

E-MAIL:

oceanstarstrust@gmail.com

PHONE: 01252 692248

Donate securely on-line through

Justgiving.com



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



@oceanstarstrust

ESTABLISHED JANUARY 2005

Newsletter 24: JUNE 2016



2016 Highlights

18 students begin preparations to visit their partner schools in Sri Lanka in October 2016. They are busy fund raising to reach their target of raising £8000 for the work of OST.

Ocean Stars Lanka team from Batticaloa travel with Dilanee and John to Killinochi to visit Mahadeva Children's Home.

Annual curry evening raises £700 for the work of Ocean Stars.

Team 2 volunteers prepare for SL

CURRENT WISH LIST

£20 per month needed to sponsor a teacher. 10 teachers still to be sponsored.

£10 per month to sponsor a child. 20 children still on waiting list.

£125: A sewing machine to help women start up a business.

PAGE 1: Chair's message.

PAGE 2: Reports from Gift Catalogue donations.

PAGE 3: Kiruthika's story: from Sponsor Child to Field Worker.

PAGE 4: Teachers from Calthorpe Park School, Fleet, report on their experiences taking school students to Batticaloa.

Maureen Johnston Ocean Stars Chairperson reflects on our work so far in 2016

As ever it has been a busy and at times challenging beginning to 2016 for all the OST trustees. We continue to work towards our goal of providing equal opportunities for all children in Sri Lanka and consequently much of our focus remains on the development and provision of pre school education in remote parts of north and east Sri Lanka. Thanks to our supporters, the hard work of our OSL team and the teachers themselves we now run 15 schools and provide education for over 500 children. As trustees we are working hard to ensure that our classrooms are in as good a state of repair as possible and that the educational provision for the children continues to develop.

Our child sponsorship programme is ongoing and the children are visited regularly to check on their progress and to ensure that the sponsorship money is used correctly. Likewise we are monitoring the progress of our sewing and other livelihood projects, as we try to support families in building a better future for themselves.

We are constantly encouraged and delighted at the progress and development of OST's work but are very aware that none of it would be possible without your support. So a huge thank you from myself and the trustees for all your contributions. There is lots more to do as we try to bring hope to these remote, poor communities and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Mrs Nadarajah who founded and ran Grace Children's Home In Vavuniya . She devoted the last 15 years of her life to the service of others and was an inspiration to all who met her. She was full of love and compassion and Grace was always a warm and welcoming home. She was "amma" (mother) to all the orphaned and displaced boys who entered her care. The children were able to leave their traumas by the front gate and enter a space where love and faith overcame all adversity. We will miss her. May she rest in peace.



GIFT CATALOGUE DONATIONS APRIL 2016.

A big thank you for all those who support our Gift Catalogue.



Lilavathi was very pleased to receive a goat from the gift catalogue. She is a daily labourer and lost her husband during the war. She has three children and is looking forward to extra income. She will breed the goats, sell them and create her own business. It costs £50.00 to donate a goat .



A laptop or desk top computer costs £350.00 and enables young people to learn computer skills and increase their job opportunities.



Jennifer's dream of having her own bike came true when she received her first bike from the gift catalogue. A bike costs £65 and changes the life of a child.



Chickens cost £5 for ten. This gift offers a family the chance to set up their own small business and therefore earn an income. After three months OST encourages the recipients of enterprise gifts to pay back monthly the cost of the chickens. Prema and her family were delighted to receive 10 chicks donated by our Gift Catalogue.



A boat costs £350 and transforms the lives of three families. The men are able to go out fishing and sell their catch in the market when they get home. OST have handed out 25 boats from the Gift Catalogue.



A uniform costs £3.50. OST provide 600 uniforms each year.



A school set costs £8.00 and provides a drink bottle and a rucksack for each child who attends our pre schools.

Stuck for a gift?

Please have a look at our gift catalogue @ www.oceanstars.org.uk

STORIES FROM SRI LANKA

Kiruthika's story – from Sponsor Child to OSL Field Worker



Kiruthika was born in Batticaloa on 12 Aug 1992, She has one elder brother and one elder sister, and she lives at home with her siblings and parents. Her mother is a housewife and her father works irregularly at a paper factory.

When the tsunami struck she was a Grade 8 student aged 12 at St Vincent's School. The wave destroyed half her house and the family lost most of their possessions: Kiruthika remembers running to her Auntie's house in the main road in Kallady to escape with her life.

