



ASHWINI



NEWSLETTER

(APRIL TO DEC 2022)

**AS THE NEW YEAR APPROACHES WE LOOK BACK ON A YEAR OF
MUCH ACTIVITY AND ACHIEVEMENTS.**

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TRAINING PROGRAMME

It is with joy and pride that we celebrate ASHWINI Adivasi School of Nursing's completion of 5 years of service. Of the 77 tribal and 23 non-tribal admissions, 51 tribal and 9 non-tribal girls respectively have completed the course with flying colours. All of them have been placed in various hospitals including the Gudalur Adivasi Hospital (GAH). It is heartening to see the dreams of our young tribal girls come true.



The 4th batch ANM students await their final year exams in Feb 2023 while the 5th batch will be having their first-year exams this month. The 6th batch of ANM students of 8 tribal and 12 non-tribal girls underwent a 3 week long Foundation course and have started their academic sessions this month.

We take this opportunity to thank all our well-wishers who walked this journey with us, especially The Poristes Foundation for their unconditional support and faith in us.

Of the 4 tribal girls Kartika, Jithya, Vinitha & Minisha who completed their GNM (General Nursing and Midwifery) course, 2 have joined GAH as staff nurses while the other two will be joining for their 6 months internship.

Ramya, a young girl from the Kattunayakan tribe, joined the GNM course this year.

Five MPH and two MSW students interned with us, while one medical student and twenty-five nursing students completed their elective placement in our rural development programme.

We wish to thank iLearningengines for building an online platform for our academic activities.



UPDATE ON NEW RECRUITS

Dr. Sarath Sistla, a senior General Surgeon and former Professor of Surgery at JIPMER, Pondicherry joined us in September filling in a great need. Dr. Queennie, from St.Johns Medical College, Bangalore will be serving her bond for the next two years. Drs. Niranjana and Lenin completed their 3 months posting as part of the rural fellowship programme. Dr. Srinivasan Sundarum, a Physical Medicine and Rehab specialist and his wife Dr. Vasanta Leela, an Anatomist are volunteering at the hospital for 2 months.

Our thanks to the many volunteering doctors who visit us on a regular basis providing specialist care, performing surgeries and being available round the clock for teleconsultations. They have been steadfast in their support and we are happy to report that their numbers are increasing.

As you must be aware, there is a great need for health professionals in rural areas. To help publicise the vacancies in rural hospitals/clinics we have started a website (<http://ruralhospitalnetwork.org>) where these vacancies are posted. Mr. Pawan, who has recently joined the RHN team, has been involved in maintaining and expanding this platform.

In May, a 3-day Rural Sensitisation Programme was conducted. The 25 young doctors who participated were introduced to the opportunities and challenges of rural healthcare.

(<http://ruralsensitisationprogram.org/>)

We thank Aravindan & Abirami, founders of the NGO, DoctorNet, who have been a great source of strength for patients referred to Coimbatore for special investigations, specialist consultations, and surgeries. They have not only put us in touch with the concerned specialists but have also taken great care of the patients & their families.

<https://sites.google.com/view/doctornet/home?authuser=0>



SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS AND SURGERIES

For our Sickle Cell Disease programme, in addition to Electrophoresis, we now have the Point of Care device for quick diagnosis in emergencies. The volunteer pathologists at Sigtuple and Bangalore Baptist Hospital have been helping us by using the Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based SigTuple AI100 with PBS (Peripheral Blood Smear) Analyser capability, installed a year ago, in differentiating anaemias and in the early identification and diagnosis of abnormal blood smears.

This year we restarted colonoscopies and the early detection of colon cancer in one patient led to surgery with a possible cure. We hope to upscale our cancer screening program for the early detection and treatment of cancers.

With Dr. Sistla's arrival, more laparoscopic surgeries are being performed.



DIFFERENTLY ABLED CENTRE

Post COVID, the centre restarted its activities. 7 children visit the centre regularly, some coming by auto on alternate days while those living close by come daily. They are involved in making wire bags, paper covers and cloth bags.



Hakeem looking happy after receiving a hooded jacket for Diwali

A one-day session was held for the hearing-impaired children and their parents to introduce them to the methods used by the Parents' Association of Deaf Children, Mysore. This was followed by a visit by this group to this organisation together with our staff and Dr. Ramesh, ENT Professor at St.John's Medical College and a long time volunteer consultant. This exposure opened their minds to the power of parents in bringing about change.

