SalGO News

May 2022 Issue 38

Friends of SalGO Assist,

As many of you know, I have been Chair of SalGO Assist since the charity began in October 2001. Of late, I have begun to feel that new leadership is required so, after discussion with the other Trustees I stepped down with effect from my 91st birthday (20th March). It has been a great privilege to serve the Charity, and our colleagues and beneficiaries in SalGOERCO in India, these 20 years.

You will, I'm sure, be mighty pleased that Denise, who has served on the committee from the beginning, has agreed to be Acting Chair at least until our AGM in October/November. Her enthusiasm, varied skills, and deep concern for the very poor of Andhra Pradesh whom we were set up to serve, are still at the top of the list of talents prized in our small charity. I believe we all, trustees, volunteers, and donors, together with our friends in India, will continue to deliver good care, hope and love for as long as we are needed.

Your fellow supporter, *Clifford Smith*

New Counsellor for PS & CS Homes

In February we were told of changes the Government are making to independently run homes. From April every Children's Home must have a counsellor from outside the Homes to talk to the children in their age groups and individually. Until now Warden's Shalem and Indira have performed this role. They have chosen Krupavaram, who has worked for 22 years in CASA, an Indian development and humanitarian organisation as a certified counsellor in the woman and child welfare department. The staff were very impressed with the gentle and loving way she spoke to the children and they in turn enjoyed sharing their thoughts with her. Krupavaram started on the 2nd April. We now have to find additional funds to pay her wages. As SalGOERCO is a charity she has kindly agreed to work for a reduced wage of R4000. At present rates, this is £40.00 a month. If anyone feels able to help us meet these costs we would appreciate it.



Help for the Elderly

The seven elderly men are now settled into their new home and SalGO Assist have raised the money to build them a proper toilet. However, SalGOERCO are struggling to raise enough money in the local community for their food and other needs.



Venkateswara Reddy is 75 years old. Since he joined Kachem, the elderly men's home, he says "I am better now I have daily food except one or two times in a week."

Please could you sponsor one of these men. £12 a month will help towards their support, but *any* small amount you can spare would be a big help and would ensure that they get meals *every* day of the week.



Sponsors urgently needed

In the last newsletter we told you of the 20 children waiting to join the home. So far we have found sponsors for nine. We still desperately need sponsors for the others. Joining the Homes has a transformative effect on the children's lives as we hear from Yaswanth:

"Most nights I sleep on my empty stomach! Early in the morning I would get up and start searching for waste material wandering some lanes, I would sell what I could find and buy anything to eat with that money, and most of the time I would be hungry and at that time I would fill my stomach with water. I forgot about the hunger when I arrived at Clifford Smith Home! I was able to make many friends through this home."





You can see the difference a few months in the Home has made to Yaswanth.



Bala Nagendra Reddy said: "I boarded so many trains to fill my stomach in one go and asked so many platforms But now with the God's grace and my sponsor's great support I'm able to eat all three on my stomach, I never thought I would go to school again in my life! But, by the way of SalGO Assist I'm going to be able to go to school again, many thanks to one and all especially to my sponsor."

Last month Shalem told us that the District Child Welfare Committee had brought a child to join the Home. Tejvath lost his father in 2016 when he was a toddler. His mother has tried her best to support her sons, but they were homeless and found wandering around begging for food. The older child has been admitted into a special home to help with his disabilities. Please would you consider sponsoring 7 year old Tejvath, who has had a very difficult life so far, to give him the support and encouragement he needs as he grows.





Among the other children waiting to join the Homes and considered most in need of a sponsor, are these two brothers aged 9 & 11 and this 6 year old girl.



Koteswararao Kotaiah (RIP)

It was with shock and sadness that we heard of the death of Koteswararao, on 12th January. He had served as treasurer of Jagannadhapuram Pentecostal Church and also of SalGOERCO these past 20 years. It was only in the last week that he began to experience heart and abdominal pains. Suddenly, while undergoing tests in hospital he had a heart attack and died. He was aged 73.

During their last visit to Bapatla, in February 2019, Pat and Clifford accompanied Koteswararao on a visit to the HIV/Aids families in Ambedkar Bavan, where the three of them distributed food supplies. Koteswararao is survived by his wife, Johnmani, his son, Sundarao and two grandchildren. He is sorely missed in church and community.

Good news for Appikatla


Venkateswarlu & Glory's house

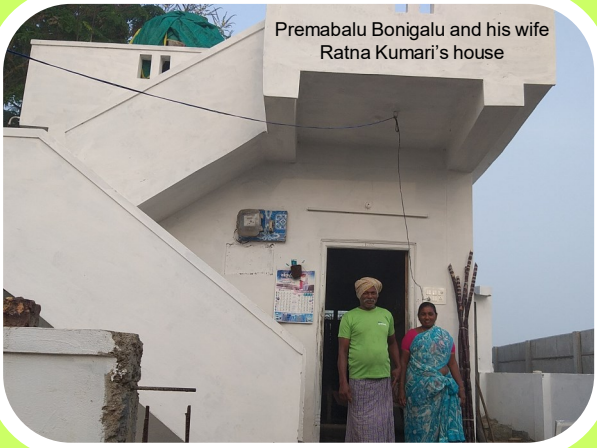
Appikatla - No snakes in our new homes! That thought must have crossed the minds of at least two families in the **tribal community of Appikatla** as they took possession of their very first proper home a few weeks ago. For years they've lived in leaky palm-leaf structures, in danger of being bitten by snakes, with rats scurrying about the earthen floor looking for food. The rainy season usually brought the collapse of one or two homes. Fortunately, the little church and community room, provided by SalGO Assist some years ago could also shelter needy families.

Venkateswarlu Kommarigiri and his wife, Bujji (Glory – the name she took at her baptism) and their two children) spent 5 years in a flimsy palm-leaf hut. When that became unsafe they moved to another for these last two years, until they were chosen by the whole community to move into this solidly-built home with a concrete slab roof, paid for mainly by CAF America and additional funds from SalGO Assist.

At much the same time **Premabalu Bonigalu and his wife Ratna Kumari** were finishing their new home. In celebration of this new chapter in their lives they've finished off the new home in colour instead of the usual white. Their son, Ashock (now married) will never forget the night, years ago, when a rat dropped through the palm-leaf roof onto his bed. Not surprisingly he never slept a wink that night!

(When the Covid 19 pandemic struck, in March 2020, all building work stopped at roof level and never resumed. When this Project (**21 Homes for Tribal Families**) was reopened, the rules had changed: the families themselves were required to pay about 9/10th of the cost of the roof! Only seven families could take on that challenge themselves. The other fourteen were too poor.

Since 2016, CAFA, a large international charity based in the USA, which has kindly approved SalGO Assist as a responsible local partner charity, has sent money to undertake this Project. So far, in addition to the seven families who could raise the Rupees 50,000 to add a roof, five homes have been completed and handed over to overjoyed families. In the last few months the cost of a new roof has increased to approximately £600.


Premabalu Bonigalu and his wife Ratna Kumari's house

Contact us at **enquiries@salgoassist.org**
Donations can be made via: **https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/10477**