OCEAN STARS TRUST

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www.oceanstars.org.uk

CHARITY GOVERNANCE AWARDS SHORTLISTED 2023 Charity Governance Awards

VANNAKAM | AYUBOWAN | WELCOME



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

John Bunter

As another year draws to a close, I am delighted to reflect on the continuing progress of Ocean Stars Trust. The past year has been one of growth, strengthened partnerships and renewed commitment to the children, teachers and communities we support in Sri Lanka. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the dedication of our Ocean Stars Lanka team, we have continued to invest in education, nutrition and opportunities for children and families. From supporting 31 preschools and expanding our Child Development Programme to providing nutritious breakfasts, training teachers and supporting vulnerable children through sponsorship, our work continues to make a meaningful difference.

Our October visits have once again demonstrated the power of friendship and cultural exchange, bringing together young people and adults from the UK and Sri Lanka. These shared experiences remind us that Ocean Stars is about much more than education – it is about building relationships, sharing opportunities and creating hope for the future.

On behalf of the trustees, I would like to thank everyone who has supported us throughout the year. Your generosity and encouragement make our work possible.

We wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and send our warmest wishes for a peaceful, healthy and happy 2027.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR TRUSTEE

Janine Dunbar

Hello, I have supported the amazing work of Ocean Stars since the beginning so was delighted and honoured to be invited to become a trustee a year ago. It has been fascinating learning about the behind-the-scenes organisation both in the UK and in Sri Lanka, and to be involved in future planning. I have just returned from Sri Lanka, where I was looking after Team 2. It was an amazing experience as always, the smiles on the children's faces showing what a difference OST makes to their lives.

One of the highlights was meeting the lovely girls in the office who were so kind and welcoming to us all and seeing the OSL office and how it's run. It was also a pleasure to meet Basith in person. I'm looking forward to the next year as Trustee of Ocean Stars.



2026 HIGHLIGHTS

31
preschools supported across Sri Lanka

1,317
children in the CDP midline assessment

140
children sponsored by UK supporters

£26,000
raised by Calthorpe Park School, a record

32
volunteers visited our work in Sri Lanka

✓
Continued feeding and nutrition projects

OCTOBER VISIT / CALTHORPE PARK SCHOOL

Friendship across the world

Record-breaking fundraising and unforgettable memories.



Calthorpe Park School Team 2026, Sri Lanka

FUNDRAISING RECORD

£26,000

- **£1,400** First meeting
- **£8,600** Halfway
- **£26,000** Departure day

After 18 months of preparation and fundraising, the Calthorpe Park School Team 2026 finally arrived in Sri Lanka on 20 October. A team of 22 students and staff from CPS, joined by 10 volunteers from Fleet, embarked on an unforgettable adventure.

The fundraising journey was extraordinary. From their first meeting, when they had raised £1,400, to the halfway milestone of £8,600, the team continued to push themselves. By departure day, they had raised an incredible £26,000 – a new record!

IN THE STUDENTS' WORDS

CPS student

"The schools (and especially the sponsorship evening) are so fun because we get to see so many children who have had their lives changed for the better due to our funding and our involvement. I've learnt some Tamil and dance from the kids and it's so amazing how excited they are to see you. It's also been really interesting to see how others live and learn which is so different to the UK and a definite eye-opening experience, and visiting Janabdeen and Ayesha's house in Trincomalee was incredible. The visit created memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. A huge thank you to everyone who made this extraordinary trip possible."

CPS student

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I would encourage anyone in my school to go. You'll never have another experience like this."



CPS student

"The Sri Lankan students are extremely welcoming, and love to talk and get to know you – they are really grateful, and you can truly tell how much these visits mean to them."

CPS student

"It's been such a good trip that has changed the way I see the world. It's amazing to know how much of a difference we are making to the lives of these children, forging memories that will last a lifetime. All the kids are so eager and excited to participate and it feels great to know we made their day!"

The Selfish Crocodile

Team 2 brings smiles to Sri Lanka!







1,000 crocodile hats for preschool children

October also saw the arrival of our second volunteer team from Fleet. Ten volunteers joined the wider Ocean Stars group of 32, having spent months preparing for their visit.

