

NEWSLETTER: APRIL 2011

# Karunai Illam Trust

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[www.karunai-illam.org](http://www.karunai-illam.org)



## Dear supporters and friends,

Welcome to this first newsletter of the year. As they would say in India: "Sorry for the late"!

Automatic payment supporters; please notice that your receipt is with this newsletter. If you have any queries regarding the receipts, please contact Beth by email at:

[e\\_m\\_drummond@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:e_m_drummond@yahoo.co.nz) or phone:

(04) 4725589.

## Contributors evening

This year's contributors' gathering will be different: we hope it will let you bring friends who might be interested in becoming contributors to Jean's Illam in South India.

More information on this exciting evening in the adjoining text box!

Special event: please come and invite friends too!

WOSOSI singing followed by Illam children tell their stories through video.

Sunday 22 May, 4 p.m

Venue: The New Crossways, Level 1 – 6 Roxburgh St, Mt Victoria

**Admission: Koha – Light refreshments provided, contributions to food welcome**

For 20 minutes, we'll listen to **WOSOSI** - a dynamic a cappella ensemble who enjoy exploring the world's rich singing traditions. They pay particular attention to conveying the appropriate intention and wairua of the song.

Jean will then briefly outline the Illam project, and introduce **Angela Fraser** who has just spent a month at the Illam. After Afternoon Tea, Angela will play a 20-minute video in which the **children tell their stories in English** in their own words.

**Please help** by introducing new contributors who are needed to enlarge the important work of the Karunai Illam Trust for poor children in India.

## News from Nilakottai

Angela recently spent a month at the Illam. How fortunate for us all that she has brought back such an interesting account and has put a great deal of work into collecting stories of the children's lives.

An account of her stay is below:

"This year I visited our project in Nilakottai from early February and stayed four weeks. This was a good time of year to visit as there were no public holidays and everyone was in their normal routine. There were exams going on towards the end so everyone was studying hard, especially the older students sitting external exams.

There are currently 33 children and the school had expanded to around 115 with the oldest children now in the 2<sup>nd</sup> standard. The main Illam building has been transformed with a new roof and renovations and we now accommodate the LIFE Centre (i.e. the Community College) in one of the two large rooms at the Illam.

Previously it had been in the center of town. The new LIFE setup was great with lots of space compared with the previous place. It was really nice having a steady flow of women attending the tailoring courses and the highlight for me was seeing our children having regular access to the computers.

*Continued on next page.*



The girls were very proud of their new room and the changes that had been made to the entrances worked very well. Their room is also used for large functions and they keep it very tidy with a large cupboard for each girl. The new roof and internal ceilings were very effective at reducing the temperature and the place was newly painted and felt fresh and clean.

I planned to make a movie this year that told some of the children's stories and background as to why they were there. I was interested in the newer children who had joined since the DHAN Foundation became our partners in 2007. The first step was to get them to write their stories in Tamil. My initial briefing was quite casual however within a day of mentioning my idea I was presented with a pile of stories from every child.

The next stage was to get the stories translated into English. I got help from Raghini, Deva, Khader, and Darvi who is the new assistant principal at the school. Nagarathinam also helped clarify some things as she knew a lot about the children's backgrounds however her English is limited.

I typed the stories into Word then worked with each child and a group of other children who helped with the pronunciation. I often had to edit the story to simplify as they got stuck on unfamiliar or hard to pronounce words.

I recorded each story sentence by sentence and they read from the laptop screen. I used the evenings to combine and clean up the audio. Since returning I have now overlaid the stories with video and photographs. I completed twelve stories and a few of them are reproduced in this newsletter.

**My name is Dhanaselvi.** I am 11. My father's name is Chinnapandi and my mother's name is Vasantha. My two older sisters are Kanagavalli and Pandiselvi. My father died before I was born. I studied up to 5<sup>th</sup> standard at Soundara



Pandian Primary School at Kurumbapatti which is about 7 kilometers from Nilakottai. When I was three I asked my mother about a photograph on the wall. My mother told me that was my father. My mother wept when she told me. My sisters knew my father and said he was very loving to my second sister. Sadly I did not know my father. Because of the shock of my father's death my second sister became paralyzed. She can't walk normally and often falls down. Mr Senthamil from my village told us

about this Illam. We applied and I was offered a place. Now I am studying in the 6<sup>th</sup> Standard. I am having a peaceful and happy life at Karunai Illam. If the Karunai Illam had not given me this chance I would have ended my education and be working as a coolie like my mother.

**My name is Anushya.** I am 14 years old. My father's name is Murugan and my mother's name is Mageswari. My sister's name is Pandiswari. She is 15. I first lived in a village called Uppukottai. My father died from fever when I was 10.

After that my family lived in my grandmother's village. My mother started work as an agricultural coolie. My uncle bought us a cow. In 2010 my uncle brought me to the Karunai Illam. I was given a place because of my good marks and poor family. Now I am studying in the 9th standard. I am studying well. My aim is to join the police. My sister wants to be a doctor. That was my father's dream for us. I hope I can make his dream come true.





