

M C D S

News & Views

MONTFORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY



“ There will never be a generation of great men until there has been a generation of free women of free mothers.”

Robert G.Ingersoll

The Newsletter
of the

**Montfort Community
Development Society**

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Editor

Bro. Patrick s.g.

Editorial Board

**Alttaf M. Haris
Mrs. Nazreth Felista
Greeto Racharia
Mrs. Sayee Ramesh**

Project Office

**17, SBI Colony
Shastri Nagar
Adyar - 600 020
Chennai
India**

☎ : 044
2491 4078
2446 0526

E-mail
mcds10@yahoo.com

Website
www.mcdschennai.org

PROLOGUE

This issue of MCDS News and Views covers a variety of topics with special emphasis on International Women's Day and Self – Help – Group (SHG) Day Celebrations.

On popular demand, particularly from institutions, MCDS News and Views will continue to carry inspiring quotes and interesting facts on environment, sustainable living and conservation of natural resources and habitat.

Thank you, TALKINGtech FOUNDATION, New Zealand,
for your partnership and patronage.

MCDS seeks partnership under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Readers are Welcome to Share their Views

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March 8th 2014 – yet another International Women's Day has come and gone and with it the usual glorification of women and womanhood. **This has become an annual event with little impact on any one in particular.**

Vulnerability continues to remain a constant despite some positive advancement in the condition of women in today's world. Violence against women in all its forms, including domestic violence, is violation of dignity of women and their human rights. Reports of such violence is conspicuous in the media and one wonders if certain sections of the society consider women not as human persons with the rights but objects to be exploited.

Despite the government commitment to halt the alarming and continuous decline in the country's sex ratio, things are only getting worse. The primary factor responsible for this unhealthy phenomenon is of course the low value ascribed to women in Indian society. Consequently, many families prefer not to give birth to girls or do not nurture girls adequately. **Not giving birth to girls is marked in many regions across the country by what the Nobel Prize Winning Economist, Dr. Amartya Sen, calls the "hi-tech sexism" determining a foetus's sex and aborting the foetus if it happens to be female.**

Everybody is aware that empowerment of women must be through education, better health care and socio-economic independence and participation of women in decision making at all levels. One has only to look at the recently concluded Election to the Lok Sabha. The number of women candidates is less than the previous years. The sad reality is that hardly any one cares and still fewer have raised any concern whatsoever.

Bro. Patrick s.g.
Director, MCDS



GUEST EDITORIAL

The meaning and significance of International Women's Day is not just greeting each other, "Happy Women's Day", or exchanging flowers and gifts. It cannot be limited to mark the occasion through the routine ritualistic celebration which takes place at every nook and corner of streets and towns. International Women's Day is indeed a sentimental tribute to women and an observance or a memorial, a date on which we remember the struggles and sacrifices of women who have contributed their best to resolve injustice, discrimination, inequality and who continue to fight for justice for women.

*In 1909 the women garment workers of New York carried out a massive strike to be recognized as workers. They were underpaid not provided with proper working conditions, - in short, they were deprived of their workers' right and entitlement. **They went on a prolonged strike, but after much suffering, they succeeded.** After that, with a lot of support from women's groups, mostly in Europe & North America, the day came to be called International Working Women's Day. This was to observe and recognize the fact that women are workers. Women are not just women, not only wives and mothers, but they are also, very importantly, 'workers'. This movement grew, and many more countries started observing it. **After World War II, when the United Nation was set up, the UN called it International Women's Day, and from 1975 it has been observed as International Women's Day with an understanding by this time that all women working are workers.** But in our country, we still think that working women are a separate and different category. We think some are working women and some are non-working women. But this is not true; majority non-working women are unpaid homemakers. All women are working, but some of them are doing what is called "unpaid work" or unrecognized work, which is not recognized as productive work. There are very few idle women in India - we will not find many women in India who are doing nothing.*

The way of being proactive and productive makes women an entrepreneur. Women naturally possess major entrepreneurial qualities like risk taking, innovating and initiating. Whether it is child bearing, caring, bonding or



group forming, saving, cooking, starting small business, IGP etc they carve their niche as entrepreneurs. They also create wealth, not such material wealth alone but social capital without which a family and society cannot live and sustain. In the process they discover their leadership skills, synthesis skills and analytical skills, and integrate them with values of justice, equality and respect for all. They are able to challenge the present global economy through micro finance and micro enterprise activities which supercedes people and places women on the centre, recognizing the capabilities of their power. This approach drives home a message that **“system and structure are for people and not people for structure and system”**, the concept which is the basis for gender discrimination.

Women's participation in the development of society through various activities brings transformative change in social, physical and psychological spheres. **Empowerment, education and participation of women at all levels are crucial because women effect eternity through their best attitude and positive behavior.** Their group and individual activities revolve around their belief in themselves and in their capability for participation, decision making, team building etc. The end result of this exercise proves, recognizes and appreciates social, economical, political and cultural power of women.

