

**"Living at Operation Shanti's children's home is more than just about getting shelter; living there prepares kids for a full life."**

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Dear Tracy,

We want to focus this e-newsletter on everything that our kids at our children's home receive from us, which is really about what they get from you, our supporters.

Our kids, who were homeless or living in squalor in slums before coming to us, are given not just shelter. We're not simply babysitting them. We're not rehabilitating them only to get them back to their old lives.

We're giving them what all kids should get -- a productive childhood filled with happy days and lots of play, quality educations, discipline, and useful life skills.

At our children's home, we give our 48 kids the tools and skills they'll need to live full lives once they leave us, and your support helps us do this. In addition to the basics (food, shelter, clothing, healthcare), each of our kids at our home gets the following:

- a good education at **quality** schools
- a **great special needs school** for our kids with disabilities
- **individualized** attention and support
- daily grade-specific tutoring and **one-on-one tutoring** for kids who need extra attention
- **useful life skills**: swimming lessons, driving (two- and four-wheeler), and public speaking
- **support for mental health and emotional issues** from qualified child psychiatrists and psychologists

- the full set of childhood **vaccinations**
- library time
- access to **laptops** and **iPads**
- a yearly **flu shot**
- a daily **multivitamin**
- minimum twice-yearly **dentist visits**
- **eyeglasses and hearing aids** for kids who need them
- age-appropriate discussions about **sexual and reproductive health**
- **responsibility** through daily chores and by making age-appropriate decisions
- **skills and knowledge** gained from activities such as cardio-focused fitness, yoga, and karate

If you're interested in donating useful in-kind items, see our wish list on Amazon at the [end of this newsletter](#).

Thank you for helping us give our kids better lives and Happy Diwali to you and your loved ones!



Diwali at Karunya Mane courtesy of the Narayana Foundation

## Speaking of Swimming...

All kids need to learn how to swim. For one thing, swimming is fun! More

importantly, knowing how to swim can save lives.



From our friend Amber Hunt-Cariappa, who accompanied the kids each day to their swim lessons:

"This Dasara season, 12 kids at Karunya Mane had the opportunity to participate in swimming lessons. It's a two-week program that teaches essential techniques. Eventually, all of the kids will complete the training. From poolside, I got to watch simple breathing, leg kicks, and then the introduction of the use of arms. Oh goodness, was it fun!!

The kids learned how to coordinate those fundamentals into swimming laps across the pool. What an achievement! I saw them give so much effort, each day, finally getting themselves across the pool. Swimming not only helps them in the long run, but showed each of them that learning a new skill can be fun and beneficial.

**It also was fun watching the kids be kids!"**

And thank you, Shareen Woodford, for the great swimming goggles. Your timing is impeccable!







Pooja, Prema, Sowmya



## Donate and Get a Calendar!

It's that time of year again. If you're starting to plan your holiday shopping, or just want to donate to a good cause, consider making a donation of \$25 (Rs.1,500) or more and get our Operation Shanti 2017 Calendar, featuring artwork by the kids!

These calendars make great stocking stuffers! [donate here](#)

## Addressing Sexual Abuse

Our friends from @WeFightAbuse, the Faith Foundation India, visited our kids in July and talked to them about a host of important but sometimes difficult-to-discuss topics related to child sex abuse, such as awareness of and the value of one's body, good and bad touch, good and bad secrets, and the concept of consent.

These are important topics for all kids everywhere to understand.





## Mental Health in India

The disconcerting headline is from the *Indian Express* newspaper: "Mental Illness India's Ticking Bomb, Only 1 in 10 Treated: Lancet Study." The article highlights the fact that there are only 3 psychiatrists per 1,000,000 people in India.

The mental health crisis in India is exacerbated by enduring beliefs, such as being possessed by ghosts instead of awareness about symptoms of depression, PTSD, or schizophrenia, and that the "puja" ritual at the temple is the cure.

At Operation Shanti, we recognize that our kids' mental and emotional health is as important as their physical health. We use an excellent team of child psychiatrists and school psychologists in Mysore when one of our kids shows symptoms of a possible mental or emotional issue.



At Karunya Mane, three of our children have been diagnosed with



clinical depression, PTSD, and ADHD. They receive excellent adolescent psychiatric care, allowing them to experience minimized symptoms.

Our dedicated counselor provides weekly support for our kids who need someone to talk to or who need a firm yet understanding talking-to for misbehaving!

