

SPARKES HOME SRI LANKA Newsletter 2019

Charity registration number : 1128189



A decade on from the end of the civil war

It wasn't only the tsunami that affected the east coast so badly, it was also the impact of the civil war. Now ten years on, the area has been helped with the return of infrastructure, new roads and tourism. However, there is still a huge need to look after girls from backgrounds of abject poverty without proper care.

Many of our girls are referred by the social services departments as the homes are acknowledged as safe havens for girls in need.

The news of the horrific atrocities on Easter Sunday and their aftermath was appalling. We have been in regular touch with our contacts in Sri Lanka. Although one of the incidents on the east coast was close to our Kalmunai home, none of our homes were directly affected. The situation in Sri Lanka has calmed down and travel warnings from overseas governments have been lifted.



Since our last newsletter in 2017, there have been seven visits by Trustees and other visits from Sparkes family members. Other friends have generously taken time out of their holidays to visit and support the homes.

The Work of Sparkes Home Sri Lanka

Sparkes Home Sri Lanka was founded following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. At the same time Sri Lanka was in the throes of a long civil war, which ended in 2009. The Methodist church asked us to build a home for displaced and orphaned girls on the East coast.

We now support 4 homes for vulnerable and poverty stricken girls, some are orphans, others are from broken or endangered homes.

In addition to referrals from local communities and churches, our homes are viewed as safe havens by the authorities for girls with troubled backgrounds. The girls all attend local schools and we provide them with a safe place to live where they can study after school and be given proper food, welfare and loving support throughout their primary and secondary education. We provide after school classes and each Home is given a trip every 2 years to another part of the island.

We also support a wonderful nursery school in the Kallar area.



OUR FOUR HOMES

KALLAR

Kallar is our original home, purpose built by us, on the East coast and has up to 25 Tamil girls living in the Home.

It is always a pleasure to visit Kallar as the girls and staff are so happy and welcoming and the home is in such beautiful surroundings, on the edge of a lagoon. A highlight of any visit is a trip to the beach followed by ice creams for all. We provide additional classes in English and Maths, and we are currently working towards upgrading the English provision. Volunteer visits are hugely appreciated! All girls in the home have been referred by social services.





KALMUNAI

12 miles south of Kallar, this home is an old Dutch style building in a beautiful compound.

The girls continue to perform well academically as they are fortunate to be able to attend the neighbouring Wesley College which has an excellent reputation. There is a regular attainment of university places. The minister and his wife run a fantastic home where the girls are all given huge support and love. The girls were looking forward to welcoming a party of Downe House girls to stay in July, but understandably this trip has been postponed after the recent bombings.



HATTON

In the centre of the tea-growing area, we co-fund this Home with the Methodist church in South Korea. The girls are mostly from the tea estate workers families, from very troubled backgrounds. After an unsettled period and discussions with the Methodist Church, the management committee for the home has changed and is already showing tangible improvements.



TUMMODERA

Situated just north of Colombo airport on the west of the island, this Home had a rebuilding programme two years ago, financed by a generous donor. Unfortunately the home was hit by terrible floods in May 2018. The community rallied in the most wonderful way and as the waters receded they all helped clean up and provide new bedding and other essentials. Luckily there was no permanent damage to the home and it was reassuring to see that the recently raised games area withstood the floods. Unfortunately some staff accommodation was badly damaged and needs rebuilding. The home is now very much part of the local community.



SILVER BELLS NURSERY SCHOOL

This is in a very remote village among the lagoons of the Eastern Province. Run by two dedicated and dynamic teachers, the children receive an excellent pre-school education as well as a midday meal.

Without pre-school, access to primary schooling is difficult. We are currently enlarging the wooden school building to increase pupil numbers and installing outside playground equipment.

Thanks to a very generous donor we have recently started to fund an inspirational pre-school and day centre in Angulana. This is a very poor fishing community just south of Colombo.



UNIVERSITY GIRLS

We are very proud of our first two university graduates from Kallar! Sulakshana and Thushathini were among our very earliest girls in Kallar. Sulakshana graduated in Hospitality and Tourism and is currently lecturing at a college in Kalmunai. Thushathini is about to marry and join her husband in Iceland where he is on an agricultural scholarship. Three girls from Kalmunai have graduated and have applied for teaching posts. We currently have three girls from Kallar at university and a further two from Kalmunai about to start.

University tuition is free and we provide each girl with money for board, lodging and books.



VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

As Sri Lanka becomes an increasingly popular tourist venue, we have many friends and donors who visit our homes while on holiday. The girls and staff are always delighted to see visitors and they are all impressed by the enthusiasm of the girls and dedication and love of the staff.

