



OCEAN STARS TRUST



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oceanstarstrust@gmail.com



@OceanStarsTrust



Ocean Stars Trust



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www.oceanstars.org.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY 1110022

Ocean Stars Trust
2 Netherhouse Moor,
Church Crookham, Fleet,
Hants.
GU51 5TY .

Phone: 01252 692248
Mobile: 07989 432118

VANNAKAM
AYUBOWANG
WELCOME

OCEAN STARS
S R I L A N K A

20 YEARS!

Ocean Stars Trust UK Registered Charity Number 1110022



LATEST NEWS

Celebration events held in the UK and Sri Lanka to mark our 20 years of operation in 2025.

20 volunteers from the UK visited Sri Lanka in October 2025 and over 10,000 students and families were impacted by this visit.

Over 1,000 children assessed as part of our Child Development Programme and Data used to monitor and raise standards.

Over 62,520 nutritious meals have been provided by our Feeding Programmes to preschool children in remote communities in 2025.

3 Hope House projects continue to provide village women with skills that empower them to set up their own business.

OST Trustees met for their annual Strategy Planning Day in September and agreed on the Action Plan for the year ahead.

A residential Teacher Training was held for 70 Ocean Stars teachers in July 2025 funded by Fonthill Foundation UK.

A sponsor child has just started University to study medicine.



As Chair of the OST Trustee Board, I send Seasonal Greetings to all our friends and supporters, far and wide! 2025 really has been a momentous year for the charity. In our last Newsletter we reported at length about the 20th Anniversary Dinner, but that very enjoyable evening was merely a part of a range of events, ambitiously referred to as "20 Fundraising Events for 20 Years". Many of you will have participated in some of them – the January Quiz, the September Curry Evening/Book Launch, the Tennis event, coffee mornings and some of the sponsored actions of students from Calthorpe Park School. Add to this the new support from the Mint Church, Exeter and St John's Church Hook, Jo and Janine's sponsored Suffolk bike ride, and ongoing ventures from other local schools, and we have a picture of much new involvement in OST.

What is more, Dilanee has been very active in giving presentations in new areas of the country—Exeter, Hertfordshire, to name a few, with one in a Birmingham church to come.

In our use of funds, we have been able to finance an unprecedented number of preschool children with a morning meal – thanks to one very generous supporter – and have delivered Teacher Training events, which, coupled with our Child Development Programme, continue to offer a high-quality experience to over 30 preschools in our designated communities. Equally we have been able to give much-needed financial support to children in our sponsorship schemes. And we are delighted to work with our Ocean Stars Lanka staff in Batticaloa, who are still doing an excellent job in delivering our agenda on the ground.

On the Trustee Board, we have recently said a sad farewell to Jenny Gilbert who has served with us splendidly for 10 years bringing valuable expertise. Equally we thank Denise Barnes for her amazing two years of very active fundraising, in particular the Tennis event and the Ceilidh of last year. We welcome in their place Janine Dunbar, who has been there with us in support from the very beginning, and we look forward to adding further new Trustees in the near future.

As ever, we thank you all enormously for your ongoing support over 2025, and of course also in previous years.

John Bunter, OST Chair.



CALTHORPE PARK SCHOOL TEAM 2025 RETURN TO SRI LANKA FOR THEIR 9TH VISIT TO LINK SCHOOLS, OCEAN STARS PRESCHOOLS, PROJECTS AND SIGHTSEEING. HERE ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS.



Congratulations to Calthorpe School Team 2025 for their fundraising for the work of Ocean Stars Trust. Over a period of 18 months the Team of 9 students raised huge funds for the work of Ocean Stars Trust. A cheque for £12,106.00 was handed to John Bunter, Chair of OST, by the Team and the Headteacher Mr Kevan John. The total has subsequently risen and funds are still coming in. The Team were able to witness first-hand how their funds are used by Ocean Stars

to empower children through education. Mr John commented to the students and parents at the final packing evening: "When our students travel to SL to work alongside the children and families supported by Ocean Stars they embark on a journey that leaves a lasting imprint on their hearts and minds. The forthcoming trip will offer immersive experiences that broaden our students' perspectives and teach invaluable lessons in resilience, empathy, and global citizenship. They will witness first-hand the joy and gratitude of those they support and return home enriched by the spirit of connection and community." We would like to thank Mr John and the whole Calthorpe Park School community for their ongoing support for our work.

