

Prayas Trust

PRAYAS TIMES

The joy of giving back

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HAPPY GIRLS LEARN BETTER!



The renovated, 100-toilet sanitation complex
funded by Prayas Trust in association with the L&T CSR team
in the Girls Higher Secondary School, Ashok Nagar

FOREWORD



Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam
President Prayas Trust

LET'S "GIVE" OUR BEST!

In today's world, people take many things for granted. Good sanitation facilities with clean, safe toilets is one of them. Ironically, there is still a sizable population that does not have access to basic sanitation. We, at Prayas, have been doing our bit to improve Water and Sanitation facilities in the communities around us. One such initiative is the recently inaugurated sanitation complex at the Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, completely funded by Prayas Trust and the CSR department of L&T Construction. Through this initiative, we have significantly changed the lives of the students as water, sanitation and hygiene contribute to their learning and school experience in many ways by enhancing cognitive functions and attention; improving attendance and increasing their sense of dignity and safety. Most importantly, children find more time for their learning process. You will read all about it in this edition of Prayas Times.

We have embraced digitalization not just with the hospital management software at the Prayas Medical Centre but also with the refurbished website www.prayastrust.com that sports a user-friendly interface, has dynamic functionalities, infographic elements and a newly introduced page to attract donations. Prayas found new office space at the L&T campus that allows us to streamline our activities better whilst staying connected with our staff members who are doing their bit for us.

Apart from all these, we have been organizing health and welfare camps for the underprivileged like diabetic camps, eye camps, etc. We have reached out to the tribal community living in the remote area of Annamalai Tiger Reserve, providing them with basic necessities. Our members have also been supporting the vocational training initiatives of Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) by buying handmade products like bags, purses, wall hangings, and the like made by them. It is heartening to see the beautiful detailing and perfect symmetry in these products because we know the effort that goes into creating each one of them.

Children are our future and we, at Prayas, are committed to developing their individuality, which, was demonstrated at the Sports day celebration at the Prayas Tuition Centre. Even very small children showed their spirit of sportsmanship which leads me to reiterate that it is imperative to shape young minds and imbibe in them values that will make them better citizens.

We are determined to create a higher quality of life for all people and do our part to achieve common prosperity, social progress and stability. Through this issue of Prayas Times, we share with you some moments to cherish from our world.

Happy reading!

ALL THANKS TO THE TOILET!

2.4 billion people worldwide do not have toilets; the consequences of this kills more children than Aids, Malaria, and Measles combined. Just one gram of faecal matter can contain **10,000,000 viruses, 1,000,000 bacteria, 1,000 parasite cysts and 100 parasite eggs.** This is a huge and constant risk to public health and the only solution is better sanitation.



Till a few months ago, Om Sneha was just another student of the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Ashok Nagar, Chennai. Everything changed when the 11th std public examination results were announced in which she emerged as one of the State toppers with 594 marks out of 600 and centum in 4 subjects. She credits not just her teachers for her academic excellence but also the improved sanitation facilities of the school that helped her concentrate on studies better.

"Earlier the toilets in the school were just basic structures, we did not have running water and, most times, we just held our bladder till we reached home. It caused a lot of discomfort but now things are so much better with the renovated complex," says the confident girl who aspires to be an IAS officer.

The renovated, 100-toilet sanitation complex, funded by Prayas Trust in association with the L&T CSR team, was inaugurated by Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam, President Prayas Trust on 22nd June 2018 in the presence of Mr. S. M. Manoharan, Chief Educational Officer, Mr. Rajeev Bhatnagar, Advisor CSR & CSTI L&T, Mrs. R.C. Saraswathi, School Headmistress, members of Prayas Trust, CSR team members and teachers. Speaking at the occasion, Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam said that clean and safe toilets were prerequisites for health, dignity, privacy and education. She stressed the importance of maintaining the toilets as poor sanitation was the cause for several unnecessary sicknesses. She shared interesting data that one of the biggest factors causing girls to leave schools and colleges was poor toilet facilities. The introduction of toilets at schools immediately led to a 15% increase in the attendance rate of girls. She concluded by detailing the plans of Prayas Trust in the areas of education, water and sanitation.



"Earlier the toilets in the school were just basic structures, we did not have running water and, most times, we just held our bladder till we reached home. It caused a lot of discomfort but now things are so much better with the renovated complex."

- Om Sneha

Mrs. Saraswathi profusely thanked Prayas and the L&T CSR teams for helping them retain the school as one of the model government schools in the district. She stated that every student was being taught safe sanitation practices including mandatory washing of hands after using the toilet which can prevent a host of diseases.

