



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
SRI LANKA

A LOVING HOME FOR EVERY CHILD



2020
JULY
VOL #7

HOW OUR CHILDREN
SPENT LOCKDOWN
DAYS

STORY OF
WASANTHI SEYA

The

sos

NEWSLETTER

"DONATE...
TO BLOOM
THEIR SMILE"
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FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY
Children in this photo are volunteers and are not from SOS Children's Villages

www.soschildrensvillages.lk



DIVAKAR RATNADURAI
NATIONAL DIRECTOR
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES SRI LANKA

It is my delight to address all of you, through our Annual Newsletter – 2020.

SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka had many achievements during last year in diverse fields. Thus, SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka received the 'JANABHIMANI' Honorary Award, as the best Social Services Organization, for its esteemed services rendered to the country. 'JANABHIMANI' Honorary Awards was a conceptualization of the All Ceylon Independent Medial Organization. SOS Vocational Training Centre in Monaragala was also awarded the Best Private Vocational Training Centre in the Province of Uva, and Sri Lanka. These Awards brought prominence and recognition to the Organization.

SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka has begun preparations to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of its presence in Sri Lanka in year 2021.

As you know, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic created panic and a fear psychosis in the country, disturbing and disrupting the ordinary lifestyles of all people. SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka too coped with the chaotic situation throughout with adoption of stern safety measures to protect its children, mothers, and staff, in Children's Villages. Children continued their education through online techniques, under the guidance of Educators. Also, they engaged in home gardening, and domestic recreational activities, to overcome the monotonous atmospheres at home. Youth too kept themselves occupied with various indoor activities in Youth Facilities during the time of country's locked-down.

Beneficiaries of Family Strengthening Programs were also supported through various relief packages released for their sustenance.

I wish to solicit your cooperation and assistance in ways possible to uplift the lifestyles of children, entrusted to our care, children who have lost parental care, and children who are at risk of losing parental care for various ill-fated reasons. It was your solidarity and generosity that made the mission of SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka possible all these times.

The post-COVID-19 era might stumble the continuity of some programs SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka had launched for children's well-being, due to economic instabilities and uncertainties. Therefore my appeal to you here is to remain with our worthy cause through your meritorious acts of goodwill for SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka to be firm in creating a happy and safe future for children, commended to its care.

I wish you a prosperous future with all success.

**A WARM & HEARTFELT
'THANK YOU'
FROM ALL OF OUR
CHILDREN AT
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES
TO YOU!
OUR VALUED DONOR!**

**CORONAVIRUS DIDN'T
STOP YOU FROM
CARING FOR US!**





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**NOW YOU CAN SET-UP RECURRING MONTHLY OR ANNUAL DONATIONS OF
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Just go to www.soschildrensvillages.lk
Click Ways to help. Then Click sponsor a child monthly.
Select 'monthly' or 'annual' option and proceed.





HOW OUR CHILDREN SPENT LOCKDOWN DAYS



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

OFFERS A LENDING HAND TO STRUGGLING SRI LANKANS



COVID-19 was an unprecedented pandemic that hit Sri Lanka in the mid-week of March. The country never saw such a predicament in its history, thus making it an extreme challenge for the government to counter the problem with necessary measures such as medical and quarantine facilities, social support systems, safety regulations etc. Yet, the Sri Lankan government did its best in tackling the pandemic with available resources.

SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka was able to do its part to the best of its capabilities in contributing to the social support system dynamic of the matter via its Family Strengthening Programme. Currently, there are 1537 families benefitting from this programme through 9 different locations scattered across the country. Predominantly, these families live below the poverty line, engaged in daily labour, street vending, farming, fishing, and other types of work that yield a meagre income. Out of them, 1271 families were identified as in need of urgent support during the lockdown period since the curfew had stripped them of their daily income. In addition, they did not have a secondary source of income to sustain themselves through these times. The survey to identify these families was conducted by SOS Children's Villages in coordination with pre-existing Community Based Organizations (CBO)

that were initially set up by SOS Family Strengthening Centres in respective locations. Despite of the strict curfew imposed, SOS Children's Villages was able to provide all 1271 families with relief packages. Each package contained rice, canned fish, spices, and dry rations. This was a life-saver for them; one could only wonder how long they would have had to bear hunger if these packages hadn't reached them on time. The biggest challenge was to organize the required purchases and arrange deliveries of these relief packages to identified families in need without breaking curfew regulations. This was overcome with the support received from government authorized wholesalers who also offered to make deliveries using their own vehicles which had special curfew passes. Not just relief packages, these families were also distributed leaflets indicating clearly all precautionary measures that needs to be taken to protect themselves from the coronavirus. They were also provided with safety items such as face masks and hand wash. At a time when almost all economic activities had come to a standstill, it was no easy feat to organize such community projects. Fortunately, the confidence and reputation the government and the community has on SOS Children's Villages helped SOS staff a lot when coordinating these activities.

Deliveries began on the 2nd of April that ensured all 1271 families received the aid they were hopefully waiting for with much expectation. It is noteworthy that all of this was done without making direct contact with the beneficiaries, but instead through efficient and effective coordination carried out by staff of SOS Children's Villages, especially the ones involved in the Family Strengthening Programme. This endeavor would not have been possible without the involvement of the National Director of SOS Children's Villages and all Project and Village Heads who worked together as one SOS Family to make this a reality.