Students from Team 2025 reflect on their trip: "I saw so much and did so much I am blown away", "The trip is incredible", "I can't put into words there is so much to talk about", "I can talk about this trip for hours", "We are going to miss this trip so much", "To see where our fundraising money has gone was amazing", "The Sri Lankan students were so welcoming, warm and friendly. We were treated like royalty", "This once in a lifetime trip was incredible", "We will never forget this trip." **Parents from Team 2025 had this to say:** "My daughter had an amazing trip", "Memories of a lifetime have been made", "We cannot express our gratitude enough", "I really appreciate all the hard work that goes on behind the scene and the energy of the dedicated staff team."



SOUND SYSTEM

Some of the money that the students raised went towards purchasing 10 whiteboards for the T/AI- Azhar Muslim Maha Vidyalam Vellaimanal, providing electricity and water for Ammankulam preschool, as well as supporting the ongoing costs of their link preschools. A sound system was also purchased for Urani school. These gifts transformed the lives of hundreds of children and enables us to continue with our mission of empowering children

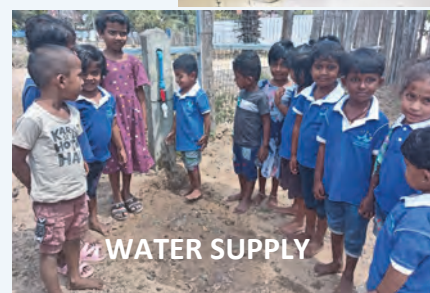


WHITE BOARD



ELECTRICITY

through education. The students appreciated seeing the impact of their fundraising.



WATER SUPPLY

BACS DONATIONS

If you would like to make a donation by BACS please use the following details :

Account Name: Ocean Stars Trust **Sort Code:** 30-93-32

Account Number: 02662990

Reference: Gift

Our Vision is a Sri Lanka where every child has equal opportunity.

Donate £10 towards our ongoing work in Sri Lanka by
TEXTING oceanstarstrust to 70085

(Texts cost £10 plus one standard network rate message).

TEAM 2 WERE ALSO BUSY VISITING PRESCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS ALONGSIDE THE TEAM FROM CALTHORPE PARK SCHOOL.

<https://oceanstars.org.uk/blog/sri-lanka-2025>



Some Members of Team 2 reflect on the trip:

Helen: During this trip I have seen first-hand Ocean Stars building connection and friendship across diverse groups of people.

Radiating joy - so evident in the smiles of the people we have worked with - across all schools, the Hope House

project, the sponsor children, parents and teachers. And finally I can see how the Ocean Stars Family helps to sustain hope for the disadvantaged people and communities it serves, giving them the opportunity to spread their wings and fly - like the hundreds of butterflies Team 2 has collectively helped to create. Post Tsunami and War, this sense of hope is almost tangible. For me, Sri Lanka, my birthplace, is a country that feeds the soul, and OSL is a part of that nourishment.



Judy: Meeting a sponsor child who was just off to University was a true highlight for me. I asked him if he had a message for potential sponsors back in the UK. Being a poet myself I was blown away by his response. "If you plant a seed it will be a tree one day. If you help others, then the tree will help others." I then asked him if he had a message for children who are currently being sponsored and he said, "The sponsor is giving you hope. Don't waste this opportunity. Give back hope to Ocean Stars and pass on this hope to others." I will take away memories of all the good-hearted volunteers whose work I found inspiring.

Lorna: Listening to speeches from past sponsor children was inspirational. The Ocean Stars Lanka Team were simply amazing. I feel like they are my Sri Lanka family. I loved every minute of visiting the preschools.

Team 2 visit preschools: Over 500 children in 12 preschools had an enjoyable morning with our Ocean Stars visitors. The book chosen as the theme for the visit was "The Very Hungry Caterpillar". 900 caterpillar hats made their way to SL along with 400 teddies. Our preschool children had great fun listening to the story, pretending to be butterflies, blowing bubbles, dancing, colouring in, playing with bean bags and Mega Bloks, and singing the signature Hokey Cokey song.