Volunteers in the Homes are enormously appreciated, the girls benefit so much from having English spoken to them on a daily basis and learn so much about the outside world. This year we have had volunteers in both Kallar and Kalmunai. We are very grateful to them all.



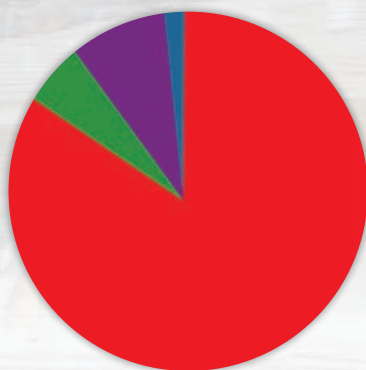
"Grace and I spent 4 weeks volunteering with Sparkes Homes in Sri Lanka. We divided our time equally between the homes at Kallar and Kalmunai which gave us an even greater insight into the life in a Sparkes home. Our sticker-fuelled study sessions were held every afternoon and it was gratifying to see an improvement in the younger girls' English by the time we left. It was interesting to talk to the A levels girls as they were the same age as us. Comparing our lives with theirs made us even more determined to help the girls with their English and to boost their aspirations. Our trip to Sri Lanka to visit the homes was second to none, everyone was so welcoming and the girls made lasting impacts on our thoughts - we hope to be back in the near future to pick up where we left off."

Minna and Grace

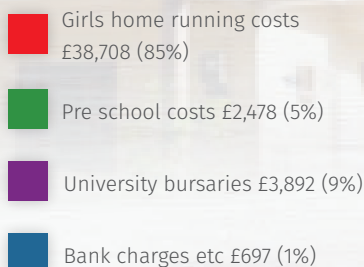
HOW WE RUN OUR HOMES

All the homes are run by the Methodist Church with funding from Sparkes Home Sri Lanka. The Church has a children's department that liaises with the resident ministers and the house mothers. We have an excellent relationship with the Church and in particular the head of the children's department, Gloria de Silva. The trustees visit the homes regularly, often accompanied by Gloria. The last visit was in February 2019. All monies sent from the UK are fully accountable right through to the rice on the table.

HOW WE SPEND YOUR MONEY



Expenditure 2018



We are continually grateful to our regular donors who provide us with our 'bread and butter' funds through their standing orders. Fund raising events are crucial for our funding and in March 2018 we had a very successful 'Call My Wine Bluff' quiz night in London. In addition, generous individuals raised funds from runs, ceilidhs, boat trips and school events. Thank you so much.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

It costs little more than **£1.50** a day to support one girl. If you would like to support Sparkes Home, please use the form attached to this newsletter or contact us direct at sparkeshome@btinternet.com.

We are a very small charity run by 7 trustees, who visit at least twice a year. We have no overheads apart from the bank charges for our monthly remissions to Sri Lanka and payments to 'Just Giving'. All postage, travel and any other expenses are met by the trustees themselves. Therefore all money donated goes straight to Sri Lanka and straight to the girls.

Sparkes Home Sri Lanka - Standing Order Form

I would like to set up a monthly/quarterly/annual* standing order gift of:

Donation of **£20** **£30** **£50** **Or other**

Amount in words

Date of first payment and thereafter until further notice

Title Initials Surname

Address

Town Postcode

Telephone Mobile

Email

Payment Details:

Please pay the above amount on the specified date each month/quarter/year * to:

HSBC, The Commons, High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8JX

Sort Code: **40-41-01** For account: **Sparkes Home Sri Lanka** Account No: **21271954**

PLEASE PRINT

Account to be Debited:

To the Manager Bank/Building Society

Town/City

Account Name:

Account No: Sort Code:

Please sign Date

☐ **PLEASE TICK THIS BOX:** to enable Sparkes Home Sri Lanka to claim a further 25% tax rebate on your donation (GIFT AID). It will not cost you anything. You just need to be a taxpayer.

giftaid it **DECLARATION:** I am a taxpayer and want to claim back the tax on all donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years until I notify you otherwise. My tax bill this year will be more than this gift.

Please complete this form and return it to Juliet Stoker, Sparkes Home Sri Lanka, 17 Glendarvon Street, London SW15 1JS.
Once received, we will keep a copy and send the original standing order form to your bank so that they can process payments.

Charity registration number: 1128189

Thank You

A very big thank you to all of our
sponsors and donors



Registered Charity No. 1128189

www.sparkeshomessrilanka.org

The costs of this newsletter have been met by a private donor.