



Mother Anna Huberta Roggendorf
Founder of the Society of Helpers of Mary

Igniting Sparks

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

25 YEARS OF JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT

I am happy that Prem Seva Mahila Co-operative Credit Society (PSMCCS), Vakola is completing 25 years of its journey of empowerment. Mighty oaks grow from small acorns. A small seed sown 25 years ago has now grown in to a huge tree of 9800 members giving hope, better living conditions and much needed economic security to its members, it is truly a phenomena to reckon with. Our Founder Mother Anna Huberta had a vision to reach out to the periphery. She envisioned a society where women and children are protected, cared and empowered. Today as the silver jubilee bell rings for PSMCCS, it is the dream of our Founder that is being realised. I am happy that God chose Sr. Shakuntala to participate in this great mission for women empowerment. My heartfelt Congratulations to Sr. Shakuntala, the Chairperson, Board of Directors, the staffs and all the members in particular St. Antony's Church for keeping alive this gigantic initiative over the years. You saw Jesus as the captain of your ship in the midst of all ups and downs of growing up as a well-established Co-operative.



Therefore, this Silver Jubilee is an occasion to celebrate God's providential care, which is also an expression of deep gratitude. It is a story richly textured with daring faith, generous love and unbounded hope. It's the farsighted vision, hard work, and commitment of Sr. Shakuntala and all the sisters who have rendered their loving service at Prem Seva, Vakola which gives a silvery shine to this day. I am grateful that God used the Helpers of Mary in the making of this noble institution. PSMCCS is an institution in itself that gives women an opportunity to earn some income as well as for decision-making. In a city like Mumbai, which is hailed as the financial capital of India,

where big corporates dominate, the role of credit cooperatives like Prem Seva is truly praiseworthy.

I had a couple of opportunities to visit the office of this Credit Society and was always overwhelmed by the professionalism with which the staff go about in the banking system. I am grateful that the outreach of PSMCCS does not end with the members only. Through the members, both loaners and non-loaners, their families have been uplifted, women have better health and living conditions, their children are educated and have found jobs. Through their self-help initiatives, women still help to sustain their families. I wish and pray that Prem Seva Mahila Cooperative Credit society further expand its ambit, grow from strength to strength and become a beacon of hope, not only for the women around Vakola but also to the whole of Mumbai. Congratulations!

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Sr. Stella Devassy shm, Superior General, Andheri



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EVERY CHILD WE ENCOUNTER IS A DIVINE APPOINTMENT

We received a call from the District Children's Office (DCO) informing us that the children's court has committed a child, who is six years of age to our children's home. So I went to the court and I found a little girl, called Peris (name changed), looking very sad and fearful. After all the necessary procedures, the Judge handed her over to us. I took her to Holy Family Children's home, every one there came to welcome her. Soon after we gave her a good shower, cut her hair, dressed her with new clothes and then she joined us for lunch.



Next morning we visited Peris house, which was in a nearby slum. When we reached there we found the mother and her two other little children living in a small room. The mother shared her painful story, she was a married woman but now living with another man and she has three children from him. She works as a daily wagger. Her two bigger daughters (from first husband) are with her mother for their moral safety. Peris is the first child born of the second man. The mother found Peris very sad, quite, and keeping herself aloof. Seeing this strange behavior, she asked her what was bothering her so with fear the child narrated that in the absence of the mother her father used to come back home from his job place and sexually abuse her and warning her not to report this incident to her mother. The father threatened the child that if she informed her mother, then he would kill both the mother and the child.

One day the Mother caught the father red-handed in the act and alerted the police and he was arrested. Thus the court decided to sent her to our Children's Home for care and protection. It is a fact that regardless of age or gender, the impact of sexual violence goes far beyond any physical injuries. We are counseling her, making her participate in home activities and help her make new friends. She feels much better now and feels at home. She seems to respond to the care she gets. She is in the nursery top class. After her 29 days of medical treatment we did the HIV test and found it negative. There are many such children who comes to our home with similar stories. "The best way to make children good is to make them happy." - Oscar Wilde

We have 110 children from a day old to 18 years. They are orphans, abandoned and abused. Children are also come due to family dispute and imprisonment of parents. The orphaned children are with us till primary school and then we keep them with guardians for home-based care. The abandoned children, if they are very young we try to find them adoptive parents thus they go for adoption. For children in crisis and any other issues, we seek help from the police, village elders, chiefs. If we find their relatives we reunites them with their families thus giving them a new life, love and joy to the family as well as to the children. In some cases the parents/relatives don't accept them. Mother Teresa said "to be discarded and unwanted is the worst experience that can befall a human being". Our home provides a safe shelter, nutritious food, medical care, love and family environment and schooling to these abandoned and destitute children. We are thankful to all our donors and supporters.

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Sr. Ujwala Fargose shm, Nakuru, Kenya

CELEBRATION OF GIRLS CHILD DAY

On September 08, 2108, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we recall the birth of a girl child. It is celebrated to increase the awareness among people about all the inequalities faced by the girl child in our society. On this occasion Sr. Mathilda Fernandes SHM visited our area of Gilbert Hill and celebrated this day with the girls of all caste. She spoke to the girls about the importance of education, health and nutrition. She also asked them to take good care and to educate themselves and become empowered citizens of this country with equal rights and opportunities. We are Thankful to Sr. Mathilda for motivating and inspiring our girls.