“Women, you've got everything.....to take the world in your stride...”

Happy Women's Day, 2014

*Sr.Dr. Lourthu Mary
Lecturer
Stella Maris College
Chennai*

Trees are poems earth writes upon the sky, we fell them down and turn them into paper, that we may record our emptiness. - Kahlil Gibran



STUDENTS' SPEAK

MCDS is happy to provide field work experience for a number of students pursuing their higher studies in Social Work. Here is what some of them say...

Madras Christian College, Chennai

At MCDS, I learnt so many things not only for my professional life but also for my personal life. I learnt how a good deed rendered would illuminate smiles into thousands. May God bless this MCDS family for transforming the lives of the poor and the underprivileged in the years to come.

- Ashley Thomas McConnell, I year MSW

At MCDS, I learned the need for planning. The staff were very kind and inspiring.

- Amos Jayaraj, I year MSW

MCDS taught me planning is very important for day - to - day life. We got lot of opportunities to organise many programmes.

- Bimal Elizabeth Philip, I year MSW

I learnt that planning is the backbone of MCDS.

- Sathish, III year BSW

I felt that MCDS is one of the best organisations for field work placement.

- Johannes Samuel, III year BSW

I feel privileged for being a part of MCDS family.

- James Prashanth, III year BSW

Loyola College, Chennai

The most inspiring thing is "how MCDS treats the community people as their family".

- Johnson Prakash, I year M A

Family is the first word that comes to my mind when I think of MCDS. It has been a privilege to be a part of this family.

- Leanne Maria, I year M A

MCDS taught me how to become a good social worker in the society.

- Christofer, I year M A

Every sector is well organised and functions systematically.

- Maria Arputha Ranjith, I year M A



...STUDENTS' SPEAK

Stella Maris College, Chennai

I learnt to adjust, respect and treat every one equally.

- Dolly Mathews, 1year MSW

I learnt to improve my skills personally and professionally.

- Enisa, 1year MSW

Learnt to be punctual and how to use the planning strategy for success.

- Parveen Banu, 1year MSW

I learnt the exact professionalism of my course, which differentiates social service from social work. -

Sree Sukhanya, 1year MSW

Madras School of Social Work, Chennai

The staff at MCDS were supportive and guided us throughout our field work.

- Nimithra, 1year MSW

Working with MCDS was great professional and personal learning.

- Jhanavi, 1year MSW

Innovation is never ending at MCDS.

- Pavei, 1year MSW

MCDS is an organization empowers people especially women and children by providing excellent opportunities and guidance.

- Spandana, 1year MSW

Urumu Dhanalakshmi College, Trichy

I can never forget MCDS and what it did for me.

- Rajesh Kannan, 1year MSW

B C M College, Kottayam, Kerala

It was a great learning experience at MCDS.

- Kukku Maria Roy, 1year MSW

My experience with MCDS was extremely useful especially with field visits, community based rehabilitation and Transit school children.

- Ragi Mole, 1year MSW

I could understand that we can make things possible through proper planning.

- Believe Joseph, 1year MSW

Endangered forests are being slaughtered for toilet paper . – Daphne Zuniga



What They Say

So thrilled to hear that you were selected for "The Life Time Achievement Award". The recognition is a well-merited one. May this appreciation spur you and your co-workers to strive, to seek and conquer greater heights.

-Rev. Fr. Abraham Kottoparampil, Kottayam

I found it interesting, informative, touching and with a lot of variety that I may say captures one's interest. Congratulations on your dedicated effort.

- Dr. Vinod Panicker, Chennai

Congratulations on receiving the Life Time Achievement Award !!! There were so many people there on a day !!

- Andrew Stark, U.K.

Thanks for the news and again congratulations for this award.

-Lynda Sauve, Canada

Many thanks for the MCDS News letter. Your activities are inspiring. My prayers for you.

- D.K. Oza, I.A.S. Chennai

Our warmest congratulations on receiving the Life Time Achievement Award. May God's blessings continue to be with you.

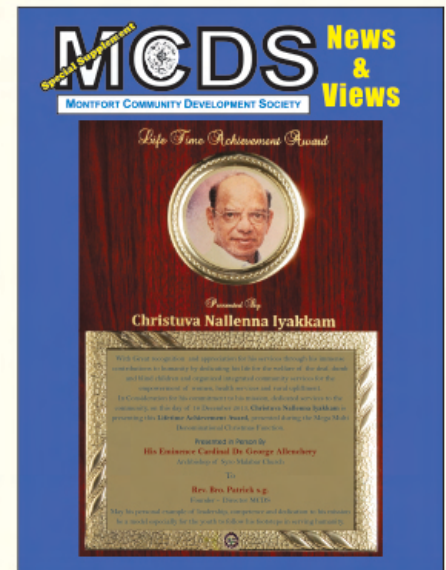
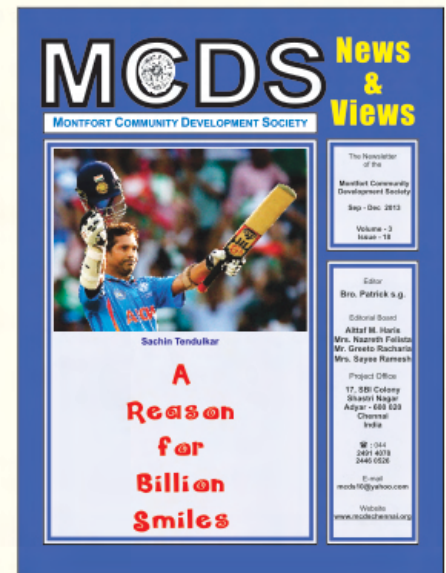
- Cliff and Gene, Yercaud

