Help the Helpless
Triannual Newsletter
Summer, 2020

Special Needs

If you could help support any of these special, urgent needs, we would be so grateful.

*COVID-19 Relief Fund in Ecuador

These funds will be used to offer temporary aid to families who are in need due to the economic effects of COVID-19. Many families are struggling to be able to provide food, to pay their children’s tuition or pay for other daily living expenses due to the loss of jobs.

*COVID-19 Relief Fund in India

Many families in India have approached the Headmaster of St. Mary’s, asking for financial assistance and food. Many of these people are daily wage earners who can no longer work due to the lockdown for COVID-19. These funds will provide immediate help to these families.

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Dear Help The Handless Friends and Benefactors:

It has been a very hard time for everyone; this hardmess increases even more for the poorest, since to their poverty were added insecurity, fear, hunger, which in this time have been tremendous.

After three months without being able to visit the families, we were finally able to meet with them again. It was an immense joy, both for them and for us. How I wish I could transmit to all of you their gaze, their gratitude, their hugs. In many homes, the first thing they said was: “Thank you, thank you... we have survived thanks to the food you sent us.” What is most tremendous is that it is not a figurative starvation, but real. They have been rationing daily what we sent them every 15 days.

One of the first experiences that we have been able to have has been the celebration of Corpus Cristi. We were not allowed to go out in procession, but Father David felt moved to do so, and we went out with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord had his procession!

It is difficult to imagine, but Jesus wanted to be present among the most miserable. We passed through an area where there are a lot of drug addiction and drug sales. There was the Blessed Sacrament followed by a small group of nuns and young people saying, “Blessed be Jesus,” and throwing rose petals. The Lord wanted to walk among these young people, with their faces marked by suffering and the vice of drugs. Surely it was their first and only suffering, and how much Mercy!

We finish by thanking you… we have survived thanks to the food you sent us, and your generosity that these types of programs exist.

We are grateful to you for your help in providing smart boards for our classrooms, ten hearing aids for our deaf-mute students, and folding wheelchairs for our special needs students. We now asking for your help in purchasing 30 more hearing aids for the remainder of the deaf-mute students, as well as help with building a speech therapy unit and furnishing it with the necessary equipment for St. Mary’s.

We are always grateful to Help the Handless. We are praying for all our children in the success of their board examination.

I. Maria Selvam
Administrator of St. Mary’s Schools

Greeting from India

Dear loving friends and benefactors!

Warm greetings and Easter wishes to all of you. Thank you for all your prayers and support to St. Mary’s. Things at St. Mary’s are running smoothly. The students are getting ready for their final examinations. Grades 10-12 will complete their exams in March.

This past year, we received adequate rain during the monsoon season, which we are thankful for. The winter was very cool, but now it is quite hot. However, all the children are in good health. Doctors visit often to check on the children, and there are no serious issues, for which we are very thankful.

This year, as usual, there were no Corpus Christi processions due to the pandemic. We are very grateful for your support this past Christmas.

During the Christmas program and annual day of celebration, the children received a lot of gifts, new outfits, study materials, and new uniforms. This was made possible due to your support.

We are always grateful to Help the Handless, and we are praying for all our students. Please pray for all our children in the success of their board examination.

Easter wishes to all of you. Thank you for all your prayers.

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We have a training center at St. Mary’s which teaches skills that students can use to get a job. In the Indian culture, the majority of women are not allowed to pursue higher education or a job once they are married. However, with high unemployment rates and other family and financial issues, more women are looking for day labor. This is one of the main reasons the Skill Development Training Center was created. Once a student completes the training, St. Mary’s will make arrangements to either place the student in a job or help him become self-employed.

Staff from St. Mary’s go to nearby villages to seek out those who could benefit from this program. It was at one such village that they found Madulamapet Aparna. She was 18 years old and was deaf and mute. She had completed the 10th grade, but her parents had taken her out of school due to her disability. The staff convinced her parents of the great opportunity of allowing her to enroll in the tailoring course. Her parents were initially nervous to let her go, but she now goes to and from St. Mary’s each day, understands what the teacher is saying, and is learning to stitch, embroider, etc. Madulamapet and her parents are very grateful for the opportunity to learn such a necessary skill and be assured of a job when she graduates from the program. It is thanks to your generosity that these types of programs exist.

