



ROOFS FOR THE ROOFLESS

Partnerships for Rural Integrated Development and Empowerment - PRIDE

Dr.Chandran Devanesen Rural Community College (CDRCC)

8th Batch Convocation, February 8th 2011

The presence of large number of students, parents, visitors, guests and the special invitees at the Diploma Certificate Distribution Function bore ample testimony to the fact that Roofs is growing in stature, gathering support from a



wide range of well - wishers. There was no stopping the students and teachers from exhibiting their joy and exuberance to one and all present. The camaraderie amongst the students of the current and previous years was a clear sign of their love, respect and commitment to the organization. I am tempted to quote the words expressed by a group of students who were awaiting the arrival of the Chief Guest of the evening.

“We are so glad that we are bread winners for our family today. We were touted as irresponsible vagabonds by our parents, relatives, friends and neighbours until we were taken into the shelter of ROOFS. Since then our lives have changed dramatically. Our stint with Roofs has taught us discipline, love, affection, respect, gratitude and commitment. We are transformed and can face any situation with courage. We owe it to Roofs in general and our beloved teachers Sekar and Rajini who treated each one of us as their own children and nurtured us every minute of their time. We will be indebted to them and will deem it a pride to serve the organisation in the best manner required.” (Translated from Tamil language.)



For the management of ROOFS, the happiness shared by the students and parents was indeed rewarding. The presence of eminent guests including:

Prof. Dr. P. Mannar Jawahar, Vice Chancellor, Anna University as Chief Guest

Guests of Honour;

Mr. G.K.Selvaraj, Prof. Dr. John Reginald, Mr.Pratapkaran Paul, Mr. Sharath and Mr. Varadan, all from the Freemasons Fraternity,

Dr. A.Ramaswamy ,M.D., USA,

Dr. S. K. Vetrivel, Executive Director, India NGO Center, New Delhi

Mr. R. Gandhi - Senior Advocate, Chennai

Mrs & Dr. Mithra Augustine, Former Principal - Madras Christian College, and

Fr.Dr. Xavier Alphonse,S.J., Director, Centre for Research and Development for Community Education, Member, UGC., New Delhi.

This was a fitting tribute to the importance of the evening's function.

The function began with a prayer and was immediately followed by a welcome dance performed skillfully by CDRCC alumni. Soon after, the traditional "Kuthuvilaku" (Lamp) was lit by the Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. P. Mannar Jawahar - Vice Chancellor, Anna University, Chennai.



Mr. Ashok Sarrangan, Secretary, of the organization welcomed the gathering. Before his address he recalled the tremendous service put in by our late beloved Mithran Devanesen and requested all present to stand up in silence and pray as a mark of tribute to Mithran's invaluable contribution to the cause of Roofs. In his address Mr. Ashok Sarrangan made special mention of the brethren from Free Masonary and Dr. Ramaswamy, who were present on the day with the specific purpose of effecting significant contribution to the Community College.



Mr. Sekar the Coordinator of CDRCC while presenting the Annual Report touched on the highlights during the year. There were 58 students (17 men and 41women) graduating from the Diploma courses and 18 students from the non formal courses. The students included 23 from the Diploma in Computer Software Applications and 23 from the Diploma Health Assistant (Nursing). All the non formal students had completed a six month certificate course in Fashion Design and Embroidery.



Father Alphonse gave an inspiring talk on “Empowering the Powerless”. He had the audience spell bound sharing the experiences that he had with our founder Dr. Chandran Devanesen. He emphasized that the concept of Community colleges was the result of the vision of Dr. Chandran Devanesen to empower the underprivileged section of the society through appropriate education. Father Alphonse was a delight not only to the audience but also to the distinguished guests of the evening.



Speaking on the occasion, Mr. G.K. Selvaraj recalled his first visit to CDRCC in 2010 and the impact it had in him and his team of brethren. He announced a handsome donation of Rs. 50,000/- from Chennai Masonic Trust and assured that he will endeavor not only to make this as a perpetual contribution but also raise the quantum of funds in the near future. He further stated that having been highly motivated by the work of Roofs in the concept of community college, Chennai Masonic Trust would try and involve more Lodges for further contributions and for assistance to the programs.

Roofs was happy to announce that an Endowment Fund that would provide four scholarships each year for deserving students of the College was established. The Endowment was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Philip and Birgitta Sherman of the USA. Mr Sherman had worked with Dr Chandran Devanesen as a Tutor in Madras Christian College in 1962. He fell sick and was nursed by our Director in their home in Tambaram. When Mr. Sherman learnt about Roofs work a few years ago, he wanted to make a lasting contribution. He never forgot the kindness and care given to him by Aunty Savithri. He has requested that the scholarships are called "The Savithri Devanesen Scholarships". Staff, parents and students applauded this wonderful gesture by the Shermans.



Dr. Ramaswamy an Oncologist from the USA, came across as a humble doctor who wished to make a difference to the poor in rural India. He felicitated Roofs by showering praises on the magnificent work being carried out by Roofs. Dr. Ramaswamy assured his fullest support to the Community College and made a special mention of the untiring efforts of Aunty Savithri

Devanesen, who he stated pursued the vision of Late Dr. Chandran Devenesan. It is appropriate to mention that



Dr. Ramaswamy has extended liberal financial assistance in the payment of salaries to the staff of ROOFS. Dr. Ramaswamy was appointed as an Ambassador of Roofs to the USA and conferred the title 'Ayal Nattu Thuduvār'.



Dr. Vetrivel during his felicitations, expressed utmost satisfaction with not only the working of ROOFS but the commitment of old students to the College. He was happy about the presence of a large number of old students and lauded their contribution to the functioning of the college even after their completion of course and taking up of employment. This he believed was the true success of Roofs in inspiring the students to encourage more and more people to come and take up studies at CDRCC.

Mr. R. Gandhi, Senior Advocate called the students to utilize such rare opportunities and build careers worthy of living and emphasized that students passing out of this institution should make it a point to serve CDRCC even after their completion of courses. He wished Roofs and CDRCC more and more success in all its ventures to serve the most underprivileged.



Prof. Dr. Mannar Jawahar in his address touched upon the importance of character, dignity, discipline, obedience and commitment as the most important qualities required for students to excel in their life. He lauded the efforts of Roofs over the last 8 years in transforming as many as 500 deprived aspirants

from the very weakest section of society into earning members of their families.



Each and every student from the year 2009 -10 had the distinction of receiving their Diploma Certificate from the Chief Guest and the smiles on their faces expressed their immense happiness.

Dr. Mitra Augustine was invited to honour the old students who are helping in the college programs by giving their expertise to the students.

Mr. Ashok Sarrangan thanked all those present and requested their continued co-operation in endeavor of Roofs to foster the Rural College and rural development in the area.



The final act was a wonderful presentation of rural dances and entertainment by the College students. They delighted the large crowd of proud parents and supporters from the surrounding villages.



Mr. Ashok Sarrangan
Hony. Secretary, Roofs

