

Reaching The Unreached

G. Kallupatti, Near Batlagundu, Theni Dt. 625 203

Happenings of January 2025

Dear Well-wishers,

Greetings from RTU. We have had a particularly busy month with Pongal and Republic Day of India celebrations, and the inauguration of many new buildings and programmes. Thanks to your support, we are able to achieve so much.

Pongal celebration



Our children's villages and schools came alive this January for Pongal, the harvest festival celebrated by Tamil people throughout the world. The celebrations began with our children performing traditional dances and enjoying sweet Pongal rice in our schools.



In our Children's Villages, foster families cooked Pongal rice over individual fires, engaging in friendly competition to see whose pot boiled first. As the milk overflowed, signifying abundance, the children erupted in unison, chanting "*Pongalo Pongal*," expressing gratitude and unity. A highlight of the festivities was the traditional greasy pole competition when students from various hostels eagerly tried to climb it to reach the bundle of ₹500 secured at the top. This perfectly capturing the spirit of teamwork that makes our RTU community so special.

Celebrating the achievements of our nursing students



On 11th January, Claudine School of Nursing in Batlagundu held lamp lighting and graduation ceremonies. Fr Antony, along with our childcare staff members, attended the event to watch four of our students who have successfully completed their nursing courses. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Kowsalya, Sindhu Bairavi, Jeyapriya and Malathi for their outstanding achievements. Gowsalya was awarded first place, and Sindhu Bairavi secured second place in the final year examinations. This is a significant milestone for these young women, and we wish them the best in their future endeavours.



New child's arrival

This month, Mrs Karthikarani (aged 28), came to RTU along with her children Pavadharani and Yogadharani aged 11 and 9. The father died of heart attack last year and the mother found it difficult to manage with two girl children. She expressed her willingness to join as a foster mother. Considering the children's woeful family situation, we immediately admitted them into our Miriam Children's Village. Pavadharani and Yogadharani are studying 6th and & 7th standard at our schools and Karthikarani is receiving training to become a foster mother.



Thirukkural (renowned philosophical text) Day celebration



On 17th January, our children in our Children's Villages and hostel students celebrated Thirukkural Day in collaboration with the World Cultural Movement, Pudukottai and Thirumoncholai publication, Madurai. Thirukkural is a renowned philosophical text. The event honoured Mr Alagan Perumal, a freedom fighter, with the Aranari Chemmal award, presented by Dr Vgp Santhosam and Fr Antony Paulsamy. Furthermore, Fr Antony received an award for the school's outstanding 25 years of educational service, presented by Mr Ramakrishnan and Dr VGP Santhosam.

New Children's Village Houses



We are delighted to open two new homes for our children in Sirumalar Children's Village which we marked with a small prayer and blessing ceremony, with Nicholas and Deborah Kimpton who were visiting us from the UK. We started building the two new houses on 20th September 2024, with a Bhoomi Pooja (land-breaking ceremony). The children and mothers were happy to enter their new houses with much-improved washroom and kitchen facilities. These two houses were generously sponsored by friends and family of St Joseph's School in Wrexham, UK, and the Allen family from Painswick, UK. We are profoundly grateful for their compassionate support and generosity towards our children.

New mobile IT labs for rural Government schools





We have been providing children in poor rural schools with valuable science learning through our mobile science labs for many years, and on 20th January we launched our new mobile IT lab to bring vital IT lessons and computer equipment to rural schools. The "Digital Literacy on Wheels" programme was inaugurated at Vadugapatti village in Theni District, and opened by Sean Henry, Treasurer of RTU-UK. The arrival of mobile lab in the school campus brought immense joy to all the students. Two experienced computer teachers have been appointed to facilitate this valuable learning experience. This initiative, sponsored by the Education Fund of the Sarco Group and the Coles Medlock Foundation in the UK, promises to empower young minds with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in today's increasingly digital world and open up better employment prospects for the poorest children in the future.

76th Republic Day celebration



On 26th January, we celebrated the 76th Republic Day with great enthusiasm and fervour. The celebration began with the hoisting of the national flag by Fr Antony, followed by the national anthem, which filled the atmosphere with pride and unity. He talked about the Indian constitution and individual freedom. Students sang songs, performed cultural events and delivered inspiring speeches, evoking a sense of pride and love for the nation.

Medical programme

New Pushparani Clinic opening ceremony



Our children and local people are privileged to have a new Pushparani Clinic with extra facilities for physiotherapy patients which we opened with a small prayer and blessing ceremony on 27th January. We started building the new Pushparani Clinic in place of the old clinic last year, with a Bhoomi Pooja (land-breaking ceremony). Nicholas and Deborah Kimpton were the chief guests and they honoured Dr Sreenivasan and Dr Shyam Sundar for their continuous medical services to our children and rural people. This new Pushparani Clinic was sponsored with the generous support of many donors from RTU-UK, and in memory of Dr Denis Daley, FRCP. We are very grateful for their generous hearts for our children and rural people.

Community Development

Cow rearing training for women in our Self-Help Groups



Thanks to our Self-Help Group programme for rural women, some families have been able to take out affordable loans to buy cows and goats to help supplement their household income. For most, the only option to earn an income is to do daily wage agricultural labouring work so rearing animals is a vital source of additional income, and over time, herds can be increased.

We organised three days of milk animal rearing training to the women members at Velayuthapuram and Kannimarkovilpatti villages respectively. Dr.Chithra Devi and Dr Ezhilbarathi were the resource persons. In total, 75 Self-Help group members took part. The participants were taught about various diseases and ways to manage these to save the animal and to increase milk yielding. The resource persons also explained the feeding methods, quantity and quality of the food, and other factors to improve the milking capacity of the animal. The beneficiaries felt that the training was so informative.

Free houses for rural people

This month we opened three houses in the Mela Endapulipatti village area in Theni District. Family members invested a lot of energy into organising the house opening celebrations. Fr Antony gave the homes a blessing. All of the new awardees entered their new homes and expressed their sincere gratitude to RTU and the benefactors.



I sincerely appreciate your kindness and support at a time when we all need to stand together. We have always been pleased to collaborate with you. We extend our hands to one another in a show of unity; nobody is left out. Without people like you, these acts of kindness and collaboration would not be possible. You are all truly great, and we are grateful for your support in providing education for orphans and others in need. Since we are all involved, I am confident that we will overcome this and emerge from it stronger than before. I want to express my gratitude, which is beyond words, for your kindness. We sincerely appreciate you, and we look forward to continuing this vital work with you in the future.

Yours fraternally,
Fr J Antony Paulsamy, OFM Cap.
Director