Ms. Kasturi, a Physiotherapist, joined us recently. Ms. Priya has taken great interest in grooming the children visiting the Centre.

We missed the visit of the Centre's mentor Dr Angela Harding this year due to COVID.

DE-ADDICTION PROGRAMME

As part of the APPI-supported mental health programme, we enrolled 4 people who went through the de-addiction programme and are doing well. Alcoholics Anonymous is helping us in following up the rehabilitated patients and organising regular meetings in their villages. This has been a small breakthrough in initiating discussions around alcohol at the village level.

MALNUTRITION PROGRAMME

The comprehensive malnutrition program for under-5 children, supported by the Anaha Trust, has been extended for another 6 months till April 2023. This will ensure their continuous monitoring and an uninterrupted supply of ready-to-eat nutritious food for severely undernourished children.



EYE SCREENING

In collaboration with Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore, eye camps were held in the tribal villages. 230 people were screened and the 78 who were identified for cataract surgery were housed at GAH, taken to Coimbatore by ASHWINI staff for their surgery, and dropped back home after discharge. They were followed up to ensure proper use of the prescribed eye drops and were seen a month later by the Sankara team. All have done well. We are very grateful to the Sankara Eye Hospital for its excellent work and look forward to their continued collaboration with us.



NEW RESEARCH ACTIVITY

We are one of the four hubs in India for a research grant in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh titled PRIIA (Psychiatric Research Infrastructure for Intervention and Implementation in India). Two of our staff completed short-term courses for capacity building in research and Vardharajan, a PhD student who has been selected as a long term trainee, proposes to do his research at Gudalur. He will evaluate the feasibility and efficacy of 'One All', a sports-based intervention being used as a tool to teach life skills among tribal adolescents in Gudalur.

The ICMR NCD study has come to an end and the results are being analysed



STORY TO SHARE...



Post-natal women and the new born is checked at the village. Any mother referred to a higher centre is seen soon after they are back home to ensure the mother and baby are fine. The baby's new born screening is also done.

A 22 yr old mother from Murukanpadi village had missed her routine antenatal check-ups. During her last month of pregnancy, she was identified in one of our doctor-led village visits and asked to come to GAH in a week's time. A few days later she developed abdominal pain and visited the nearby Primary Health Centre. As she had a previous C-section she was promptly referred to GAH for a possible repeat C-section. Fortunately, she had a normal delivery at GAH. This good outcome was achieved because of your continued support in making the regular village visits by our health animators and doctors possible and also in sustaining the Hospital and its trained staff.



FUNDING

Poristes Stiftung continues to support all aspects of the training program, 3 students were supported for higher studies by TAGUE TEC. Government funding for the Sickle Cell programme continues under NHM-TN.

The previous "Bed Grant" reimbursements are still pending. As per the new Government order, GAH is to be reimbursed Rs.3000/patient for tribal inpatient care. This, unfortunately, will not be covering the total expenses incurred

We have also received funding from Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative (APPI), The Anaha Trust, the JSK Foundation UK, TIHF USA, From Here to There UK, Vidyalay.org, USA, Nilgiri Adivasi Trust UK, Friends of Hope- UK, DASRA, GIVE foundation, ARTMA Foundation, individual donors and through Benevity platforms.



In 2023 we hope to strengthen the community programme with capacity building for the next generation of youngsters at the village level.

With COVID hopefully behind us, GAH should become as active as before. We are looking for specialists in OBGyn, Anaesthesia and Paediatrics to join us so as to increase our services.

As we move forward, we plan more workshops on governance and management for our tribal team so that our vision of tribal ownership of the Health system becomes a reality.

DONATIONS

In India - Are exempt from income tax under section 80G of the income tax act. Money can be transferred directly to our account in SBI, Gudalur as ASHWINI DONATIONS, Current account No: 35765454150 IFSC Code: SBIN 001016

In USA -Tax deductible donations can be made by check to Vidyalay.org Foundation Inc and mailed to Ms. Asmita Shendye, 35 Meyer Drive, Clifton, NJ 07012

OR

By online donation through Tribal India Health Foundation <http://www.tihf.org.in/> and click the “donate” button on the page “How you can help”.

In the UK - Gift Aid can be a benefit if donations are sent to Account Name: From Here To There, Sort Code: 30-65-92, Account number: 16621468. Email: friendsofgudalur@gmail.com. Donation web page : <https://ashwini.org/donate/>

*Thank
You*