"We couldn't wash our hands before as there were no wash basins or running water," laments Jeevitha Anand, a girl of many expressions studying in the 12th. "Today I am proud that my school has the best facilities. One day I am going to give back to the school tenfold. I know my future is very bright and I will work hard," says the girl as she gets framed by the newly inaugurated sanitation complex over an exceptionally bright sky probably mirroring her hopes for the future.



Today I am very proud that my school has the best facilities. One day I am going to give back to the school tenfold. I know my future is very bright and I will work hard.

- Jeevitha Anand





PRAYAS TRUST FINDS A NEW HOME AT L&T CAMPUS!

A NEW AND REDESIGNED PRAYAS WEBSITE LAUNCHED!

The new office space of Prayas Trust at the L&T Construction Manapakkam Campus was jointly inaugurated on 13th June 2018, by Mrs. Suryakumari Ramakrishna, Founder President of Prayas Trust and Mrs. Chitra Rangaswami, Former President of Prayas Trust in the presence of Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam, President of Prayas Trust and other Prayas members. Mr Rajeev B Bhatnagar, Advisor –CSTI & CSR, Mr Vinod Chacko, GM & Head Corporate Communications, and other employees, also attended the function.

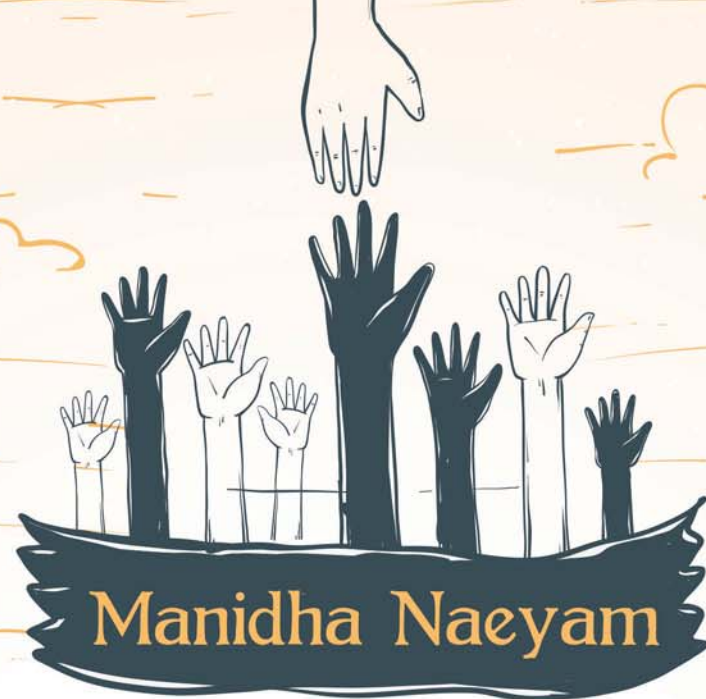


For Mrs. Suryakumari Ramakrishna the occasion was an opportunity to walk down memory and she exclaimed that Prayas Trust had grown from “5 to 5,000!” She reminisced about the early years of Prayas, the joy of receiving the first donation and appreciated the dedication and commitment of the Prayas team to keep the flame burning. Speaking from her heart, Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam shared about the recent achievements of Prayas and their immediate plans to spread their ambit of services. She requested the members to continue their diligent work to transform the lives of the underprivileged. She took the opportunity to thank the L&T Management for providing a fully functional facility to Prayas.

A freshly redesigned and refurbished website of Prayas Trust was also launched by Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam, as part of the day's programme. www.prayastrust.com sports a user-friendly interface with dynamic functionalities, infographic elements, a newly introduced donation page and a video section. Initiated by the Prayas team, the website was designed by Corporate Communications with the support of ISD team.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs. Sathya Ravichandran, Secretary Prayas Trust, to conclude the event that was anchored by Mrs. M. Chandra, Joint Secretary.





MANIDHA NAEYAM RECOGNIZES PRAYAS FOR HUMANITARIAN WORK

The humanitarian efforts of Prayas Trust for the community was recognised by Manidha Neiyam, a well-established IAS Academy at the Kamarajar Arangam on 5th August, 2017. The academy, instituted by Mr. Saidai S. Duraisamy, the former Mayor of Chennai, provides free IAS and IPS coaching for deserving, underprivileged students.