Amali Bunter and Cameron Williams two Ocean Stars Trustees travelled to Sri Lanka in October 2025 and reflect on their trip seeing the work on the ground following decisions taken at Trustee meetings.

From Amali: It was great to return to Sri Lanka and visit the Ocean Stars Lanka team after 6 years. In this time the OSL team has faced the covid-19 pandemic, an ongoing economic crisis and changes in government. Despite the hurdles of the last few years, it is clear to see that Ocean Stars has continued to be a consistent presence and support for children, families and communities across Sri Lanka. We have seen sponsorship children grow into young adults going on to pursue careers, and women of the Hope House programmes gaining skills to achieve further employment. It was a privilege to visit the people and programmes of Ocean Stars and to see the amount of work that goes in from the OSL team to ensure that the money received from donors in the U.K. and beyond is spent to maximise reach and impact. The volunteer teams this year brought so much energy to the week and embraced the varied and busy schedule. It was great to spend time with everyone involved and really felt like a reflection of our mission – “to share friendship, hope and joy”.



From Cameron: After 6 years away from the home of Ocean Stars, this October/November I was lucky enough to return to that special island of Sri Lanka and see more of our wonderful eastern gem of Batticaloa, and this time with the focus of a Trustee. The agenda for the trip was centrally to see first-hand the work I hear so much about year round in our trustee meetings; the Calthorpe Park School trip, the Team 2, educational and community development projects visit whilst meeting our Sri Lanka team in-person for the first time.

Highlights Meetings with NGOs and local government - learning from those working in similar spaces and sharing understanding with stakeholders that can help us grow our impact meetings with Dream Space Productions, Link School visits, Deaf Link school, and visiting the preschool and Link School in Vellaimanal Trincomalee T/Al-Azar Muslim Maha Vidyalam. Final night's celebrations with everyone being together with deserved thanks to Dilanee and all of those making this all possible.

Reflections and learning The benefit of collaboration - learning what others in our space are doing, how and for what purpose and how this differs or shares similarity with our own work - so we can continue to strive and be our best. Our wonderful Ocean Stars family, incredible team, working tirelessly to deliver impactful services to those we work with and for.

Those that support us, our volunteers, donors and helpers in all that we do. Looking forward to the future - growing from our learnings and continuing to strive to make as long-lasting an impact as we can to those that we work with.

Gratitude

Thanks again to all those that make it possible, ongoing generosity enables us to continue to deliver for the families and children we work with in Sri Lanka, and without our donors all this simply could not be happening.



Our focus Areas agreed by the Trustees on our Away Day.

Focus Areas

Provision of quality education

Advocating for mainstream development in Sri Lanka

Creating opportunities and changing mindsets

Our Mission is to identify and overcome the barriers to equal opportunity for children in Sri Lanka through education and social enrichment, supporting their families and communities, sharing friendship hope and joy.

Our Vision is a Sri Lanka where every child has equal opportunity

2025 SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK

New Playground for Kurumanvely preschool donated by Mint Methodist Church Exeter.



20th Anniversary celebrations in Batticaloa, with the Governor for the Eastern Province as special guest.



Regular distribution of food parcels to our poorest preschool communities, transforming lives.



Gift Catalogue gifts bringing hope to our Ocean Stars communities.



Jo, Janine and Maureen cycled 120 miles in Suffolk and raised over £1000 for Ocean Stars.



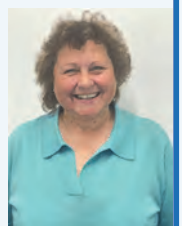
<https://oceanstars.org.uk/shop>



Jenny

TRUSTEE UPDATE: In July we said goodbye to Jenny who has been on the Trustee Board for 10 years and who started off as an Ocean Stars intern before that. We wish Jenny all the best for the future. She sent us this message: "I would like to thank you all for your support guidance and friendship over the years. It has been an absolute pleasure working with you all, and I have learnt so much from my time with Ocean Stars Trust. I will always think back on my time as Trustee fondly, with many happy memories and laughter shared with you all. It's been a real honour to be a part of such a wonderful team and charity. You all work incredibly hard and OST is thriving because of it. I look forward to seeing OST continue to develop - I will always support OST and it will always have a special place in my heart!"

