60 years in the community using Visual Inspection with Acetic acid (VIA) to identify pre-invasive cervical lesions.
- Coordinate treatment of those with abnormal lesions by colposcopy and thermocoagulation.
- Provide referral services to CMC main hospital when needed.

There are 1600 chronic patients who will be assessed for palliative care. In January, the team identified 11 people requiring palliative care.

There are 2572 women aged 30-60 years. In January, the team screened 77 women, 15 were VIA positive and referred for colposcopy. Of these, six received thermal ablation. CMC are not offering the HPV vaccine as it is too expensive (Two doses are required costing around £40 each). It is hoped that the Indian Government may offer this in a few years' time.

You may remember that last Christmas, Friends of Vellore UK asked for donations to fund the palliative care service for low-resourced urban areas in Vellore. We are delighted to report that with your help we have raised over £5,000! We are grateful for this opportunity to help CMC offer compassionate healthcare and witness to the eternal hope we have beyond this life. Thank you to all who donated.

We are continuing to raise funds for both the cervical screening side and the palliative care aspect of this project, as it runs for three years with a total cost of £90,000. This sum covers the salaries of the team, as well as set up costs including an ambulance. When our funding finishes, LCECU hope these programmes will become part of their ongoing work.



Palliative Care screening



LCECU Cervical Cancer awareness raising

# News from CMC Vellore



A busy waiting room at Chittoor campus

Christian Medical College Vellore continues to grow with multiple campuses across three districts and two states, in addition to 168 mission hospitals who are closely linked. They have a phenomenal workforce who are very dedicated and hard working. Retaining and recruiting enough staff is a big challenge however, so please pray about this.

CMC's new hospital at Ranipet is steadily growing. They have secured funds to build a new paediatric block of 700 beds. CMC's Chittoor campus is planning to increase its existing 140 beds by 300 to enable a medical college in 5-7 years' time. They hope to build a secondary hospital to train people from all over the country in secondary hospital care which would provide a knock-on benefit to many who are poor and marginalised across India.

A new pharmacy college is being built on the medical college campus. The pharmacy college is a continuation of CMC's tradition of providing outstanding pharmacy education. The college will have three floors with classrooms, laboratories, a central instrumentation room, library and seminar hall and is expected to reach completion in fifteen months' time.

## NEW LOGO AND EMBLEM

CMC has recently launched a revised version of their logo and emblem which reflect their values and Christian ethos. This project has taken several years to



come to completion, the aim being to make it the best possible symbolic representation of the institution in the digital age, while making sure that links to their history and heritage stay secure. The refreshed logo is simple and versatile, whilst the emblem is detailed and formal. Both feature CMC's traditional colours of silver and blue.



## DR IDA SCUDDER DOCUMENTARY

CMC are partnering with Shepherd Films to make a documentary on Dr Ida Scudder and CMC Vellore. The film will be produced by Mr Aneesh Daniel, best known for his award-winning film 'The Least of These: The Graham Staines Story'.

The filming for this documentary began in January 2024 at Vellore. Members of the Scudder family, Drs James & Susan Taylor were present at the launch and dedication shoot. CMC hope to release the first episode of the film later this year. Subsequent episodes will tell the story of Dr Ida's co-workers, pioneering leaders and highlight the contributions of CMC.

CMC are grateful to generous individuals and Alumni Batches who have helped raise funds for this. You can watch a video on the progress of this project and some behind the scenes action here: <https://givecmc.org/be-a-part-of-aunt-idas-legacy/>



Dr Ida Scudder's grave

# Abraham George runs again!

Friends of Vellore supporter, and CMC Alumnus, Abraham George will this year run his seventh marathon after being inspired by the couch to 5K NHS podcast.

In 2017, Dr Abraham George, a GP in Norwich, had been suggesting the couch to 5k podcast to his patients when he considered why he'd never taken it up. A short while later, he had been so inspired by the programme that he signed up to run his first-ever marathon.

This year, Abraham will run his seventh marathon, raising money to fund a palliative care service for low-resourced urban areas in Vellore. The palliative care programme will improve the quality of life of patients and

that of their families who are facing challenges associated with life-threatening illness, whether physical, psychological, social, or spiritual. You can read more about this on the preceding page.

If you would like to sponsor Abraham or keep up to date with how his training is going, please visit his Just Giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/abraham-george>

You can also join Abraham in running this year's virtual London Marathon, which you



can run from anywhere in the world on 21 April. Friends of Vellore have two places available, contact Georgina at [georgina@friendsofvellore.org](mailto:georgina@friendsofvellore.org) to find out more.