The award recognizes the far reaching initiatives of Prayas Trust in the areas of education, healthcare, water and sanitation, childcare and skill building. "This award reinforces our belief that we are on the right path and, at the same time, reminds us of the great responsibility we carry forward towards the disadvantaged in the community," said Meena Subrahmanyam, appreciating the dedicated efforts of her team in the same breath.

The award was handed over to the Prayas team by Ms. Santha Sheela Nair, a retired IAS officer. It was a very proud and joyous moment for all the office bearers of the Prayas Trust who were present at the occasion.



**Nothing great was
ever achieved without
enthusiasm**

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson,
American Philosopher*

Awards

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD

Prayas Trust was presented with the Social Responsibility Award for its role in promoting best medical care and rehabilitation for the disadvantaged senior citizens on International Day for Older Persons.



ADOPTING BEST PRACTICES IN HEALTHCARE

At the CHC Conclave in Mumbai, Prayas Trust was honoured for adopting best practices in Healthcare by the Larsen & Toubro Public Charitable Trust.



NATIONAL SERVICE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AWARD

Prayas Trust was awarded the 'National Service under the Leadership of Women Award' for its substantial contribution in bringing positive social change through women leadership



PRAYAS MEDICAL COMMITTEE WOMEN OF SUNSHINE!

A year ago, a group of women proved that the power of determination has no equal. They had been working in perfect synergy, balancing each other's strengths to get Prayas Medical Centre ISO certified. The process involved copious amount of documentation and stringent adherence to the highest standards of quality in all aspects of Healthcare Management. Every step of this journey spearheaded by Mrs Ezhil Jayakumar and mentored by Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam, President Prayas Trust and Mrs. Vasanti Satish, Managing Trustee was a milestone in itself. Finally, when the ISO certification was officially received on 7th August 2017, there were misty eyes and a quiet celebration.



"We are doing a good job at the Prayas Medical Centre, so why do we need to be ISO certified was a question that we heard from some quarters," shares Mrs. Vasanti with her trademark smile and elaborates, "ISO 9001 is a Quality Management System (QMS) standard that comes with numerous benefits for the medical centre. To start with, we embrace the concept of quality through continual improvement. Continued customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of QMS and that is what we want to give our patients who are predominately from disadvantaged families."

Chipping in Mrs. Sathya Ravichandran, Secretary of Prayas Trust says "ISO certification also ensures that the employees of the medical centre are empowered. It provides them a clearer framework on expectations, procedures and work instructions and they receive actionable feedback through process metrics on their performance resulting in improved work culture and more professional staff."



Each of us manage the departments assigned to us as holistically as possible. We know we are small links to the larger chain of bringing positive social change. We regularly share best practices and compare notes. There is much teamwork



member covering HR, Administration, Lab, Physiotherapy, Scan, Dialysis Unit, Dental, ENT, Dermatology, Orthopaedic, Paediatric & Gynaecology, Purchase, Maintenance and the like.

"I have been associated with Prayas Medical Centre for more than 14 years and I feel the same sense of pride even now when I tend to the patients," says Ms. Elsy P, a nurse at PMC. "The atmosphere here is empowering and we are given regular training to enhance our skills. The best part is that I have never stopped learning."

For Mrs Meena B, Prayas Medical Committee member, who has been associated with the centre from its inception, every day is a new day. While there are new challenges, there are also better ways of doing things. "Each of us manage the departments assigned to us as holistically as possible. We know we are small links in the larger chain of bringing positive social change. We regularly share best practices and compare notes. There is much teamwork," she muses.

For the lab technician trio of Varun P, Theresal A and Venkatesan who have all been part of the medical centre for several years, the ISO certification has brought more discipline to their day-to-day activities. "Now my brains are attuned to follow protocol



Our strategy was simple, we synergised the strengths of the team and were meticulous in doing so. At this point, I would also like to wholeheartedly thank the team.



"We had a streamlined process to ensure that we pass the physical certification audit from Bureau Veritas Quality International, ISO 9001: 2015, an international standard related to quality management." Mrs. Vasanti's words are measured and she emphasises them with her gesticulations. "Our strategy was simple, we synergised the strengths of the team and were meticulous in doing so. At this point, I would also like to wholeheartedly thank the team."

Post the ISO certification, the team continued to make far-reaching changes in their way of working and running the Prayas Medical Centre. An eight-member team called the Prayas Medical Committee headed by Mrs Vasanti was formed to ensure that the daily activities were streamlined and managed professionally. Each department of the medical centre is supervised by a team

while testing. All those checklists have become a muscle memory,” says Thersal A., who has been associated with the centre for more than 9 years.