In September we said goodbye to Denise who was on the Trustee Board for two years. Denise was instrumental in relaunching our website and procuring funds from grants, and she too will be missed by us.



Denise

TEACHER TRAINING FOR OUR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IS PROVIDED REGULARLY AND OUR ANNUAL 4 DAY RESIDENTIAL TEACHER TRAINING IS FUNDED BY FONTHILL FOUNDATION UK.



The teachers in our 31 preschools are pivotal to our work empowering children through education. We are very fortunate to have a team of hardworking dedicated teachers some of whom have been with us since 2005. Providing regular high-quality teacher training has been key in helping us deliver our flagship Child Development Programme. We are truly grateful to Fonthill Foundation UK who have invested in our CDP Programme from the onset. This year we have 12 extra preschools who have joined us for the Child Development Programme, so 350 more children and 24 extra teachers are also involved.

Thanks to Fonthill Foundation we have been able to conduct a residential Teacher Training for all our preschool teachers over the last 8 years. This training brings together our teachers from all over Sri Lanka. The teachers from our Colombo City Mission preschool have to travel over 10 hours across the island to attend the Teacher Training.



In 2025 our teacher training focused once again on our Child Development Programme. High-quality workshops were led by leaders in the field of child psychology and early years learning. The teachers were totally engaged in the 4 days and are always sad when the training ends. The teachers value sharing experiences and ideas, being introduced to innovative teaching methodology and just spending time together networking. The teachers had workshops on Yoga for children which now forms part of their daily routine at preschool and on nutrition where they had live demonstrations on how to make nutritious food.

Apart from the residential teacher training we conduct regular teacher training for our teachers at our Office. Before each cycle of the assessment tool teachers meet up to go through the tool and to share ideas on teaching methodology. At our Teacher Training this October we shared the story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar and the teachers came up with activities they could do with the students to develop the themes of the story. Great fun was had by everyone as butterflies were flying all over the training room.



PARENTS OF STUDENTS AT YATITANTHOTAPRESCHOOL:



"We are so happy that our children come to this preschool. The teachers are excellent and they attend teacher training so they teach in motivating ways. The feeding programme means our children have a good nutritious meal everyday. Thank you Ocean Stars".

Since 2005 around **10,000 children** who have attended OST preschools and have been provided with a high-quality Early Years education. **68 Teachers** help to provide an outstanding learning experience.

IMPACT STORIES THAT REFLECT THE TRANSFORMATIVE WORK CARRIED OUT BY OCEAN STARS TRUST IN SRI LANKA SINCE 2005.



Shivanujan was sponsored by Ocean Stars from the time he was 8 years old. Both his parents are from the hearing-impaired community so life was tough growing up. He had to be the spokesperson for his parents from a very young age. He had to go on behalf of his parents to parents' meetings, village meetings and medical appointments. Shivanujan was not trained by anyone in sign language and given support in how to communicate with his parents. They worked out their own system for communicating. He was determined to make the best use of his sponsorship money so used it entirely for educational purposes. He said that the Ocean Stars sponsorship was a major pillar in his life growing up. He passed with 9 Grade A's for his O Levels and went on to do A Levels. He excelled in his A Levels and his dreams of becoming a Doctor came true when he was accepted to study medicine. Gaining a place at University is a competitive process in Sri Lanka and securing an entry to medical school is an even more coveted prize. We are truly delighted that Shivanujan has now left his home town of Batticaloa and travelled to Galle to start his medical studies at the University of Ruhuna. We wish him all the very best with his studies.

Basith, another former sponsor child comments "My father is hearing-impaired so growing up life was very difficult for us and the sponsorship money was a lifeline for my family and provided for my education. I co-founded [Dream Space Media](#), a digital media startup focusing on constructive post-war stories in Sri Lanka. I want you to know that your support did not end with my school years. It has carried forward into my work today, helping me empower and uplift others in Sri Lanka. I am forever indebted to you for the opportunities and hope you provided me during my formative years. Your generosity has inspired me to pay it back by making a positive impact on the lives of countless others.

It has been simply wonderful to be able to attend the 20th celebration of Ocean Stars. To meet with all the people who have supported Ocean Stars over the years was a truly amazing experience. I am blown away by the support of the Fleet community for Ocean Stars. I have seen first hand all the hard work the Ocean Stars Team puts into the charity every day".