# Paediatric Subsidy Fund

Every year, hundreds of families bring their children to CMC Vellore for treatment and care. However, many families struggle to afford the treatment costs. Friends of Vellore UK send £10,000 annually to enable a paediatric subsidy fund. This fund supports 10 children each year from poor families who would benefit from a one-off intervention with a high likelihood of a positive outcome. Below is Abhi's story:



Abhi in the intensive care unit



Abhi after the procedure

## Abhi

12-year-old Abhi is from West Bengal. He is the joy and delight of his parents, who brought him to CMC as they were unable to find treatment for him locally. Abhi seemed well until one month prior when he developed breathlessness associated with pain in his chest and swelling throughout his body. The severe pain and generalised swelling prevented him from going to school; he was unable to even go to the bathroom without feeling breathless. His parents took him to their nearest hospital who referred him to a specialty centre. Even after a prolonged stay at the specialty centre, he did not show significant improvement. His parents came to CMC Vellore as a last resort.

When Abhi first arrived, he appeared very sick with generalized swelling and heart failure along with hypertensive emergency. He was quickly admitted to the intensive care unit and treated with antibiotics and steroids. Further investigations showed worsening of creatinine, so he was given emergency haemodialysis. He required mechanical ventilation for his heart failure. Detailed evaluation revealed a significant blockage in the blood vessels of his left kidney. He required six different drugs to control his blood pressure. An emergency procedure to improve blood flow to his kidney by balloon dilatation or stenting was advised to save his kidney and life. This procedure was expected to cost between ₹2 to ₹3 lakh (£1,942 – £2,913) if there were no complications, or at least double this should complications arise.

Abhi's father is the sole bread winner of the family, working in construction on a contractual basis. He managed to raise few thousand rupees from friends and family to come to Vellore for an opinion. However, the family were not prepared for a major procedure and long hospital stay in the ICU. They had no other source of income or financial support. Abhi's father asked to take



his son home as they were unable to afford his treatment. He felt it was better that his son died peacefully than the entire family fell into debt.

CMC, however, assured him that they could arrange for funds for Abhi's treatment. After a week to allow his condition to stabilise, he

was scheduled for a catheterization procedure under the Cardiology Department. However, the attempt to insert a stent in the renal blood vessel was unsuccessful. His parents initially requested to discharge him home to avoid any further expenses. After much discussion, they agreed for the cardiologists to reattempt a stent insertion using another technique. This second attempt was successful. The cardiology team identified two different blockages and inserted two stents in a procedure lasting nearly six hours.

Thankfully Abhi tolerated the procedure very well and his post-operative recovery was excellent. He now requires fewer drugs to control his hypertension and appears to be on the road to recovery. There is no evidence of heart failure, and he is able to climb two flights of stairs without any discomfort. His kidney function has also improved significantly.

Overall, the procedure and hospital stay cost around ₹8 lakh (£7,767). The family was able to pay ₹3 lakh (£2913) towards the bill and CMC covered the remainder, out of which ₹1 lakh (£970) was from the FOV UK fund. The Cardiology department provided the stent device and procedure free of cost to the patient, which should have otherwise incurred another £1750. The medical team and the family are extremely grateful to FOV UK for their financial support for Abhi through the Paediatric Subsidy Fund.

*\*Patient details shared with consent & name changed to protect their privacy.*

# Empowering rural farmers: Help us to invest in sustainable change

Agriculture has been the main occupation for the people of India for centuries. However, irregular rainfall, poor soil fertility, and generational debt have made farming an unreliable livelihood. The use of chemical fertilisers and lack of innovative water management have also increased expenses and affected productivity. The result is that marginal farmers, affected by poor agricultural performance, have been forced to take up non-agricultural occupations for their livelihood thereby increasing migration.

Working in partnership with CMC, Friends of Vellore UK is supporting an ongoing initiative focused on empowering small-scale farmers through education, resources, and a progressive shift to organic and sustainable farming.

At the core of this initiative are local expert farmers who serve as trainers, and complete regular intensive training sessions to ensure their own proficiency. Training covers sustainable growing methods like natural pesticides, water conservation practices, and organic cultivation. But it goes beyond just planting crops.

Farmers also receive continuous coaching in farm business management - marketing, finance, legal aspects, and the day-to-day running of an agricultural enterprise. It's instilling an entrepreneurial spirit to treat farming as a viable commercial operation, not just subsistence.

Using model farm sites, the core farmers mentor others in their communities, sharing sustainable best practices. They've established Farming Clubs where marginalised farmers meet regularly, supporting each other as a network.