For Jeevitha, another nurse at PMC, the main catalyst is the encouragement from the team. “When we do good work, we are recognised not just by the patients but by the Prayas team who sometimes literally handhold us through tough times. We are now a family,” she adds with a beaming smile.

“Yes, for sure we have been making a difference in the lives of our patients,” exults Mrs. Vasanti. “Their smiles are ours, their sadness are ours as well. We are part of all their highs and lows. Like, for example, the first time, when a lady experienced clear vision thanks to the spectacles provided to her at our eye camp, she was crying in joy and let me tell you, we weren’t dry-eyed either. Every time our patients improve post dialysis, we feel so much better. We have had three generations of a family visit us for treatment on the same day, at the same time – a grandmother, mother and daughter. Post treatment, they posed for a picture for us, all of them smiling. That picture is more ingrained in our hearts than in the phone on which it was taken. This is our calling,” sums up Mrs Vasanti, her cheeks flushed like the simple pink bead necklace on her neck.

Meanwhile it was time for the ladies to take stock of the daily activities. The evening meeting of the Prayas Medical Committee begins in right earnest. There are more milestones to achieve and each member is determined to give off her best. Outside, the busy traffic buzzes while the orange sun remains obstinately in the sky. And, it is almost as if the sun will never set on Prayas Medical Centre.



When we do good work, we are recognised not just by the patients but by the Prayas team who sometimes literally handhold us through tough times. We are now a family.



106 BENEFICIARIES FOR PRAYAS DIABETIC CAMP



Prayas Trust in association with the Indian Diabetic Research Foundation conducted a Diabetic Camp on 20th January, 2018 at Prayas Medical Centre that had 106 beneficiaries screened for high blood sugar related diseases, of which 58 were known diabetics. 11 more people were found to be diabetic and counselled on how to manage the long-term medical condition by the IDRF team. The participants of the camp were appraised of the symptoms of Diabetes which include frequent urination, intense thirst and hunger, weight gain, unusual weight loss, fatigue, cuts and bruises that do not heal, male sexual dysfunction, numbness and tingling in hands and feet.

The camp concluded with members of Prayas Trust felicitating the IDRF team with mementos.



PRAYAS GIVES NEW LEASE OF LIFE!

Prayas Trust provided timely financial help to Ms. Keerthana who was suffering from a heart problem that required immediate valve replacement. She is the daughter of Mr V. Munuswamy who was a crane operator at L&T.

“My daughter has a new lease of life thanks to the support from Prayas. We are so touched and indebted,” said an emotional Munusamy. The Prayas team visited Ms. Keerthana at the hospital post the successful operation. Her quality of life has improved drastically post the valve replacement and she has made a complete recovery.



UPLIFTING THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Prayas Trust showed its commitment towards the upliftment of the deprived and underprivileged of rural India by reaching out to the tribal community, living in the remote areas of the Annamalai Tiger Reserve to provide them with basic necessities.

Representing Prayas, Mr. Bavithran from Mastrowin Lifeline, manager of the pharmacy at the Prayas Medical Centre handed over utility kits to the tribal members. The kit included food items, honey, umbrellas, bags and emergency lights.

It was heartening to see the joy in the faces of these marginalized members of the community, who face several issues like acute poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, lack of basic facilities and infrastructure. The villages thanked Prayas Trust for its timely help.



SAFE SANITATION FOR IRULA COMMUNITY

Prayas Trust contributed INR 50,000 towards the construction of toilets in association with the NGO, Ennagalin Sangamam (NDSO) for the women of the Irula community at Gumudipoondi.

45 toilets were built within a month of the launch of project, the scope of which is to build 100 toilets for the Irula community, a marginalized tribal group, through an integrated approach to shelter, water and sanitation and building awareness on social issues.





Students of the Prayas Tuition Centre and Prayas members came together to celebrate Pongal on 15th January 2018. The students spoke on the importance of sustainability and environmental conservation while paying obeisance to the Sun God.

Pongal means 'spilling over' and the harvest festival derives its name from the tradition of boiling rice in a pot till it starts to overflow. The students followed popular traditions like drawing of rangolis and cooking of the Pongal dish, which is a preparation of rice boiled with milk and jaggery.

They concluded the celebration with an impromptu Kummi dance, a simplistic dance form with rhythmic clapping accompanied by actions related to harvesting.