Their special project was based around the much-loved children's story The Selfish Crocodile. The team had been busy making an amazing 1,000 crocodile hats, ready to distribute to children at our preschools.

The hats brought enormous excitement, laughter and smiles wherever the team went. Alongside the fun, the visit provided a wonderful opportunity to share stories, encourage creativity and build friendships between children in the UK and Sri Lanka.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped prepare the resources, supported the fundraising and gave their time so generously. It was a wonderful example of the joy that cultural exchange can bring.

REFLECTIONS FROM TEAM 2

Returning volunteer

"Someone asked me on the trip, 'Doesn't it feel much the same after coming back so many times?' 'Honestly,' I said, 'no.' You see every time you visit Ocean Stars you become more part of the family. You make new friendships you never expected, lifelong friendships. You see different parts of the country, visit remote preschools you never thought you could travel to and you meet young friendly children so eager to talk to you, give you a smile and excited for the activities you are doing. Imagine the faces and the excitement of 40 children when they see bubbles, the joy of colouring in a hat, and the fun of doing Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes as slowly and quickly as we can; not to mention the famous Hokey Cokey where everyone from young to old joins in, bringing a community together from across all parts of the world. That is why I want to return each year and why hopefully I will next year."

Team 2 reflection

"I was deeply inspired by the humanitarian and charitable work that you do, and I would love very much to extend a helping hand to the Ocean Stars Trust, as I believe what you provide is a truly wonderful and noble work."

Team 2 reflection

"This is a very small community preschool where even access to clean water is challenging, but good to see OST making a real difference every day. Children are healthy, happy and enjoy good nutrition each day."

Team 2 reflection

"You would think you would feel worlds apart from people on an entirely different continent, but it felt like I had known them forever!"

Team 2 reflection

"The children were lovely and very attentive. There seems to be a lot of organisation and routine to the children's morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity."

Investing in children's futures

Sponsor children, their families and the people who support them.



The Sponsorship Evening brought sponsor children and parents together.

140

children sponsored

Batticaloa	84
Trincomalee	51
Kilinochchi	4
Yatiyanthota	1

Our Child Sponsorship Programme continues to provide vital support to children from vulnerable families, helping them access additional educational opportunities and resources. As of July–August 2026, 140 children were receiving sponsorship support across four areas. The sponsorship money is paid directly into a parent or guardian's bank account, to help meet the cost of extra classes and educational resources. The sponsor children and families are regularly monitored by our staff.

Chris Fry, sponsor

"It was wonderful to meet Deborah, the girl that we sponsor, with her mother and grandmother. They welcomed us warmly into their home and we chatted about Sri Lanka and UK in terms of our families, schools, hobbies and aspirations for the future. With a love of maths and singing in common, Hope and Deborah got on instantly. They were so pleased to see each other again for the sponsorship celebration evening which was great fun (including making playdoh snakes and crocodiles) and also really inspirational to hear about the achievements of the children and young people involved."

ASHWIN'S STORY

Grade 10 student and Ocean Stars sponsorship beneficiary

Ashwin

"My name is Ashwin and I am in Grade 10. I would like to thank Ocean Stars very much for your support. I do not have a father, so this sponsorship means a great deal to me. This term, I achieved very good marks in my studies because I have been able to attend extra classes by travelling on my bicycle. I am very happy, and one day I hope to become a doctor. Thank you so much for your kindness and support."

Ashwin's story is a wonderful reminder that a bicycle is much more than a means of transport. It can open doors to education, create opportunities and help a child move closer to achieving their dreams.

TEACHER SPONSORSHIP

£25 a month

Our preschool teachers play a vital role in shaping young lives, often working in communities where resources are limited. Through our Teacher Sponsorship Programme, just £25 a month can make a real difference. By sponsoring a teacher, you invest in the education and development of the many children they teach, as well as strengthening the wider community. Could you help us make a difference for just £25 a month?

oceanstars.org.uk/what-we-do/sponsor-a-teacher-sri-lanka

oceanstars.org.uk/what-we-do/sponsor-a-child-sri-lanka

Building strong foundations

Early years education across Sri Lanka






PRESCHOOLS

Early childhood education is the foundation on which a child's future learning is built. Ocean Stars continues to support preschools in communities where access to good-quality early years education is limited.