A key resource through these clubs is access



Sekar with his cow and Nanaja with her family's cow.

to interest-free loans. These no-interest funds allow farmers to invest in livestock, equipment, or property improvements to increase productivity and incomes. One farmer named Sekar was able to get a loan to purchase a dairy cow. Alongside his half-acre peanut plot, a crop that requires very little water, he now also earns income selling the cow's milk. Each year, the cow has a calf. If the calf is male, Sekar will sell the calf for a profit. If female, Sekar keeps the calf for milk, also making a profit.

The initiative also provides interest-free

livestock loans specifically for disadvantaged families. Women-led households receive prioritised access to these resources, as well as extra training opportunities. It's an intentional effort to empower women as agricultural entrepreneurs and providers for their families.

An onsite training centre offers monthly workshops covering advanced topics like value-added farm products, finance and marketing. Around 30 farmers attend each of these intensive sessions to build key business skills.

With monitoring and bi-annual reviews, Friends of Vellore UK and CMC ensure the program stays on track and achieves its goals. Funding covers critical components like training materials, expert instructors, and maintaining the model farms.

But to help this effort succeed, we need your support. £400 would cover the cost of an interest free loan to buy a cow. We are looking for loans for 10 farmers, 5 socially disadvantaged families and 5 chronic respiratory patients.

Please consider donating to help families across rural communities increase their income, food security, and nutrition. Thank you.

## Cambridge Half Marathon raises £2200+ for rural projects

Tom Slevin, Mike Slevin, Ben Slevin and Josh Tuckwell completed the Cambridge half marathon on Sunday 3rd March, collectively raising over £2200 (including Gift Aid) for Friends of Vellore UK.

These four friends ran to raise money for two of our projects at CMC's Rural Unit of Health and Social Affairs. Josh ran to enable life skills education for teenagers. This project helps young people to navigate this period of transition, and find work or training opportunities after leaving school. Mike, Ben, and Tom ran to provide training on organic farming methods and loans for new farmers to purchase animals for milking. Ben ran the marathon appropriately dressed as a banana!

We are so grateful to them for this fantastic effort and to everyone who generously donated.



# Extending our reach

CMC Vellore's Missions Network is made up of 168 hospitals that serve India's rural areas.



Pankaj with his father and the hospital team

Friends of Vellore UK have been instrumental in promoting CMC's work amongst smaller mission hospitals in India. We began by funding the first three years of the Mission Network Consultant post at CMC which has now been absorbed into CMC's ongoing budget and sits within a recently created Missions Department.

do have either a strong calling from God, a passion for social justice or a reason to keep the flame burning in their local area. CMC are working hard to raise the profile of this important work and encourage staff to get involved. They hold an annual missions conference for students: Shiloh, and support CMC undergraduates and postgraduates working in mission hospitals on placements.

Pankaj is a 10-year-old boy who presented with severe generalised tetanus. He was admitted to ICU and put on a ventilator with the help of a tracheostomy tube. Over the three weeks he spent on the ventilator, we performed many tests including biochemistry tests to measure his renal and liver function. The biochemistry machine has been a great help in treating patients like Pankaj who require ICU care, multiple investigations almost every day and constant monitoring. Pankaj was restored to complete health after four weeks and ready to be discharged home. Pankaj, his father, and all of us are deeply grateful for this provision as we've journeyed this road of pain and joy with them. We are humbled by their endurance, resilience and implicit trust in us. Pankaj was gifted a new pair of sandals for his feet.



CMC's Missions Department

## THE GIFT OF NEW LAB EQUIPMENT

In 2022 Friends of Vellore UK gave £23,570 to Chinchpada Christian Hospital (CCH) to enable them to buy some much needed lab equipment. This hospital is situated in west India, in the state of Maharashtra.

The funds were used to purchase a fully automated biochemistry analyser and a D10 haemoglobin electrophoresis machine. The analyser measures different chemicals and other characteristics in several biological samples quickly, with minimal human input. These measured properties of blood and other fluids are useful in the diagnosis of disease. Haemoglobin electrophoresis can help to diagnose diseases involving abnormal haemoglobin production.

Dr Deepak Singh, Medical Superintendent at Chinchpada Christian Hospital, shares the following stories of two families who have benefitted:

CMC are committed to helping these much lower resourced hospitals. Staff in the department build links with mission hospitals who might benefit from a partnership with CMC. Several mission hospitals have asked to establish some form of operational partnership with CMC. This will ease the very high workload of CMC and help sick people to be confident of the care they could receive locally. This sounds exciting but there are enormous legal, funding, governance and operational challenges to be worked through.