FIGHT TB, SAVE LIVES

The Prayas Trust organised a TB camp in collaboration with REACH, an NGO that works towards fighting and controlling Tuberculosis at the Prayas Medical Centre. Tuberculosis, is an extremely infectious bacterial disease characterized by the growth of nodules (tubercles) in the tissues, especially in the lungs and affects numerous people in India. The camp was the right medium to continue to create awareness about this potentially deadly disease. About 60 people benefitted from this camp.



BEYOND THE SCARF!

Prayas Trust supported the vocational training initiatives of Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) by buying handmade products like bags, purses, wall hangings, and the like made by the members of SCARF. This gesture not just boosted the morale of the members but also brought smiles to their faces. To further encourage them, the Prayas team placed more orders for these products.



BEING A GOOD SPORT!

The much awaited Annual Sports Day was held on the 25th February 2018 at the Prayas Tuition Centre. The students exhibited their spirit of sportsmanship whilst thoroughly enjoying the occasion. Students from classes 1 to 9 competed with each other, class wise, amidst cheers and cries of encouragement during the events such as dashing the bottles, balancing the balls, pinning the paper, etc .

There were also fun games organized for the teachers and members.

Ms. Meena Subrahmanyam, President Prayas Trust, cheered the students and advised them to be compassionate and kind while focusing on their education.



NEER MOR (BUTTERMILK)



Neer Mor (Buttermilk) was distributed daily during the month of May at the entrance of the Prayas Medical Centre, giving the general public a respite from the heat.

COOL SUMMER CAMP



Prayas Trust brought in summer cheer through a customized summer camp for disadvantaged children at the Prayas Tution Centre on 23rd of April 2018. The camp was inaugurated by Mrs. Meena Subrahmanyam amidst great fanfare from the excited children.

The students were taken back in time through traditional games like Gilli, Bambaram, Nondi, Adu Puli Aattam, Dhaayam, Palankuzhi, Kho-Kho, etc. much to their delight. The mobile toy van and tuition teachers helped them learn through interactive quizzes, board games and play-acting.

It was a fun filled week of learning and play. The students were given healthy snacks along with beverages like rose and chocolate milkshakes.



IT'S ALL IN THE BLOOD

A blood group identification camp conducted by Prayas Trust for the students of SBM Primary school in Thiruverkadu benefitted over 166 students.

Members, office bearers and trustees of Prayas actively participated in the camp with each group handling specific responsibilities that included filling in the details of the students and segregating them towards the technicians. The lab technicians collected the samples and tested the blood group of each student. The teams were helped by a few volunteer students to clean the testing equipment. The students were sensitized about the importance of blood group identification especially in sudden or unforeseen circumstances like accidents where group awareness can save time and lives.

The Head Master of the school, Mr. V.P. Obed thanked the Prayas team for this initiative, appreciated their selfless efforts to serve the community and requested Prayas Trust to continue its support to the school in future.



50 BENEFICIARIES FOR THE PRAYAS ENT CAMP

The Prayas Trust organised an ENT camp at Prayas Medical Centre. Dr. Swarna Saravanan, ENT consultant at PMC spoke on WHO's initiative to eradicate deafness and the importance of screening new born children for deafness which is now practised in all government hospitals.

Speaking at length on how allergies cause various problems in the ear-nose-throat regions, he advised the participants on how one could avoid them by making a few lifestyle changes.

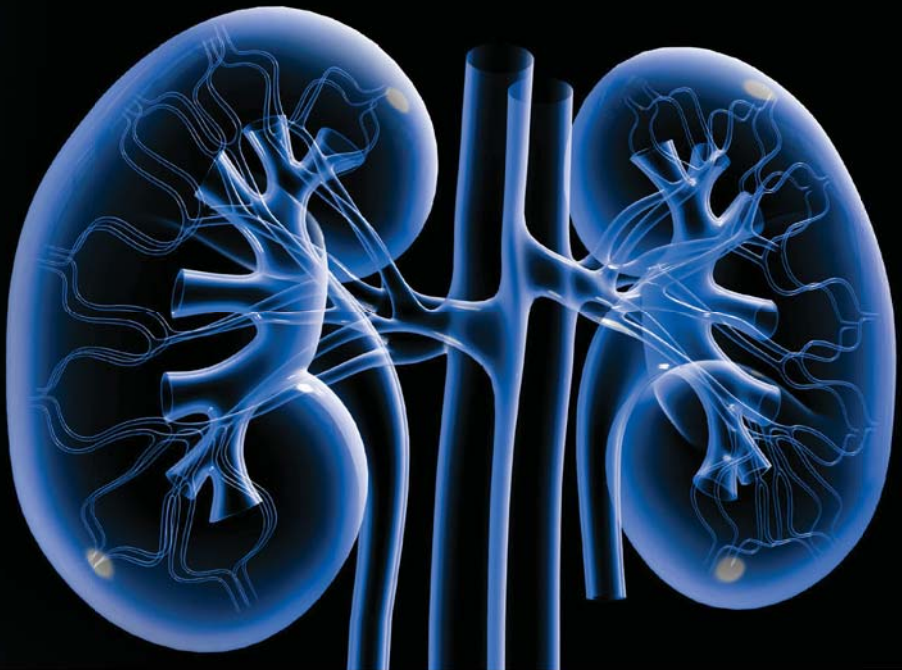
Around 50 people attended the camp.



PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE!

A kidney diseases awareness camp was conducted by the Prayas Trust in collaboration with Davita, on 29th July 2017. Dr. Shankar welcomed the audience and highlighted on how to prevent kidney related diseases.

About 60 people benefitted from this camp.



KNOW ALL ABOUT DENGUE

A Dengue awareness camp was organised by the Prayas Trust at the Prayas Medical Centre. Mrs. Sathya Ravichandran, Secretary of Prayas Trust set the tone for the camp and encouraged participants to consume Nilavenbu Kashayam (an ayurvedic concoction for Dengue) for a week as it increases immunity. Dr. Shankar, Medical Officer of PMC spoke about the symptoms of the disease and the right kind of treatment to be administered. He mentioned that if fever persisted for more than three days, the patient would need medical attention. Being a viral disease, he did not advocate any antibiotics. About 90 people benefited from this camp.



SUSTAINING BREAST FEEDING TOGETHER: AN AWARENESS CAMP

“Breast feeding is not a choice, it’s a responsibility”

The Prayas Trust organised a camp on Breastfeeding themed ‘Sustaining breast feeding together’ at the Prayas Medical Centre aimed at creating awareness on the various benefits of breastfeeding. This was the 6th consecutive year that such an awareness camp was being conducted by Prayas.

Emphasizing the importance of breast milk, Dr. Meenakshi, paediatric consultant at PMC said, “breast milk should be the child’s exclusive diet for up to six months.” Her talk concluded with a screening of a UNICEF video on breast feeding.





The Prayas Trust organised an eye camp in collaboration with Sankara Nethralaya at the Prayas Tuition Centre. All the arrangements were overseen by the hospital which included equipment, frames and refreshments for the patients. The patients were treated for eye related ailments with most of them being recommended for further treatment. Those with vision problems were provided spectacles free of cost.

About 11 surgeries were performed based on the diagnosis at the camp which had 249 beneficiaries



*Almost nothing need
be said when you have
eyes*

- Tarjei Vesaas
Norwegian poet
and novelist

MEDICINE ON WHEELS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED ELDERLY

Members of Prayas visited Trustpuram, 9th Cross Street where the mobile medical van targeting the disadvantaged senior citizens plies every Monday morning to offer health related services.

Dr. Shanmugam attended to the patients and prescribed medicines which were handed over with clear instructions. Mr. Naresh, project officer of Help Age India, sensitised members about the facilities offered by the Mobile Medical Van.

Mrs. Thangam Chockalingam and Mrs. Radhai Veerappan of Prayas interacted with the 50 beneficiaries of the camp aged between of 55 to 80, who expressed their gratitude for the consultation and medicines provided through the mobile medical service.



A MEANINGFUL REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION

Republic Day was celebrated enthusiastically by the members of Prayas Trust with the Kannagi Nagar Welfare Association at Perumbakkam. On the occasion, Prayas Trust in association with the Ambedkar Study Centre sponsored 40 buckets and mugs.

Promoting entrepreneurship and financial independence, Prayas Trust donated cash to six underprivileged women to start small scale businesses.

The local residents were extremely thankful for the initiatives taken by Prayas towards the betterment of their lives.





**DONATE TO
PRAYAS TRUST
AND MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!**

To make a life meaningful, even a small contribution towards any of our causes will go a long way in helping someone. Reach out to us at

044-2815 4632 or mail us at **prayastrust@gmail.com**

Donations to PRAYAS TRUST are exempt u/s 80G of Income Tax Act, 1961

Woman power to the fore! Brightening lives together



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