Skil Development Training Center
Update from Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dear friends from Help the Helpless:

We’re drawing close to Easter and to our Lord’s Resurrection. We hope that you are able to live these days with devotion. Thanks to you, we see this mystery of the death and resurrection in those “little ones” so loved by our Lord. We are constantly meeting families that live in situations you could call truly deathly: their souls dead for the lack of knowledge in the love of the Lord and for the ways in which they have fallen and cannot escape. They suffer mortal wounds in their human dignity, living as animals in the midst of poverty, and even more so, in misery, lacking everything that is necessary for their lives. Thanks to the fact that we can reach them, we see with great joy the mystery of the resurrection. We see how they discover their dignity as persons, as Children of God. Thanks to your help, we’re able to elevate their health, living conditions, and education so that they discover God who is love and who with His Providence, meets them in their needs, both spiritual and material. As their material suffering is attended to, a spiritual desire is born within them to thank and to love He who takes care of them.

We would like to share with you the story of the Medardo family. They are elderly grandparents raising their 2 grandchildren, ages 14 and 12. They were living in a house that was completely destroyed and on the verge of collapsing. The 2 children were abandoned by their mother who left them to live with another man. Their grandfather is very sick with diabetes and other illnesses, and the grandmother is very elderly. The children did not go to school and the young girl did not even know how to read or write. Thanks to your help, we were able to build a small house, very humble, but worthy. The boy and girl each have their own room, as do the grandparents. We were able to give them beds because before that, they had been sleeping on the floor. Improving their living conditions has given them dignity. The grandparents are going to receive the sacraments and get married. The children have started classes with a volunteer tutor who will get them ready to go to school. The other day when we visited, the boy started to cry because he wanted to go to school. We are very eager to have our students back with us as soon as we are able.

We are always praying for you, our dear benefactors. Also, we have requested the Montfort Fathers who live nearby to visit, the boy started to cry because he wanted to go to school. We are very eager to have our students back with us as soon as we are able. We are always praying for you, our dear benefactors. Also, we have requested the Montfort Fathers who live nearby to visit. Please pray for us.

Thank you, because you all make this mystery of “death and resurrection” possible in these people who are suffering. Thank you and happy Easter and Resurrection!

St. Eulogia

Update on Summer Mailing Special Needs

A special thank you to all those who donated to the special needs projects from our Christmas newsletter. We received over $3,000 to help repair the home and build a bathroom for the Ceduño Piloto Family in Ecuador, to help take care of Mrs. Rosa Pincay, an elderly woman who lives alone, and to purchase playground equipment at St. Mary’s School in India. It is not too late to donate to these projects. Please visit: www.helpthehelpless.com and click on the Give tab at the top.

An Update from St. Mary’s School in India

Dear loving friends and benefactors! Greetings! We are so grateful to you!

I hope you all are safe in the name of Our Savior, Lord Jesus Christ! Thank you for your continued support and prayers for the successful running of our schools for the poor and disabled. We believe in God’s love and the late Rev. Fr. Antony’s invisible blessings. As St. Paul said to the Ephesians, “I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you. I remember you in my prayers.”

I wish to give you an update as to how COVID-19 has affected our schools, children, and families. In February, the first cases of COVID-19 were identified in India. By March 23rd, a lockdown was instituted, and it has been this way since then. Our schools were immediately shut down, and all the children returned home where they currently remain. Even now, all religious places, educational institutions, and private companies and agencies remain closed. The lockdown is set to end August 31st, but as with many times before, it will most certainly be extended again.

At present, our staff continues to come to St. Mary’s according to the government regulations (only 50% of the teachers can be on campus at a time). For grades 10-12, the teachers delivered books to each family for distance learning. Since April, the government has also provided educational instruction for students on the TV. Online instruction for students at St. Mary’s is not possible as many families do not have access to a computer or the internet. However, they do have access to a TV for the government instruction.

We are preparing the school for when we can re-open. There are many new government regulations that we must follow. Therefore, we have to make many large scale modifications, such as hand washing stations and limiting the capacity of the classroom to 50%. Additionally, some of our students do not know basic hygiene practices, so we will have to teach them. However, we are very eager to have our students back with us as soon as we are able.

We are always praying for you, our dear benefactors. Also, we have requested the Montfort Fathers who live nearby to pray for you in their daily prayers and at daily Mass. Please pray for us.

With warm regards,

I. Mariaselvam

P.S. We are very sorry to say that we were not able to send the children’s letters to their sponsors for this mailing as the children are at home. We do not have a way to get a letter from each child. We are hopeful that you will receive a letter from your child in the Christmas mailing.

COVID-19 RELIEF FUND AT ST. MARY’S IN INDIA

Proper arrangements were not made by the government ahead of the lockdown in India, and so many in our area have been affected by economic struggles, particularly daily wage earners and farmers. They were not able to manage the situation. The shops initially closed, and people faced problems in getting basic necessities. They did not even have food stored up. Additionally, the daily wage earners were not able to work to earn money to even buy food. Poverty and unemployment made the situation more critical, and as a result, starvation became even more prevalent.