Today, fewer healthcare professionals are keen to work in mission hospitals. Those that



A grateful family



# Celebrating 20 years of compassionate care

CMC's Palliative Care Unit was inaugurated twenty years ago, on 3 March 2004. Soon after, Friends of Vellore UK began supporting this work and made the Home Care Program and drug subsidy sustainable.

The Home Care Program cares for those in their home who are unable to travel to hospital. A doctor, a nurse and a social worker from CMC's palliative care team travel within a 50km radius of Vellore to visit patients and their families at this bleak time. About 200 patients a year are provided with pain relief and other drugs, and the family and community are guided in how best to support the patient.

Palliative care, in its true sense, should transcend the boundaries of the hospital and address various aspects of the lives of patients and their families. Often, the disease or death of the breadwinner leaves a family struggling. The Department of Palliative Medicine tries to identify and help such families by providing monthly rations, supporting children's education, and empowering the bereaved family to be self-sufficient. Friends of Vellore UK send funds for these non-medical needs in addition to funding the Home Care Program. At Christmas time, the palliative care team gave this group of patients and bereaved families much-appreciated gifts of a bedsheet and a towel.

It was a privilege to be a guest of honour at the dedication of a new palliative care hospice facility during my visit to Vellore in January. Sadly, only about 3% of Indian people have access to palliative care. This hospice facility and the new palliative care service in Vellore town demonstrate CMC's determination to ensure that their healing ministry should extend to those who are terminally ill and in need of compassionate care and love at the end of their lives.



Members past and present of the Palliative Care Department



Outside the new hospice



A ward in the new hospice

The Ida B Scudder hospice is situated beside the busy Chennai-Bangalore highway, 11 km from CMC Vellore. This 15-bed facility is a beacon of care and hope for individuals with serious illness in Vellore and nearby areas. It has been set up in collaboration with the Sneha Deepam Society, a catholic charity.

Embracing the philosophy of holistic care, the centre will offer pain and symptom management, psychosocial, spiritual, financial, and practical support to patients and their families. The hospice facility will provide dignity and compassionate care to people in the last stages of life, including those who are underprivileged and marginalised. This will be a huge support to distressed family caregivers who are unable to care for their loved ones at home.

Please pray that this hospice will be a place where those who stay, not only receive compassionate care, but find rest and peace in the eternal hope that Jesus offers.

Every year, the second Saturday of October is observed as World Hospice and Palliative Care Day. The theme for 2023 was 'Compassionate Communities: Together for Palliative Care.' The Department of Palliative Medicine conducted awareness programmes for high school students of four schools in Vellore. Palliative care was a new concept to the school children, and they were greatly interested in learning more about it. Many students volunteered to identify and help people with palliative care needs in their neighbourhood. It was heartening to see such compassion and motivation from the younger generation.

A poor migrant family who live in a remote location with no access to healthcare were able to get their children tested for sickle cell anaemia. With the availability of the D10 machine we were able to test these children at low cost (£2) whereas the market rate is £12. Following a positive test, the children were enrolled by the CCH team to the government

scheme so that they can receive benefits of £10 per month and free blood transfusions if they are in a crisis. With 12% of the 1.6 million population affected by sickle cell disease we hope to reach as many people as possible with the tests so that they can receive the same benefits.

During the year we have carried out a large

number of tests and many patients have benefitted. These machines have improved the quality of our testing whilst reducing the burden on our patients who would otherwise have to travel long distances to get these tests done. Our grateful thanks to Friends of Vellore UK for their generosity in providing this equipment.



Raman and Saritha with their son



Raman, Saritha and their son with the palliative care team

## Not to be served but to serve

A visit to the alma mater is always accompanied with nostalgic memories of the years spent in undergraduate and postgraduate training in Vellore. My visit in January this year, to represent the Friends of Vellore UK at the CMC Council meetings, was no different. In addition to attending the CMC Council meetings, Ruth and I visited some of the projects that FOV UK has been involved with at CMC.

The first day of our visit, I accompanied the palliative care team on a home visit they were making to one of their patients. Raman\* was around 35 years old and was a manual labourer, living in a village near Chittoor on the Chennai-Bengaluru Highway. Raman came to CMC after seeking medical help at government hospitals in Vellore and Pondicherry where he was turned down for any further treatment. He had metastatic cancer involving the lymph glands in his neck, arising from a primary nasopharyngeal carcinoma. He presented with a large, fungating mass in the right side of his neck which was inoperable.

Raman was admitted to CMC under the care of the Palliative Care Department and a referral was made to the Radiotherapy Department. He underwent palliative radiotherapy to the neck mass and was discharged home after the radiotherapy was completed. His care was taken over by the palliative care team who taught his wife how to manage his neck dressings at home.