Our work goes beyond providing a classroom. We support teachers, provide learning resources, encourage creative play and monitor children's development through our Child Development Programme.

In 2026, 1,317 children took part in our CDP midline assessment across 31 supported preschools and 15 expansion preschools. This enables us to monitor progress across six important areas of development, helping teachers identify children's strengths and areas where additional support may be needed.

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, explore and develop confidence. Our aim is to give each one the strongest possible start in life.

Teachers at Sri Murugan Preschool

"You have been a constant source of support to our school for a long time, and for that, we are truly grateful. Your continued generosity and unwavering commitment have made a lasting impact on our students, teachers, and the entire school community."

TEACHER TRAINING

Our teachers are at the heart of everything we do. In June, Ocean Stars held its annual residential teacher training programme at the Sarvodaya Centre in Sathurukondan, Batticaloa. The four-day event, from 26–29 June, brought together teachers from across several districts of Sri Lanka.

The programme provided a valuable opportunity for teachers to explore new ideas, take part in practical activities and share their experiences with colleagues, reinforcing the importance of learning through play, creativity and positive relationships with young children. The friendships formed continue long after everyone returns to their own preschools.

We are extremely grateful to the Fonthill Foundation, whose support for our teacher training programme has been invaluable since 2018.




A meal today, a brighter tomorrow





For a young child, arriving at preschool hungry can make learning and concentration extremely difficult. Our feeding programme helps to ensure that children receive a nutritious meal during their preschool day.

The teachers at Little Stars Preschool tell us the children are enjoying a healthy and balanced diet, with a variety of nutritious foods provided each day. Their meals keep them satisfied, support their physical health and contribute to their growth and development. The children are active, energetic and thriving.

Parents have also been very supportive and ensure their children attend preschool regularly and punctually. This positive partnership is helping to improve attendance and create a supportive environment for learning.

Our Ocean Stars community

Fishing boats, Hope Houses and the people behind our work

A FISHING BOAT

For families living in coastal communities, fishing is often their main source of income. Through our Fishing Boat Programme, Ocean Stars is helping local fishermen access the boats they need to earn a reliable income. Having his own boat has enabled Senthuran to increase his daily catch and sell his fish at the local market and in his community.

Senthuran

"I am married and have three daughters, who are all studying. Before I received the boat, our situation was very poor. I had no work, and life was very difficult. Now I have a new boat, and I am very happy. I can catch fish and sell them in the market, and sometimes to people in our area. My family is happy now. Thank you very much, Ocean Stars, for giving me the boat and changing our lives."







A helping hand for the YMCA Deaf School.
Ocean Stars donated a three-wheeler to the YMCA Deaf School as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting local communities.

HOPE HOUSES

Our three Hope Houses are much more than buildings. They are places where children can learn and receive additional support, while women gain practical skills and work towards greater financial independence. We are delighted that our third Hope House in Mandoor, which welcomed 15 learners in November 2025, is now adding to these opportunities.

Former Hope House participant

"Before coming to Hope House, I had no idea how to sew or operate a sewing machine. Today, I am proud to say that I run my own business, selling clothes that I design and make myself."



TRUSTEE AWAY DAY

In September, the Ocean Stars UK trustees came together for an Away Day to reflect on what we have achieved and plan our priorities: the development of our work in Sri Lanka, the sustainability of our programmes, fundraising and sponsorship, and our growing partnership with Ocean Stars Lanka. As Ocean Stars looks ahead to its 22nd year of operations in 2027, good governance, careful financial planning and a shared vision are more important than ever.



Ocean Stars UK trustees at their September Away Day.

OST UK founder and trustees · Also serving: Wendy Haynes and Amali Bunter


Dilanee Bunter


John Bunter


Jo Barton


Rachel Angel


Karen Kridland


Janine Dunbar


Cameron Williams


Abdul Basith Rafeekin

Ocean Stars Lanka Team 2026


Salujah


Danushika


Dishanthini


Luxmy

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR OCEAN STARS FAMILY!

To our sponsors and donors, fundraising groups, schools, churches, foundations, volunteers and trustees, and to our wonderful Ocean Stars Lanka team: thank you. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year.

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