BURSTING THROUGH OBSTACLES

STORY OF WASANTHI SEYA - AN OUT OF CARE YOUTH



“I felt the warmth of a lady who asked me to call her ‘mother’. I used to think to myself: so this is how the love of a mother feels like.”

Wasanthi Seya was brought to SOS Children’s Village Piliyandala in August of 1993. The sudden change in environment from an institution to a place called ‘home’ disconcerted her a little. She needed time to adapt and accept the change. And with time she didn’t just accept it, but also grew fond of it. Wasanthi grew up with five others like her, sent to SOS Children’s Villages to have a family. They called each other ‘Ayya’, ‘Malli’, ‘Akka’, ‘Nangi’; and although not by blood, they were still siblings by bond, love, and care.

“My mother used to cry and get emotional when I refused to eat, and I remember getting sick quite often after coming to my new home. I was rushed to the nearest clinic whenever I wasn’t feeling well. At SOS, everything was different. I got to wear clothes that I like, my mother cooked for everyone in the house, I went to school with my brothers and sisters, and slept in my own room. I completely forgot my past and where I came from. This was my home and this was my family. As I grew older, I understood that I was living at what is called ‘SOS Children’s Villages’ – a childcare organization, but it didn’t matter anymore. This was my family and I didn’t care what anyone said about it.”

Wasanthi grew up happily at SOS Children’s Villages in her home, loved by her mother and siblings. At age 18 she was transferred to the girls youth home of SOS Children’s Villages where young girls are taught to take care of themselves and gradually be independent. It was during this time that she partook and won all-island first place at a drawing competition! Their mentor at the girls’ youth home identified her creative skills and sent her for training at a salon where Wasanthi was eventually recruited as a beautician.

“I learned everything I could and didn’t stop there. I went on to follow many courses in cosmetology using my hard earned money as a beautician. I must say I got a lot of encouragement from my mother and senior staff at SOS whom we call ‘uncle’ and ‘aunty’. Of course, there were many hearsay from the community about where I came from, but I stayed focused. I left the girls’ home after two years and rented out a small house. My siblings and I brought our mother to our new house and cared for her when she fell sick.”

After eight years at the salon Wasanthi had to face an obstacle life threw at her. She was ready for it, because she knew her ‘SOS Family’ would be there for her.

“The salon was facing many difficulties and we were asked to resign. I felt dejected and heavy-hearted, wondering what to do next. I thought to myself, ‘why not set up my own salon?’ It wasn’t easy. Despite many obstacles, I finally managed to open my salon and I have never felt such a sense of self-fulfillment before. Everything was elemental since I had just started up. There were some who scoffed at my new salon saying ‘you call this a salon?’ But I didn’t let such words get in my head. Those same people admire it now since I worked hard and gradually made it more professional. You have to prove the naysayers with your success. My formula for life is: be fair and confident. And no short-cuts.”

Wasanthi is a proud owner of a professional salon and has built her own house. From a lonely child without parents to a professional business-woman full of confidence, skill, and talent; SOS Children’s Villages is proud to call her their child.



**Donors Like You
Made Her Future Possible!**

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka won the 'Janabhimani Award' for the 'Best Social Service' rendered to Sri Lankan community in 2019. The Janabhimani Awards is an annual award giving ceremony organized by the All Ceylon Media Organization in association with Multi-Publishers in recognition of individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to Sri Lankan society.



Our Monaragala Vocational Training Centre reached new heights in the latter part of 2019 by winning two prestigious national awards at the 'World Youth Skills Day' which was organized by the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training. Accolades secured were for 'Best Island-wide Private Sector Training Provider' and 'Best Private Sector Training Provider for Uva Province'.



In the second week of July, it was announced by the Registrar General's Department to remove the 'marital status' question of parents from the new digital birth certificate as it causes prejudice to youth with their biological parents in question. This was an achievement for SOS and Generation Never Give Up (GNG) network (a group of individuals who grew up at childcare institutions) that pushed for this removal backed by SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka.



**“ONLY YOUR SUPPORT CAN
KEEP THEM SMILING”**

Please consider donating a little more because coronavirus pandemic has badly affected the funds we receive to care for our children. It is with your kind donation that we fulfill the daily needs of our children such as meals, education, and healthcare.

DONATE TOWARDS

- ☐ **Education - Rs.2000**
- ☐ **Medical - Rs.4000**
- ☐ **Dry Rations - Rs.6000**
- ☐ **Any Amount -**

SELECT YOUR PAYMENT METHOD

Direct Deposits

Bank / Branch :

Amount :

Date :

Cheque (In favor of SOS Children's Villages Sri Lanka)

No :

Date :

Rs :

Credit Card (Visa/ Master Card)

Card No :

Expiry Date :

Amount Rs :

Donate Online - www.soschildrensvillages.lk

Signature :

Name:

NIC No:

Tel No:

Address:

I agree e-mail correspondence in future : ☐

Email:

PSN Number:
(Refer Envelope)

- ☐ **Hatton National Bank**
- ☐ **Sampath Bank**
- ☐ **Seylan Bank**

- ☐ **Commercial Bank**
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- ☐ **Bank of Ceylon**

A loving home for every child



**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**
SRI LANKA

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