When Ocean Stars Trust began its work in Batticaloa by sponsoring children, it was through a contact that we received knowledge of the plight of many of the St Vincent's girls and their families. Teachers at the school selected students to be sponsored, and Kiruthika was one of the first to be chosen.

An OST sponsor for Kiruthika was found: this was Anne Williamson, of Fleet. Kiruthika reported this Easter that she used the sponsor money for a variety of projects – to buy books, to pay for extra lessons, including gaining basic computer skills. She also bought herself a bicycle. The money helped significantly through her education, and she achieved A level passes in Art, Logic, Drama and Tamil. Her sponsor money helped her pass further English classes.

After A levels she worked to support her family, continued to complete classes, but then, in 2012, she volunteered as a helper during the OST October visits. In 2013 and 2014 she was confident enough to be a translator during the OST visits, until in April 2015, she was selected to fill a vacancy with Ocean Stars Lanka (OSL) – as a Field Worker. Thus having received the benefit of the goodness of OST supporters, she is now receiving a salary to give back to the OST/OSL movement.

She looks back fondly to receiving gifts from Anne when she was sponsored, and enjoyed the email contact with England, including the photographs she received. With OSL she visits playgroups, liaises with the teachers and sponsor families, and works in the OSL office very much as Diana's "No.2".

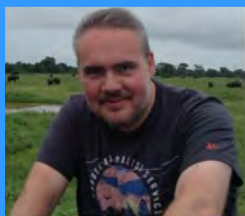
Kiruthika says, "Because of the sponsorship I received for 6 years, my life has more opportunities, and I love now working with OSL. My English and my computer skills are much better now, and I really look forward to planning and working during the October visits. I enjoy meeting all the visitors".

We contacted Anne Williamson before completing this article, and Anne was delighted to hear about Kiruthika's progress:

"In our case the sponsored child was a lovely girl called Kiruthika. Over the years, through her letters we were so pleased to see her English improve and indeed thrilled when through her own commitment and endeavour she excelled in her studies to become a translator and field-worker for the Ocean Stars Sri Lanka team. A true Ocean Stars "star".

We have been truly privileged to have been involved in her journey."





Calthorpe Park School staff reflect on the Ocean Stars Trips to Sri Lanka with their students



Mr Ross Walker and Mrs Wendy Haynes spoke to Dilanee about their experiences of taking students from Calthorpe Park School in Fleet to Sri Lanka.

They both felt that the trip gives students the opportunity to see and experience a community which is very different to their own. It helps students to grow up and take responsibility for themselves. They see a country with diverse religions, languages and ways of life from a modern city like Colombo to remote communities in Batticaloa where people live with very little.

Mr Walker a music teacher said he was struck by the creativity and imagination of the students in SL. He felt that in England we have so much in the way of resources to aid our education that in some ways students are more inhibited here. For the UK students whilst in SL the lack of resources is a steep learning curve. There is no cupboard or stock room with a supply of scissors, glue or rulers.

During their trip with Ocean Stars both Ross and Wendy commented on how the students see the best of two worlds. They see temples, art work, tea plantations, and wild life and see the legacy of the British Empire with their own eyes. Seeing monkeys, monitor lizards, crocodiles and elephants brings the whole visit alive for the students.

What the students embark on is not just a trip. It is a year's investment of their lives. Once the students sign up for the trip it is a beginning of a process which lasts a year and culminates in the trip to SL. The students raise money for Ocean Stars and they can see firsthand where their money has gone. CPS has over the last 3 years given two sets of Samba drums, donated sports equipment and football kit, bought a laptop, photocopier and a projector for their link schools in Sri Lanka. Wendy and Ross say that the trip is not a one way charitable mission. It is a two way process. The people they meet out in SL who have so little in the way of possessions give so much in the way of love, friendship, kindness and warmth to all they meet.

This trip transforms the lives of staff and students in the UK and SL. It is a life changing experience which helps young people to grow to be confident global citizens.

If you are a school teacher and would like to organise a trip to Sri Lanka for your students then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us: oceanstarstrust@gmail.com

Trustees and Committee of Ocean Stars Trust



From left to right: Dan :Trustee, Jo: Secretary, John : Treasurer Amali: Co-opted Trustee, Maureen: Chairperson, Ruth: Fund Raising Manager, Becky: Book Keeper, Colin: Finance Assistant, Danny: Trustee Dilanee : Founder Ocean Stars Trust, Gill: Gift Catalogue Manager

We would like to thank you all for your support.