For more information about our sponsorship programme please follow this link:

<https://oceanstars.org.uk/what-we-do/sponsor-a-child-sri-lanka>



Basith with his former sponsor Ann Adams

TEACHER SPONSORSHIP

As we work towards our strategic goals of expanding our preschool support we are looking for teacher sponsors. For £25 a month you will be empowering a woman to gain employment as well providing children with the expertise of a well-motivated teacher. Kiloshana is very grateful to her sponsor for providing her with a monthly income which means that she is able to support her family. She loves her job working with young children and knowing that she has financial security motivates her even more. Maybe you would like to offer someone a gift of a teacher sponsorship? If you would like to sponsor a teacher and transform lives then please follow this link to our website.

<https://oceanstars.org.uk/what-we-do/sponsor-a-teacher-sri-lanka>

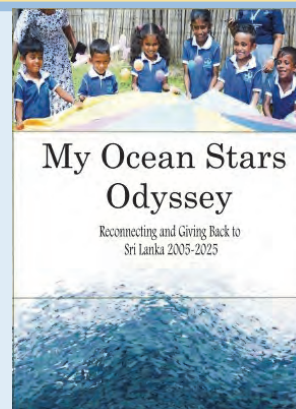


10 children and 20 teachers are currently on our sponsor waiting lists. Can you help us to transform lives? Please follow the links above to our website.



My Ocean Stars Odyssey: Dilane Bunter, Founder of Ocean Stars

Trust, who wrote the book reflects ... The journey of the last twenty years with Ocean Stars is one I felt compelled to document. It has been a deeply personal odyssey - one that began with a desire to reconnect with my roots in Sri Lanka, the country I left in 1976. For as long as I can remember, I carried a dream: to one day give back and help those in Sri Lanka who were less fortunate than me. That dream took a defining turn on Boxing Day, 2004. The devastating tsunami that struck the region also became a personal turning point - my own tsunami - and in its aftermath, Ocean Stars was born in March 2005. Over the years, many have asked when I would write a book. Now, as we mark twenty years of Ocean Stars Trust, I feel the time is right. The stories - the triumphs, challenges, and the incredible people I have met along the way - are too powerful not to be shared. Their stories are waiting to be heard.



Judy Kendall who edited the book writes in her foreword: Perhaps, like me, some of the pieces and illustrations will move you to tears. Grassroots organisations at their very best are set up by ordinary people in the areas in which they are needed. In many ways Ocean Stars fits this brief. Dilane has strong roots in Sri Lanka. She grew up there and has family there still. So it is fitting that Ocean Stars supports Sri Lankan children's education and well-being. But Ocean Stars is more than this. It is, like Dilane, a quietly phenomenal bridge-builder. Ocean Stars works in areas of Sri Lanka affected by the 2004 tsunami but also in Tamil areas affected by civil war between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Dilane is Sinhalese. This is a precious example of bridge-building.

Akshaya Suseendran who did the illustrations reflects on her work: Working on the cover was one of the most impactful parts of the project for me. The children's faces at the top, their smiling faces, watching over the dark ocean waves below, with a quiet space in between. It felt like a moment of stillness and protection. I think in that space, hope became Ocean Stars, a guiding light rising from the darkness.

My Ocean Stars Odyssey : Dilane Bunter RRP £19.99

Available online via our website <https://oceanstars.org.uk/book> or

If you wish to **pay via BACS** please email: jayddlited@gmail.com with the name and delivery address, then BACS your payment to:

Account Name: JAYDD Limited: Sort Code: 30-80-42 Bank Account: 39454668

The trading arm of Ocean Stars Trust, Jaydd Limited, processes all payments for the Ocean Stars book.



OCEAN STARS LANKA TEAM

From left to right: Salujah: Assistant Director and Finance Manager, Nishanthini: Preschool Manager and Sponsorship Supervisor, Lakshmi :Office Manager, Danushika: Sponsorship Manager,

Founder and Trustees of Ocean Stars Trust UK



From left to right: Dilane: Founder, Jo: Trustee, John: Chair of Trustee Board, Cameron: Trustee, Rachel: Trustee.

We thank you for your continuing support.