

FAREWELL TO THE HOSPITAL: a letter from Sylvia



Dear Friends

As you know, I came to India on January 6th 1982. For three years I worked in the villages from 8.00 am to midnight, giving basic health care and education to the villagers. Many of the staff I recruited have stayed with me. We worked hard easing pain and saving lives.

In those days, in rural India, health services were very sparse and patients often had to travel many miles to get trained health care or rely on untrained village health workers.

Thanks to the Trust and your kindness, we opened our first hospital in 1985 which grew to 150 beds. These were always full and we also dealt with up to 8,000 out-patients each month. Our high quality health care was always given at minimal cost and, for those unable to pay, free of charge - thanks to your generous support.

Over these thirty five years, India has changed a good deal and, in Tamil Nadu especially, health care provision has improved.

In 2015 a Government Medical College Hospital was opened in Tiruvannamalai, providing an extensive range of free medical services including facilities for in-patient care (about 750 beds) with ready access to various specialties and equipment. This has been a great boon to the poorer people.

Health care is of course expensive, even in India; medical advances and increasing life expectancy create new needs and rising costs. It has become increasingly difficult and indeed unnecessary for me to continue my original medical mission.

Therefore, with much heart searching to know God's will, I have decided to hand over Rangammal Hospital to Dr Pandian and a group of Indian doctors. They will invest a great deal of money to develop services but will still retain an element of charitable work as well as continuing to employ my faithful staff.

Our other services to the deaf and to physically and mentally challenged children will continue and improve even further; their needs are still great and the Government provision is still very basic. These services to such disadvantaged children and their families are given free and still rely on your generosity.

Nurse training will continue and our College will expand. The students' practical experience will still be provided in both Rangammal Hospital and the new Medical College Hospital.

As you can well imagine, my decision to change the emphasis of my work has not been easy, but my priority, as always, is to meet the most important needs of our local community.



Sylvia and Dr Pandian together on ward

Please pray for us. It is not always easy to know God's will and it often takes a great deal of personal soul searching to follow where he leads; sometimes there are tears and we may not get it right! However we all have to put our hands into the hands of God and (as St. Peter was told) be led where he wants us to go!

God bless you all, Love Sylvia

A message from Dr Pandian:

"I am a native of Tiruvannamalai but did my medical training in Chennai and now run a team of hospitals in and around Chennai.

I have been familiar with Rangammal Hospital for many years. Its reputation has always been very high in the area for giving good quality care at an affordable price. Thousands of people have benefited for three decades. I and my team intend that our Vision and Mission Trust continues this tradition of service but we will also develop the hospital in many ways.

We are establishing a 24 hour Casualty and Trauma Centre, enhancing the Intensive Care facilities and building a Blood Bank, so the whole District will benefit. We have many other plans to provide a wide range of state of the art facilities for the people of the area.

Thank you for your trust and faith in us."

AS ONE DOOR CLOSES SEVERAL OTHERS OPEN

All together now

As Sylvia withdraws from the hospital 5 miles away, she now has all her main projects on one campus: this includes her School for Deaf Children, Nursing College and Education & Therapy Centre. Sylvia has a small flat in the school and so is on the spot with much less daily commuting to do. As there will soon be 300 children, 120 nursing students (see below) and 100 staff, the laundry is being upgraded. The kitchen is being fitted with steam cookers to improve quality, speed up cooking times and reduce fuel costs. A generous Indian donor has also funded the installation of a complete water purifying system for the campus – another major improvement.

Nursing College to expand

The College, which opened in 2009, currently admits 20 village girls per year. All have done well, have passed their exams and found employment. Just as importantly, they have been imbued with Sylvia's care and compassion. "Rangammal Nurses" are a credit to themselves, their families and Sylvia. The main college buildings will readily absorb an increase and the only requirements are more hostel accommodation and the approval of the Indian Nursing Council. Sylvia is now progressing both matters with a view to increasing the intake to 40 each year leading to 120 in total over 3 years. Apart from the initial building and equipment costs (met by the Trust) and bursary donations, the College is self-funding.

Back to school!

After their summer exams, children went home for their holidays to enjoy more time with their families. They returned to school in June to find more improvements. The school has been redecorated and the bathrooms refitted. The remaining group of children are being fitted with digital hearing aids – again donated by Hear the World Foundation – meaning every child in the school now has one. Another major step forward is the appointment of a Speech & Language Therapist who will be focussing her work on the primary age children; all the children now have conversation classes to help their speech and social development. Sponsors have been receiving beautiful 'thank you' cards with details of their child's progress in the school.

CONTACT US

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There is now a greater need for sponsors

Please contact Angela Clark on 0113 2677660 if you would like to sponsor one of the deaf children or one of the increasing number of disabled children starting at the new IETC. See below.

Integrated Education & Therapy Centre

On 15 March 2017 (World Disability Day) the new Integral Education and Therapy Centre (IETC) was inaugurated with a Hindu ceremony and Christian blessings. The dream has now become a reality although there is still work to do on physiotherapy and hydrotherapy equipment, wheelchairs and furniture. Landscaping and a special playground (vital for the development of children with mental and physical challenges) are in progress. Paediatricians and medical students from CMC Vellore visited and screened 75 children individually. It was a very busy and successful day with teachers and parents also present. The Official Opening will be on 18 November. We will send supporters complete details and photos in a special celebration Christmas Newsletter.

Because of lack of space in this edition, we have not been able to include several photos illustrating our news items. However, these can now be seen on the latest news pages of our website which is updated regularly. Please go to the News page at: www.sylviawright.org

Come and meet Sylvia!

Sylvia will be visiting the UK in the second half of July. She will be hosting a Coffee Morning at 10.30 am – 12.30 pm on Monday 17 July at Sand Moor Golf Club, Alwoodley Lane, Leeds LS17 7DJ. All supporters are invited to meet her personally, hear her views on the future and assure her of our continuing support for all she is doing. Apart from meetings with the trustees and SWAG, she will also be speaking at churches, Rotary & Catenians and visiting schools. Sylvia has a limited number of dates (between 15 – 30 July) when she can visit supporters in their locality. If you would like to invite her, please contact our secretary, John Howley, who is looking after her schedule. Tel 0113 2673936

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