Raman and his wife Saritha\* live in a two-

room brick house which has an outside bathroom and toilet. Raman was getting increasingly frail with his metastatic cancer and had very limited mobility. He could just about get himself to the toilet and bathroom outside the house. His appetite had decreased, and he was having difficulty swallowing food, so his diet had to be restricted to liquids and semi-solid foods. His wife now was the sole bread winner. He had three children all under the age of 12 who attended the local school. Saritha had to look after Raman, the three boys and manage a full-time job. If she didn't go to work, they would have no money for their daily food and existence. She works as a daily labourer at a local distillery earning about £5 a day!

The palliative care team involved in the home visit that day included a doctor, a nurse and a social worker. The doctor examined Raman and reviewed his medication, making alterations to ensure better control of his pain. The nurse supervised Raman's wife doing his dressings and taught her some simple improvements in managing his neck wound.

She also taught him some exercises for his neck to keep his neck mobile. The social worker inspected the house and their lodgings and made suggestions to the layout of the house that would help Raman getting around his home, given his limited mobility. This included some modifications and necessitated monetary help from the Palliative Care Department. Having spent over an hour in Raman's home, attending to his needs and helping to make him more comfortable in the few weeks that he had left to live, we left leaving Raman and Saritha in a much better situation than when we arrived.

The palliative care team truly live out the institution's motto 'Not to be served but to serve', as they demonstrated Christ's love, compassion and empathy towards Raman and his family, who represent the poor and marginalised in society.

Written by Dayalan Clarke, MBBS batch of 1977 and Chair of Friends of Vellore UK.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



The living and sleeping area in Raman's home



The cooking area

# Highlights from the Hills

The hilly terrain in the Jawadhi Hills makes access to healthcare and other facilities difficult. Around 80,000 people live in this remote region in Tamil Nadu, 37 miles from Vellore, with some of the villages accessible only by dirt tracks.

CMC's Community Health and Development team is working in the area to improve health and to provide development opportunities. We are delighted to be working with them on this mission and to be able to provide an update on the work we are funding here.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH:** Community health workers bridge the gap between the local tribal community and the CMC medical team. We pay the salaries for 11 of the 22 community health workers in the Jawadhi Hills, who are integral to improving healthcare in the region. These workers are young people from the Jawadhi Hills. So, the role not only benefits their communities but also provides young locals with training and employment.

**OPHTHALMOLOGY:** CMC run a vision centre in Jawadhi Hills five days a week and conduct monthly eye camps in villages across the region. For the past year, CMC has employed two field workers to help with eye related work. Friends of Vellore UK are funding their second year. The field workers are local men from Jawadhi. They travel to various villages and hamlets to identify people with eye problems and refer them for further assessment and treatment. They also assist the optometrist in the vision centre one day a week.

**YOUTH GROUPS:** These groups occupy young people in the evenings

with sport and physical activity. The purpose is to decrease indulgence in alcohol and prevent early initiation into substance use due to boredom. There are no cinemas, libraries, clubs, or organised games in Jawadhi, so this work provides a much-needed service for young people. Currently running in six villages, the groups promote a healthy lifestyle including good eating habits and physical activity and encourage social responsibility with activities such as tree-planting and village cleaning.

**STUDENTS:** CMC help young people from the Jawadhi Hills to apply for nursing or allied health science courses. We are currently sponsoring seven students, six on nursing courses and one studying to become an X-ray technician. The students are from farming families who are struggling financially and so need help with their tuition fees and meagre living expenses. All the students cite financially helping their families as a reason for wanting to study. They hope to gain the skills and qualifications needed to find a stable and fulfilling job. Some students want to study so that their families can rely on them for financial support and avoid taking on risky migrant work overseas or in different states. We are proud to support this work with help from some wonderful individual and church supporters in the UK.



Some of the community health workers



One of the Jawadhi eye workers



Youth group volleyball tournament

## Annual Supporters' Meeting: Sunday 6 October

Our annual meeting for all supporters of Friends of Vellore UK is on Sunday 6 October 2024. This is an opportunity for you to hear more about our projects at CMC Vellore and its associated mission hospitals, as well as providing an opportunity to meet other supporters and CMC Alumni.

This meeting will be held in Coventry to coincide with the end of the CMC UK Alumni reunion. We are at the same venue as last year: the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Coventry, CV2 2ST (just off Junction 2 of the M6).

The timetable for the morning is as follows:

- 9:30am Sunday Chapel Service
- 11:00am Tea/Coffee
- 11:30am FOV Annual Supporters Meeting
- 1:00pm Indian Lunch

Those attending on the day are welcome to join us for the service or to arrive in the coffee break in time for the meeting itself. We would love to see many of you there. If you are able to attend, please go to: <https://friendsofvellore.org/asmbookingform/> so we have an idea of numbers or contact the office.