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Parishioner, Amboli Church, Andheri



LITTLE CATHY AND HER DAUGHTER

Cathy (name changed) was the only daughter of her single mother, who lived in a little village far away from the capital city of Kenya. Poor and sick, the mother was unable to send Cathy to school. Cathy helped her mother in searching for daily bread, fetching water and firewood. Her mother became very ill and finally died leaving 12 years old Cathy orphaned. For Cathy, it was an experience of her world coming to an end and she wept not knowing of her tomorrow! On the funeral day of her beloved mother, her aunt who came from Nairobi advised her to come along with her promising that she would send her to school. Indeed, Cathy once again was filled with hope that she will have a better future!



After coming to the city, her aunt did not keep her promise rather made her work in her house as a maid. The aunt used to work elsewhere leaving her alone in the house. Cathy patiently did all the work as she knew it from home already. Cathy prayed hard that her Aunt would send her to school. All her dreams went to ashes when the brother of her uncle came home while she was alone, and sexually abused her in spite of all her struggle to defend herself.

Little did she know that she would become a mother out of this forced act by her relative. The unwanted baby grew in her womb, completing her term of pregnancy, she gave birth to a lovely little girl called Celine (name changed). The neighbors noticed all that was happening to this 13 years old Cathy and how much of suffering she was going through at this age! They came to our home asking us to help rescue Cathy and Celine from this ill treating Aunt.

One day when the Aunt as usual was out at work, we the Sisters went to visit Cathy and we were shocked to see how the little baby Celine was lying in shabby clothes on the floor and sad Cathy sitting next to her with a big question mark on her face. It was very painful to see how little Cathy 13 year old taking care of her baby. We reported to the DCO who rescued Cathy and baby Celine and the court placed them in our home. Cathy was happy and excited. The children in our home welcomed them into the big family. Soon Celine began smiling and eating and became a healthy baby. We enrolled Cathy to school, her long awaited dream and she began her schooling. She is trying her best to cope with her studies and Celine is joyfully growing up in babies ward.

Cathy went through a painful beginning, patiently withstood every hard ship, and today God gave her a new opportunity, a new world of hope, and a safe and secured home surrounded by loving and caring Sisters. God gives each of us grace to face every difficult situation with patience and courage, and He has a place for everyone!

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Srs. Azalech, Abhaya, Alphonsa and Mahima, Divine Providence, Kenya

THE GIFT OF SIGHT IS AN INCREDIBLE GIFT

Our Community, Karunalay is in the midst of the poor at Bhadohi, near Varanasi in the city of carpets, where the people of different faiths, creed and caste live together. Besides our ministries in Bhadohi we reach out to the people of Musahar community and educate the children. One day when we visited Musahar basti (village) at Rajpura we met a woman, called Kanchan, she was a graceful woman but was extremely poor and blind. She had lost her eyesight at a very young age. She struggled to support her four children. The women of the village came together and asked us to help her to get back her eyesight. We were amazed to see their trust and the confidence they had in us. We took her to the hospital; her eyes were examined and treated, she underwent surgery on both eyes. Her eyesight, along with her dignity and appreciation for life has been restored. She opened her eyes and started looking at the trees, the leaves, the sky.... She appreciated everything. We thank God for making us the instrument to regain her eyesight. She happily and gratefully expressed her gratitude towards the Sisters for the care and concern towards her and her family.



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Sr. Preeti Bagaji SHM, Karunalay Bhadohi

HEALTH CHECK UP CAMP AT SUB JAIL

With the help of Booth Hospital we organized a Health camp in Sub Jail, Ahmednagar, on the request made by Jail Superintendent, Mr. N. G. Sawant and his Staff. 3 Doctors and 7 staffs helped us in this medical checkups. They checked blood pressure, blood sugar levels along with other medical examinations and distributed free medications to the prisoners. Two Hundred and twenty inmates benefited from this Health Camp. At times, prisoners are unaware that they are suffering from any disease. They too are human beings and deserve access to healthcare. That



is why we organized this camp to address their medical needs. Many of them diagnosed with diabetic and high blood pressure. The Superintendent, staff and all the inmates were grateful to the Sisters of Anand Vihar for organizing this medical camp for them.

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Sr. Shweta Dabre shm, Tilaknagar

A DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

On September 16, 2018 we celebrated the Girl Child Day at Karunalay, Bhadohi where many girl children participated from different villages especially from Musahar Basti. Various games and competitions were held and they had this opportunity to express their talents before a crowd. The Girls were thrilled to perform and to participate in the program and we were happy to see the joy and enthusiasm on their faces. The Chief Guest of the program was Mr. Ravikanth Bharathi who drew their attention on their personality development and made aware that every girl has a right to be born, to study, to succeed and to live. Sr. Severine SHM spoke on health issues and made them aware that every child should be in the school and not in the kitchen.

It was a learning experience for me as I am in Bhadohi for my community and mission experience. It's so encouraging and motivating to see the witnessing life of the SHM Sisters among the powerless. I am grateful to God for showing me the way to the Helpers of Mary and to the Congregation for initiating and encouraging such great work in the midst of poor and downtrodden. I am so blessed to be an eyewitness here in Bhadohi.

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Novice Anjali, Karunalay, Bhadohi -UP



CONDOLENCE

Sr. Anita Menezes lost her brother

May his soul
rest in peace