As a result, parents of our students came to us as well as poor families from other institutions. They had tears in their eyes as they requested help. They said that when their children were at St. Mary’s, they had food, safety, and shelter, but now they were not able to provide that. We helped by giving them money for necessities as well as food. But, over time, the number of those asking for help continues to increase.

In May, I approached Help the Helpless to ask for funding for a COVID-19 Relief program. The grant allowed us to give money to those parents in need as well as rice and groceries. All the parents who received aid were so very grateful to Help the Helpless. On behalf of St. Mary’s, we are also very thankful and grateful to all the benefactors because they gave their support, even those who are in the same situation. We are again arranging for parental support for the month of September, and we are asking for your prayers and generosity in helping us continue to give aid to those who need it.

Thanking you,
I. Mariaselvam

P.S. We are very sorry to say that we were not able to send the children’s letters to their sponsors for this mailing as the children are at home. We do not have a way to get a letter from each child. We are hopeful that you will receive a letter from your child in the Christmas mailing.
Dear Help the Helpless Friends,

The school year has been up and running for 2.5 months, and we are very happy. It has been a challenge because we have distance learning with virtual classes and not all the students are able to connect online. However, little by little, the parents are making an effort so that the children can connect and follow the classes. For those children who do not have the means to connect, the teachers are sending them papers. The Ministry of Education (government) is waging a war against us, because they say we should not be teaching classes by subject. However, we are fighting to give the children all the subjects so they can learn. We are encouraging parents to be brave and responsible with their children’s education. After this quarter, we are seeing that parents are making an effort to ensure that their children are doing their school work. The parents are saying that their children are learning. On Tuesdays, we invite the parents to Mass, and we are able to meet with the parents to see how things are going. There really is a family atmosphere. We are also very happy with how the teachers are doing with virtual learning. It is more work now for them, especially maintaining communication with the families, and they are working very hard.

The economic situation is very difficult for the families. In fact, there are still 100 students whose families have not been able to pay the tuition fees. In July, that number was nearly 300. However, they are confident that they will be able to get by. We know that the situation is very difficult so we only encourage them to pay what they can. We are very grateful for your donation to pay the teachers their monthly salary.

We thank you for the sponsorship of the families during this difficult period. Yesterday when we brought them their food baskets, they were very grateful because for many of them, it is the only thing they have to eat.

Once again, thank you very much for everything you do so that we can continue to bring hope and above all the presence of God to so many souls.

Sr. Ruth Ibañez, Superior and Principal of Playa Prieta School

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Note from Fr. Raphael

Dear GMHM benefactors, members of HTH:

We are so grateful for all your help! As soon as you heard about the crisis caused by COVID-19, you offered all your help for whatever was needed. What generosity! May God reward each one of you. I will put below some of the donations that you have sent this quarter:

1. Funding for woodworm treatment for the fourteen classrooms of the school in Playa Prieta which, as you know, are made of bamboo cane.
2. We have been approved to repair eight houses in Guayaquil, five of which are already finished.
3. Funding for the purchase of oxygen bottles used in Guayaquil.
4. 200 quick COVID-19 tests have been bought and distributed between Chone and Guayaquil.
5. We received funding for the salary of the teachers to be able to pay them $150.00 per month.
6. Finally, you have approved the five new university scholarships for students who would otherwise be unable to afford to attend the university.

With all that has been received, you have made it possible for us to give hope to some children who will be able to leave behind their poverty and human misery. You can be sure that the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother and all the Home of the Mother will be very grateful to you.

I remind you that every 16th of every month, the day that our Sister Clare Crockett and five companions died in the severe earthquake in Ecuador on April 16, 2016, we offer Mass for our benefactors. You, the members of HTH, are first in line! You will reap the fruits of your generosity on the day you stand before the Lord and hear from Him: “Come, blessed of my Father and take possession of the Kingdom, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink…”

With all my appreciation and love for you, I bless you paternally,

Father Rafael Alonso
Reymundo, President of the Mother

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Special Needs

If you could help support any of these special, urgent needs, we would be so grateful.

*Hearing Aids and Speech Therapy Room: $8,400*

This would fund the purchase of 50 more hearing aids and the construction of a speech therapy room, complete with necessary equipment for the deaf-mute students at St. Mary’s School in India.

*5 Computers for Teachers in Ecuador: $1,500*

None of the 23 teachers at Holy Family School in Playa Prieta, Ecuador, have computers. This would provide for those teachers most in need of one.

*Aid for Venezuelan Immigrants in Ecuador: $3,500*

This money will provide aid and relief to the many immigrants who have been forced to flee Venezuela and who have nothing.