# Dr Lily Easterine Devaranjini Mills-Clarke

Easterine Mills was born in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday 17 April 1949, to Rev Jeyam Mills and Mrs Lily Navamany Mills. She was the second of five children.



Lily Easterine Mills-Clarke



Easterine with her batch mates at their 2015 reunion

Easterine joined CMC in 1970 to study medicine. She threw herself into student life with her innate verve and enthusiasm. She was happy-go-lucky, flamboyantly friendly to one and all, forever with a broad grin on her face, a characteristic laugh and boisterous to the point of being called tomboyish. She was a basketball player, loved all sports, and, as the self-appointed cheerleader, travelled with the various College teams for their away matches.

She had strong faith and was a faithful member of the Student Christian Movement. An accomplished pianist, endowed with a strong alto voice, she was a regular member of the college choir and, often, a substitute organist. With her instinctive creativity and sense of fun, she was very much the life and soul of any party. In spite of her immersion in these extra-curricular activities, she was a serious student, completing the MBBS course on schedule.

Having qualified as a medical doctor in 1975, she served in Batticaloa before she moved to London in 1979. Sadly, insurmountable difficulties with medical registration and practice in the UK constrained her to move into other areas of work. Despite many disappointments, she continued to live with her usual vivacity and graciousness, availing of nonmedical options enthusiastically and to the best of her ability.

Her home in London was a stopping place for anyone who was visiting. She was a much loved 'aunt' for the children of alumni or family and friends from Sri Lanka who visited

or came to study. Her generosity and kindness were boundless. She was a faithful member of St Nicholas Church Deptford where she served as organist, pianist, bible study leader and parish council member.

Her marriage to speedway driver Tony Clarke brought stability to her life and she took great care of him during his terminal illness. After his death, she moved from London to Anglesey in Wales, where the air quality was much better for her failing lungs. She continued to live with zest, making new friends, who were a big support as her progressive illness made her increasingly dependent. Coming to terms with her decline, she planned and travelled overseas to visit friends and join in family occasions, doing all the things she felt were important to do.



Easterine with some of her classmates

Easterine's love for sports and games never left her. She kept detailed Excel sheets for World Cup football, cricket, and tennis at Wimbledon, predicting the likely outcomes. She was working with these

even during her final hospital admission.

The UK Alumni Association and Friends of Vellore UK were a big part of her life. She served as Treasurer of both and Secretary of the Alumni Association, organising and maintaining contact with alumni, especially welcoming younger and newer members who were coming to the UK for study or work. Many alumni would remember her enthusiasm and hard work to organise the UK Alumni Association's Golden Jubilee in 2022; this despite being on oxygen support for unrelenting chronic lung disease superimposed on congenital hypertrophic cardiomyopathy which finally carried her away.

Easterine was a person who drove through life with gusto, just like she drove her much-loved car. She never grumbled at 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' but lived with exemplary courage, determination, generosity, and good humour.

Dr Easterine Mills-Clarke passed away peacefully on 31 October 2023 after a brief stay in hospital. She will be greatly missed by many people, including her sister and three brothers. We thank God for the many ways he used her in his service and take comfort in knowing that she now rests in the Lord's presence, her eternal heavenly home.

Thank you to Dr Sara Bhattacharji and some of Easterine's CMC classmates for their contributions to this obituary.



# Bridging the gap for Raghav

51-year-old Raghav\* and his family live in a small village near Vellore. The family own a few cows and earn their living from selling milk every day. Raghav's only son works in a shoe factory.

Last year, Raghav felt his legs getting stiff and the tightness worsened progressively. He struggled to walk, bend down or squat. Over time, the stiffness spread to his hands. He found it hard to hold anything or even eat with his fingers. Eventually, he could not move and was confined to his bed for six months. Raghav's son had to leave his job to care for him. Treatment from a nearby hospital did not help him to get better.

His family brought him to CMC Vellore where he was seen by specialists in various departments for diabetes and kidney disease. He was admitted to bring his sugars and urinary infection under control. A month later, he was well enough to receive surgery to treat cervical spondylotic myelopathy, an age-related degenerative condition.

The compression of his spinal cord resulted in his stiff limbs and walking problems. Raghav had a decompression surgery to help him regain his mobility. He recovered well and is now able to sit up and walk slowly. He was advised to have physiotherapy and continues to visit CMC for regular check-ups.

Raghav contributed as much as he could towards the surgery. The rest was covered by PTP and CMC's charitable funds.