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## The School Year is in Full Swing and the Kids are Busy!

Our tenth graders take the public board exams (SSLC) in April, and are busy studying like fiends! **Prema, Pooja, Mamatha, Prajwal, Pavan, and Vinod** have buckled down, gotten serious, and are getting good grades this year.

We made a couple of changes to their study schedule. The 10th graders have tutoring in the morning before school, and their late afternoons and evenings are left to them -- they decide how to spend their time after school, when the others are in their tutoring sessions, and study, relax, or get some exercise. For the most part, our teens are using their time well.

**Shilpa**, below left, continually ranks #1 in her 6th grade class (English medium!), and with **Mamatha** (below, right), they received the "Best Student Award" in school this year.



Shilpa, housemother Sulochana, and Mamatha

**Joel**, our new 12-year-old boy from a now-defunct children's home, could barely read or write in when he came to live with us in July. He's now really enjoying learning both Kannada and English, and did well on his first mid-term test this past month, scoring all As and Bs.

**Surya** continues to rank in the top five in his 7th grade class. His sister, **Sowmya**, has improved her grades tremendously and is also ranked in the top

five of her 6th grade class.

**Pavan** has been ranked #1 in his 10th grade class since the beginning of the year, a dramatic improvement from last year!



Surya, Pavan, and Sowmya



## Project Food & More: Five Out of Six

During the past few months, six HIV+ individuals (five women, one man) received our assistance for their medical conditions, some life-threatening.

For the women, tuberculosis was the culprit and they needed operations to remove growths. Four of the five women survived, and one did not make it. She was too far gone to save.

Your support helps us continue our assistance to destitute HIV+ women and men who have nowhere else to turn to for life-saving treatment.

Your support also helps us continue to secure second-line antiretroviral medication for HIV+

children who need this therapy, and to provide our monthly care packages to 70 HIV+ children orphaned by the disease.

## Where are They Now?

Some of our older kids have left Karunya Mane after finishing either 10th grade or 12th grade. We have kept in touch with them to monitor their progress. The following kids came to stay with us in 2008.

**Sreenivas** was a 14-year-old homeless orphan in 2008. He started his education then, and ultimately received his 12th grade (PUC 2) degree and a driver's license, before leaving in 2015. Sreenivas is now an apprentice for a local businessman who owns a plumbing and water filter installation business, earning

a steady salary and living with friends in a rented house.

**Harish** was 9 years old and living on the streets with his mother (who has since passed away) in 2008. Harish also started his education in 2008, and graduated from 12th grade (PUC 2) and got his driver's license while with us. Harish now works at a large drugstore in the city -- the same drugstore whose floors he swept as a street kid -- and is earning a good income.

**Manikanta**, age 10 in 2008, also left in 2015 after receiving his 10th grade degree. Manikanta has always struggled with self-discipline and lacked positive influences for the first few years of his life. He currently stays with his brother in the city and works odd jobs to earn a living.

**Sharath** arrived at the age of 10 and left Karunya Mane in March 2016 after passing 10th grade (SSLC). He is with his mother and relatives, and attends a two-year vocational training program at the nearby college, and takes computer classes after school. We were concerned that Sharath would lose interest in continuing his education but he has kept up with his studies so far!



Sharath



Sreenivas

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## Be a Sponsor!

Sponsoring an Operation Shanti child is a great way to support one of our little ones as they make their way through childhood and to their teenage years, and become young adults.

Sponsor or gift a sponsorship to a friend or family member for \$400 a year or \$33 a month for 12 months.

[sponsor here](#)







The kids performing during the Gowri/Ganesha Festival.

## New Operation Shanti Ambassadors

We love our three new ambassadors who join our other ambassadors in generously offer their time and energy to assisting our kids and women when they are not in India. The kids sure love it when they visit our children's home!

### Ally Ford

Ally is an Ashtanga Yoga teacher based in Clearwater, Florida, and has been traveling to Mysore since 2003 to study at the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute. Ally is also a busy wife and mother of two, and **believes that every child deserves the opportunity to blossom into their full potential** with love, support, healthcare, education, and healthy nutrition.

Ally said, "This is exactly what Operation Shanti is providing at Karunya Mane. I love visiting with the kids to play games, do arts and crafts, sing songs, or just get to know them and hear about their studies. I have had the great blessing of witnessing the dramatic positive impact of Operation Shanti's efforts in the children's lives and feel passionate about doing all I can to help ensure these efforts continue."

