



# March 2019 Newsletter

## *Greetings from Cultural Academy for Peace!*

A lot has been happening here at Cultural Academy for Peace, and we thought there's no better way to give you the updates than through a Newsletter. It takes us great privilege to publish our newsletter, and we have tried to concise it for your easy reading.

### **International Women's Day Celebration:**

International Women's Day is celebrated every year on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March to celebrate womanhood and women's achievements. This year's International Women's day was based on the theme “#BalanceforBetter”, an initiative to help forge a more gender-balanced world.



Cultural Academy for Peace celebrated its International Women's Day by organizing members from different women groups, along with the entire staff team, the residents of Shanthibhavan, the advisory board members, government officials and civil society groups, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of

March at our shelter home, Shanthibhavan.

Eminent speakers inspired everyone with their powerful speech on womanhood and convinced everyone to be proud of being a woman! Mrs. Beena Sebastian highlighted upon the area of “fear” which are knowingly and unknowingly tutored by the society.

She highlighted upon this year's theme “#BalanceforBetter” and stressed upon the need to build a better world where there is gender equality and respect for life for all.





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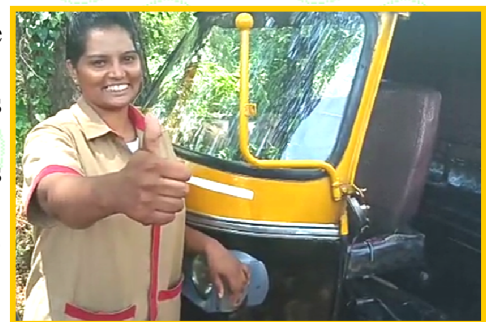
The Kerala State Women & Child Development Department's Protection Officer, Mrs. Deepa S. appreciated the work of Cultural Academy for Peace and encouraged the present female generation to be role models for the future generation whom they can look upon. Dr. Neena

Joseph, former faculty of Institute of Management in Government (IMG), strongly stressed the women to come forward and work parallel with men in the field of technology and politics.

May we create and find opportunities to celebrate womanhood every day!

### **Wheels for Women:**

This project was started to empower the destitute women who are bread winners and enable them to support their families financially with a steady income. So far we succeeded in giving training to 20 women to drive auto-rickshaws and to acquire a license. Recently, one of our beneficiaries succeeded to get a license for the auto-rickshaw and at present 3 are undergoing the training to learn driving.



### **Shanthibhavan:**

In Shanthibhavan, our shelter home, at present we have 30 residents: 18 children and 12 adults who are being taken care by 4-5 staff who are social workers by profession, and who are trained in counseling and life skills. At the moment, the primary school children are equipped with preparing for their exams, while the secondary school children are busy giving their exams.



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We are providing special tuition to the children who are academically backward and in need some form of assistance in addition to the regular tuition classes.

### **Chennamangalam & North Paravur Flood Relief Project:**

An extra-ordinary southwest monsoon in Kerala had unleashed floods and landslides in the state on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2018), the magnitude of which had rarely been observed in nearly a century. This completely left the entire state shattered. All the 14 districts were on red alert, 35 out of the 54 dams in the state were all opened together, first time in the history. One-sixth of the total populations of Kerala were directly affected in which nearly 483 people died, 15 went missing and about a million people evacuated!

Cultural Academy for Peace along with the partnership of Terre des Hommes (TDH) and AEIN, started a one year program for the “flood affected areas” of Chennamangalam and North Paravur; two small coastal villages near Cochin. This project has been set up with three main objectives:

1. Repairing of partially destroyed homes
2. Economic rehabilitation through support for livelihood or income generation programs
3. Addressing the issues of WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) and Public Health





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Almost halfway through the project, we were able to support 29 beneficiaries, out of which we were able to repair the houses of 20 beneficiaries, provide economic rehabilitation to 88 beneficiaries and address the issues of WASH and Public Health by giving out water filters, hand-wash kits and conducting awareness programs.

The project was able to sponsor for a wide range of income generation programs such as, tailoring units, looms, carpentry, masonry and black-



smith equipments, cattle, poultry farms, studio, petty shops, candle and rosary making, catering and chips unit, ornamental pet shop, etc. In addition to this, we could also support a school

that was completely destroyed in the flood. We provided them furniture for the students and teachers, learning materials, teaching aids, sports equipment, a library shelf and books, and also doors for the bathrooms.



Our team also went one step further to strengthen the psychological health of the children. We organized a two day camp with an objective of Post Traumatic Stress Management (PTSM) for 95 children who were students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standard. We invited eminent trainers and volunteers to conduct classes for the children who were divided into groups according to their age groups.