CMC's dream is to never have to turn away anyone in need. Concessions and free treatment are made available according to need, amounting to around 15% of CMC's budget. CMC operates several charity schemes including the Person-to-Person fund and the Emergency fund, as well as providing low-cost accommodation and free meal schemes. But these schemes always need more funds if CMC is to continue to be able to help all those that need it.

*\*Patient details shared with consent & name changed to protect their privacy.*



Raghav with his wife

## A gift that endures

### Would you consider writing the future of CMC Vellore into your Will?

Writing your Will is a very personal experience, and we understand your loved ones come first. Once you've taken care of your loved ones in your Will, leaving a small percentage of your estate or a cash gift, to Friends of Vellore UK, could make a lasting difference.

Whether you are passionate about access to healthcare or want to give back to CMC, it is with the help of individuals that Friends of Vellore UK has been playing a vital role in the development of CMC since the 1940s.

We want to be here in years to come and although India seemingly grows more wealthy by the day, still the problems and demands of the poor outstrip this growth. There is truly no sense in which the need for Friends of Vellore is completed. There

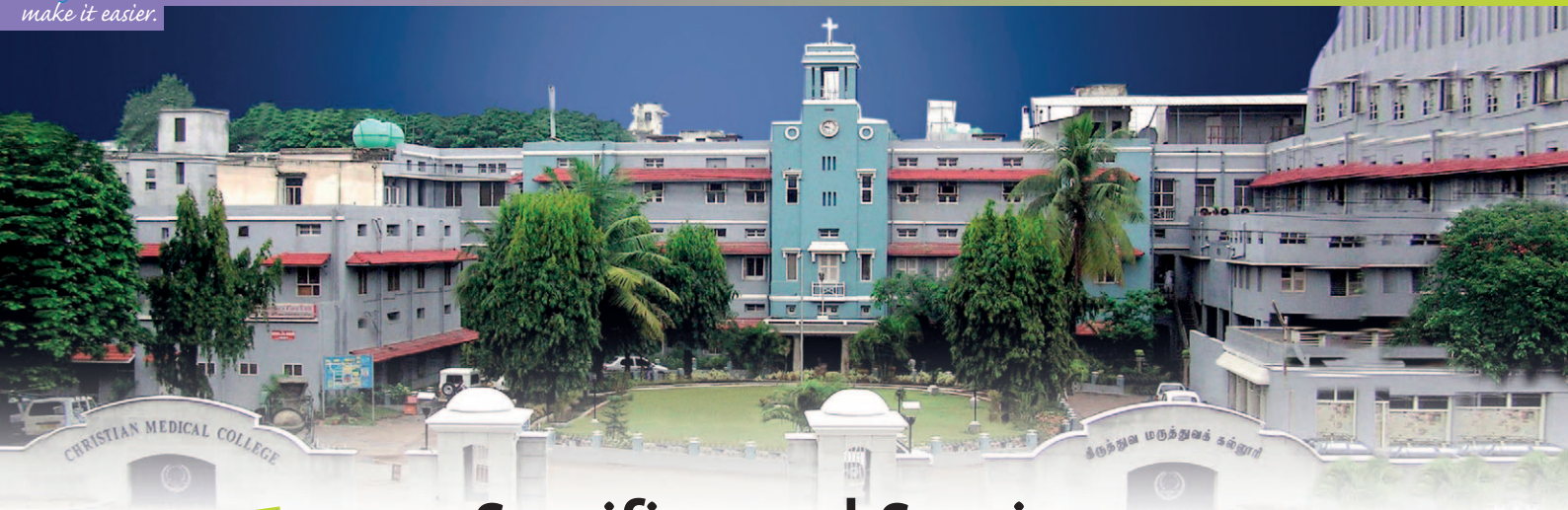
is still much work to be done.

If you would like to leave a donation or a small percentage of your estate to Friends of Vellore and have an existing Will, you can find guidance on our website: [www.friendsofvellore.org/get-involved/legacies](http://www.friendsofvellore.org/get-involved/legacies)

If you don't yet have a Will, Friends of Vellore UK have teamed up with Bequeathed who offer a free Will-writing service. The link to their website is: [www.bequeathed.org/fovuk](http://www.bequeathed.org/fovuk)

A gift in your Will can make a lasting difference to CMC. We hope you will consider this life-changing decision to leave a gift that will have a positive impact on generations to come.

If you have any questions about leaving a legacy, please get in touch with Georgina Crawford, Fundraiser at Friends of Vellore UK: [georgina@friendsofvellore.org](mailto:georgina@friendsofvellore.org)



## Sacrifice and Service



Mary Green peacefully passed away at home (York, England) on 28 December 2023, at the age of 94. In 1955 she set sail on a three-week voyage to Vellore, India as a physiotherapist, for what she thought would be the rest of her life. Whilst the Lord only had Mary at CMC for 5 years, these were formative years.