**My name is Karthik.** I am 14. My father's name is Muthupandi and my mother's name is Subhulaksmi. I have one elder sister and one younger brother. My father died from AIDS when I was eight. When I was 12 my mother also died from AIDS. I came to the Illam in 2010. Now I am studying in the 9th standard. Before I came to the Illam I lived with my grandmother. She is very old and poor. She could no longer support me to study. I heard about the Illam from Arumugam. He is from my village. He is an old student of the Illam.

The Illam is very good. Everything is provided. I am given a lot of support. In the future I would like to join the Police. When I have a job I will help the Illam children. I am very happy to be here at the Illam.



**My name is Ajith Kumar.** I am 15. I am in the 9<sup>th</sup> standard. I come from Pudupatti. My father's name is Ravi and my mother's name is Baby. When I was 4 my mother died from fever. My father remarried. My stepmother's name is Chithra. My younger brother's name is Arunkumar. He is 10. My younger sister's name is Arunadevi. She is 7. My father died in a van accident in 2008 when I was 12. My stepmother is a  
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Kalanjiam member so she heard about the Illam. I joined the Illam in 2009 in the 8<sup>th</sup> standard. I am studying well and came second place in my class. I got a prize for my achievements. In the future I want to become a computer engineer. I would like to help places like the Illam educate poor children. I want to thank Jean Aunty and the other supporters for helping me with my education.



DVD's can be ordered from Angela.  
She is making copies available for \$10  
(includes the postage) \$5 will go to the Illam.

**Angela Fraser, 13 Wilton St, Grey Lynn, Auckland 1021, phone (09) 3763550 or email: [angelangelfraser@gmail.com](mailto:angelangelfraser@gmail.com)**

## Artwork at LIFE center

Also, with input from the LIFE center and the school Angela organised saleable artwork in the form of small purses/pencil cases decorated with the children's drawings. They are very nice indeed and cost 10 rupees to make. They will be able to sell them locally for 15 rupees.

*"I had some drawing sessions with the children as well as doing one with some 5 year olds at the school. I gave them the shape of the purse to trace around and within a short time had a lovely pile of drawings. I photographed them with my digital camera and combined them to one file in Photoshop and got more printed out. They were all very excited to see their drawings reproduced with the digital printing and one little girl in the school came up to me a number of times with a handful of coins saying "Aunty, tomorrow I buy", so I am sure there will be interest from the large community surrounding our school.*

*My visit was very busy, social and creative and I had a heartfelt time with all our children and the fabulous team of people running our project. "*

## Garden update

Mr Khader says in his monthly report:

*"Jasmine numbers 30 plants planted by children in the presence of M/s. Angela at her cost and every one made responsible for specific plant for proper maintenance of the flower plants. Vegetables and jasmine are coming up in the garden. Further the plants and fruits trees planted by our guests are properly take care of at the garden."*



## Note from Raghini

“We felt quite worried on hearing the news about the earthquake in Wellington and again after Angela's message that all of you are safe we felt relieved. I hope that it is the last of the earthquakes and tremors for a long, long time from now.

We were relieved to hear that you were safe from Angela as soon as we got the news of the earthquake at Christchurch including our children at the Illam. We hope that none of our supporters are affected. Our best wishes and prayers are for the affected people, and to your country at this time of calamity.

After the earthquake in our newspapers in the editorial there was a lot of praise for the building code its quality and level of adherence by the people, which was responsible for containing the extent of devastation. Had a similar intensity earthquake hit a developing country or India the damage and loss of life would have been catastrophic. Warm regards from all of us at DHAN”.

Raghini

## IRD payroll giving

Payroll Giving is a new way of making donations to organisations of your choice. You will be able to make a donation directly from your pay and receive a third back as a tax credit in the same pay period. KIT is a registered donee organisation with IRD and we are now listed for such payroll giving.

### Claiming tax

Currently, if you make a charitable donation you can claim your tax back on it at the end of each tax year. To do this, you need to keep your receipts and claim your tax refund at the end of the year - but most of us don't.

The great thing about Payroll Giving is that you don't have to do this. Instead, Inland Revenue will automatically credit the tax you paid on your donation (33.3%) back to you in your next pay. This means you end up getting the tax back on your donation at the time you make it.

You still choose how much to contribute. As you are aware every cent and dollar counts for the work we do. Your HR payroll administrator at work should be able to help set this up for you.

## Illam activity in New Zealand

### Our gathering at Auckland

As I regularly go to Auckland to visit family and friends we held a small gathering of supporters at my sister's house in West Auckland. Angela lives in Auckland so she brought her DVD for us all to see. It was much appreciated.

I am planning to travel to Nilakottai towards the end of June, so you can expect the next newsletter some time in July. I will be able to give you the news of exam results and the progress of our tertiary students.

Best wishes and thanks for your continuing support.

Jean ☺



The Trustees are:

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**Sankar Ramasamy**, 52 Gordon St., Avalon, LOWER HUTT, phone 977 3634, [sankars@paradise.net.nz](mailto:sankars@paradise.net.nz)

**Jean Watson**, 41 Maida Vale Road, Roseneath, WELLINGTON 6011 [jean@actrix.gen.nz](mailto:jean@actrix.gen.nz)

(There is no office as such - correspondence is usually addressed to me at 41 Maida Vale Road, but can be addressed to any of the Trustees. Sankar is happy to be telephoned if you have any questions.)