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We will be conducting two more camps as the second and final stages of the PTSM. We have received a lot of support and encouragement from the local government of the two areas and also from the public who believed in us and stood by us in all the stages.

### **Kuramkotta Island Project:**

It is a Dalit (a member of the lowest caste in the traditional Indian caste system) island located in Cochin which is isolated from the mainland. At present, it has a rural population of 349. The only means of transportation of the residents of Kuramkotta to the mainland city is via a ferry. This, along with the whole island was destroyed by the flood and as a result, the people were completely isolated from the mainland.



We succeeded in helping them purchase a Yamaha motor for the ferry boat to improve transportation facility of the islanders and help them for easy access to the facilities of the mainland for livelihood, health, education needs. It is running smoothly and to a huge extent, their

lives have come back to normalcy. We continue our intervention through our interns and volunteers by frequent visits to the island to conduct a follow-up, which they report back to the staff. We are also working to come up with ways to introduce a livelihood program for the home makers of that island.



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#### **Acharya K.K. Chandy Commemorative Lecture:**

Beena Sebastian got her inspiration to establish the Cultural Academy for Peace from her parents Acharya K.K. Chandy and Mary Chandy, (one of the founding members of the Ashram) who committed their life to the Ashram which build an ecumenical centre in Central Kerala. This is where she got her motivation to dedicate her life to the cause of spreading the message and spirit of Peace, Non-violence and Justice.

The Acharya K.K. Chandy Endowment Trust holds a yearly lecture and get together. It is an opportunity to continue the legacy of Acharya who had inspired many to stand for the cause of Justice through Non-violent strategies.

It is also an opportunity to listen to socially relevant issues firsthand from experienced and acclaimed people from different walks of life. This year's lecture was on the topic:

“Spirituality & Accountability”. A panel of eminent scholars from different churches gave orations and their insights on the subject.



Spirituality & Accountability goes hand in hand. But in the churches and other religious places of worships of today's society, these two elements have lost its position. There is a shortage for spiritual leaders who gives importance to accountability also. As a result of this, many damages are occurring in religion, which is adversely affecting the religious communities. Therefore, we initiated to conduct this year's Acharya K.K. Chandy Commemorative Lecture on the topic: “Spirituality & Accountability”.



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Everyone who attended had a lot to take away with them. Some insights like how can we be both spiritual and accountable to oneself, other and to the Creator by doing little acts of random kindness, by learning to see the world without being judgmental. Altogether, it was an inspirational and a thought provoking experience.

# Upcoming Project

### **Food on Wheels Project:**

We know that India being second highest in the world population is not far behind when it comes to poverty. Though India is no longer a nation having the largest number of poor people in the world, it is still ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> globally. Even today there are 73 million people living in extreme poverty, among this, 25% of poverty rate is in rural areas and 14% in urban areas. Within this population, there are people from all age groups. Due to this, hundreds of our brothers and sisters, and children go to bed empty stomach almost every day, especially in the tribal and urban slums! Food is not a luxury for everyone and therefore it should not be wasted.

Keeping this in mind, Cultural Academy for Peace is starting a new initiative by the name: "Food on Wheels". This project is an offshoot of the "Wheels for Women" project. In other words, to implement this project, we will be making use of the vehicle and the women driver of the "Wheels for Women" project.



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With this project, we aim to prevent wastage of food materials and also to make good quality confectionaries available to the needy, i.e. the homeless, migrants, inmates of emergency and rescue homes. This project is an initiative to collect the extra or perishable food that gets piled up in the bakeries by the end of the day to

be either thrown away or to be served in the next morning batch. Once these food items are collected, we aim to deliver these to the target group. Though the main focus is on the children and women residing at the emergency and rescue homes, we also aim to reach out to those who are in need for food i.e. the homeless and the migrant population residing in the Ernakulam district.

The government has made provisions to provide wholesome meals to the children and women in shelter homes and care centers within the state and Ernakulam district. Many a times the food supplied are not adequate to meet the needs of the residents who are taking psychiatric medication and for the pregnant women, as they get cravings to eat at every short interval. We are careful in providing nutritive and healthy food for our members.

We aim to set up a 'Cool Room' for this purpose to store the dry food stuff where in the hungry can come in and pick up these items without any fear or stigma.

We managed to get an auto-taxi with the support of Petronet LNG Foundation for this project.







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In addition to this, we will have to hire a driver who can be assigned to collect the food stuff from the shopper or bakers, and also for the distribution of the same. In order to pay the driver, it costs about \$250.00 and €230.00 per month.

We seek partners, groups and individuals who can be a part of this project and contribute in their own ways.

We extend our deepest joy and gratitude to you and your group for partnering with us in our journey to make the world a better place!



**Thank You  
for your  
Support!**