The Lord saved Mary (nee Tatchell) when she was 11. At age 15, after hearing a medical missionary from India speak, the Lord placed this same calling on Mary's life. She began training as a nurse, believing this would be the means the Lord would use to send her to India. After several failed attempts in nursing, she transferred and qualified as a physio. Looking back, this obstacle was intended by the Lord as she was to move to CMC to work as Baptist Missionary Society's first physio.

Mary sailed to India on 14 October 1955, leaving behind family, friends, familiar surroundings, and the majority of her belongings (that hadn't arrived at the port!) She saw this as a test from the Lord and was willing to faithfully serve the Lord - whatever the cost. A couple of years earlier she described a similar testing when she made the hard decision to end her relationship with David Green. Whilst she loved David, he wasn't called to the mission field, but she remained willing to go - whatever the cost. Mary, however, didn't know then that Lord had other plans. After 5 years of working in CMC she contracted TB and was sent home early on furlough. Whilst she was home, she reunited with David and they both clearly saw the Lord bringing them together. David was pastoring a church in the UK; after they married Mary spent the rest of her days in the UK, as a pastor's wife. Much of their ministry was with international students - Mary knew India had prepared her for this.



Mary in 1955



Mary at CMC Hospital in 1956



Mary in Vellore

Mary was an extremely humble woman and was well aware of her need for her Saviour to the very end of her life. Whilst it is easy to look at Mary's life with admiration, that is the last thing she would have wanted – the only reason she was willing to sacrifice so much for the Lord was because she knew with all her heart the greater sacrifice Jesus had made for her. The childlike faith she was given at age 11 grew in a deeper knowledge and understanding of Jesus' love for her; that while she was a sinner, Christ died for her, that on the third day Jesus rose from the grave, conquering death and making a way for her to be reconciled with God. Mary was fully convinced that this gospel message was not to be kept to herself but shared with a dying world. This took her to India, to share the hope of Jesus with those who had never heard.

Mary recalled a wonderful testimony of one patient who had come to CMC from North India. This woman exclaimed that she was going home with two new hearts; "one given by the doctor, and one given by the Lord because I leave knowing Jesus!" It is only Jesus that can transform a heart of stone to a heart of flesh. May we all also testify to having a new heart, through Jesus, and spend our lives sharing the hope of the gospel with those who need to hear.

*This article was written by Mary's granddaughter, Emily Green.*

# DONATION FORM



Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Email ..... *(saves postage on donation acknowledgements)*

I enclose my donation of £ ..... *(please make cheques payable to Friends of Vellore UK)*

I have made an internet bank transfer of £ ..... *(Sort Code: 40-02-13, Account No: 41865986)*

*If you wish to set up a standing order, please complete the form below.*

I am eligible for Gift Aid and have registered with the Charity

*Please complete the declaration below if you are a taxpayer and have not registered.*

Optional: Please use my gift to support .....

*Name the area of work you wish to help, eg PTP, RUHSA, LCECU, Palliative Care, Mission*

We would love to keep you updated about the work of Friends of Vellore. We promise to keep your details safe and secure, and will never sell your data. To join our mailing list, simply tick the appropriate boxes below. You can unsubscribe at any time by emailing [friendsofvellore@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofvellore@gmail.com) or writing to us. For further details on how your data is used and stored: [friendsofvellore.org/privacy-policy](http://friendsofvellore.org/privacy-policy)

I would like to receive newsletters and updates from Friends of Vellore via:

Post  Email  Both  *(A postal newsletter enables you to pass it on to others who may be interested.)*

## GIFT AID DECLARATION

I want to Gift Aid this donation, and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past four years, to Friends of Vellore UK. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signed ..... Date .....

*Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or you no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.*

## BANK STANDING ORDER FORM

To: The Manager of ..... Bank

Address: .....

..... Postcode .....

Please pay Friends of Vellore UK at HSBC, 281 Chiswick High Road, Chiswick, London, W4 4HJ

Account No: 41865986, Sort Code: 40-02-13, the sum of

£ ..... (figures) ..... (words)

on the ..... day of ..... (month) 20 ..... every month / quarter / year

up to and including the year ..... or until further notice.

My bank sort code ..... My account number .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Thank you for your donation. Please send your completed form to: Friends of Vellore, 2A Chalk Lane, Cockfosters, Barnet, EN4 9JQ. We will forward the standing order details onto your bank on your behalf.

Friends of  
**Vellore** <sup>UK</sup> 

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