We're very grateful to have Ally as an Operation Shanti Ambassador!



### Jules Sung



**Jules and Latha**

A former workaholic and sugar junkie, we first met Jules in 2016 in Mysore, India. Jules made her first destined trip to India in 2012 and dove into the epicenter of what she believes is the most profound form of yoga practice, Ashtanga Yoga. Jules, a devout student of this lineage, is an Authorized teacher of the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute and returns to India annually to practice with the source himself, Guru R. Sharath Jois, in Mysore.

During a recent visit, Jules got to know our kids at our children's home and they thoroughly enjoyed her fun-loving and calming presence. Jules is a sought-after Health Coach and active advocate of feeling good and looking great. In 2014, she founded Blossom with Brilliance, where she shares her arsenals of love and passion: nourishing recipes, yoga how-to's, and an all-round prescription to a healthy lifestyle.

We're very excited to have Jules as an Operation Shanti Ambassador!

## Despina Psarra

We first met Despina in 2011 in Gokulam in Mysore, India, the home of ashtanga yoga. Since then, Despina has been generously offering some of her Ayurvedic yoga massage (AYM) sessions to yoga practitioners as donations to Operation Shanti to help our kids and women. She also organizes fundraisers with the help of her massage students, and helps to spread the word about our work.

Despina truly enjoys mindfulness practices, working with the body and exploring the body-mind relationship. Since 2009, she has practiced ashtanga yoga and travels to Mysore, India every year to practice with her teachers, Sharath Jois and Saraswathi Rangaswamy. We're very grateful to have Despina and her warmth and generosity as an Operation Shanti Ambassador!



## Frances Cole Jones

Frances Cole Jones is the author of "How to Wow" and "The Wow Factor" and President of Cole Media Management: specializing in personal presentation skills.

She is also an authorized teacher for KRI IYI



SHE IS ALSO AN AUTHORIZED TEACHER FOR KFIJATI having received her blessing to teach from Sharath Jois in 2012. She teaches at Mandala Yoga Center for Healing Arts in Amagansett, New York.

The kids met recently met Frances during her visit to our home and had a great time practicing their English with her and hanging out. Thank you, Frances, for your support as an Operation Shanti Ambassador!

## Meghan Kirk

Meghan Kirk lives in the U.S. and runs a traditional Ashtanga Yoga program called Mysore Philadelphia. She is authorized to teach by her teacher, R. Sharath Jois of the Sri K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute in Mysore, India. In addition to teaching, Meghan also works as an administrator and direct care provider at Spectrum Specific Services, an agency which her mother founded in 2014 to provide services for her brother, Tim, and other individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



Meghan lives with her husband, Jason, and their two dogs, Scrappy and Pixie (a street dog they brought home from Mysore) in the Fishtown section of Philadelphia. Meghan considers her practice to be a profoundly healing gift, and believes that once you have found health and steadiness in yourself it is then your duty to help others find the same. It is her great honor to help Operation Shanti in its wonderful mission in any way she can.

Thanks, Meghan, for serving as an Operation Shanti Ambassador!

## Morgan Lee

Morgan is a nurse who works with kids who are privileged to have healthcare in the U.S. Since 2011, he has traveled to Mysore, India to study with Sharath at the Sri K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute. That's an excuse to bring vitamins to and vaccinate the amazing kids of Operation Shanti so that they can remain healthy and thrive. Morgan lives on his sailboat and teaches in Los Angeles as the Ashtanga Nurse.



Morgan is thrilled to be an ambassador for Operation Shanti, and the feeling is mutual!

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## Our Amazon Wishlist!

Order items on our wishlist at [Amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in) -- you can use the same login as when using any of the other Amazon sites, like Amazon.com.

Shipping logistics are taken care of and your donated items are delivered straight to our receiving point in Gokulam, Mysore, India!

Easily donate items on our wishlist, like bath soap, toothpaste, shampoo, snacks, school notebooks, pens and pencils, slippers, sports shoes ... and many more!

Check it out. It's so easy!

[click here to donate in-kind items from Amazon](#)



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For questions or comments, feel free to connect with us over social media or at [info@operation-shanti.org](mailto:info@operation-shanti.org). Thank you for your continuing support!

Peace to you,

The Operation Shanti Team

STAY CONNECTED



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