My family joins me in congratulating you on receiving the Life Time Achievements Award. Our prayers are always for you.

- P.Prabhu, Madurai

My heartiest congratulations on being awarded the 'Life Time Achievement Award' Brother. Extremely proud of you.

Dr. A.P.Sukumar, Thanjavur



Don't blow it - good planets are hard to find.



... What They Say

Thank you for your love and friendship. Continue your great service to the poor.

-Dr. Xavier Alphonse,s.j., Chennai

Just saw the MCDS News Letter. Congrats for Life Time Achievement Award

- Vijay Patel, Salem

Congratulations, we are all proud of you.

- Dr. Georgey Paul, Salem

What a crowd! Hearty Congrats for the Award.

- Littu, Chennai

Congrats. We are proud of you.

- Dr. V.Ashok Ganapathy, Chennai

Congrats. May more awards come your way.

- M.P.Thomas & family, Chennai

Congrats. We are proud of your achievements.

- Rev. Bro. K.V.Thomas, Kerala

Congrats and best wishes.

- Rev. Bro. Michael, Chengalpet

Congratulations on the richly deserved recognition.

- Commander Dr.K G Kumar, Mumbai

Early plants started to develop more than 2 billion years ago. Through photosynthesis, plants uptake carbon dioxide into the biosphere as organic matter, and release oxygen as a byproduct.



International Women's Day & SHG Day Celebrations

March 8, 2014 will never be forgotten by the 3000 men and women, all members of the MCDS SHG program. They gathered at the Santhome Higher Secondary School Indoor stadium for a day-long celebration of International Women's Day and SHG day.

The concept of SHG program for men was initiated by MCDS about 7 year's ago. Began on a trial basis, the men SHG program has become a success story. Most of the 140 members are auto rickshaw drivers, highly motivated and disciplined. And ambitious. They dream of a better future for themselves and their families, particularly their children. MCDS is happy to contribute by initiating the possibility of purchasing new auto rickshaws at competitive rates with loans from nationalized banks. To make a long story short, **as many as 64 men, all members of the SHG program were able to own new vehicles with loans from Corporation Bank.** The keys to these vehicles were distributed during the program on 8th March.

Thanks to Bajaj Auto and the Dealers M/s. Khivraj Motors, Chennai for providing the Auto - rickshaws at a competitive rate.

Initiatives are on for the purchase of another 100 vehicles and it is hoped that atleast 50 of them will be for our women SHG members.



Chief Guest Mr. W.I. Devaram, I.P.S
being Welcomed by
Bro. Patrick, Director, MCDS

The dignitaries on the dais

L to R Rev. Bro. Patrick

Mr.B.V. Amarnath (Manager SALES, Khivraj Motors - Bajaj Auto Dealers, Chennai)

Chief Guest Mr. W.I. Devaram, I.P.S.

Mr. P.V Chandrasekar, (DGM, Corporation Bank ,Chennai)

Dr. Nagarajan, Ph.D, Director, Special Olympics - Asia Pacific Region

Mr.Doraiswamy (Noted T.V. & Radio Hockey Commentator & International Hockey Umpire)



International Women's day.... Contd



The Chief Guest addressing the gathering



The symbolic key to the Autos being handed over



... on the road to self - sufficiently

He who plants a tree, plants a hope. - Lucy Larcom



International Women's Day Contd

Yet another program of the day was the ever popular "Pattimandram" (debate in Tamil) coordinated by the well-known academican and TV personality, Prof. Gnanasambandan from Madurai. The key speakers were members of our men and women self-help-groups (SHGs). The 3000 strong audience followed the event with rapt attention.



Prof.Gnanasambandan being welcomed



All smiles!



3000 and counting



Participants with the Moderator

When you plant a tree, never plant only one.
Plant 3 - one for shade, one for fruit, one for beauty - African Proverb



Inter-Federation Dance competitions :

The most popular event of the day was a hard fought dance competition involving teams from various Federations. Considering that most of the participants were housewives, the quality of performance was truly top class.



Variety was conspicuous



Some people , like flowers, give pleasure, just by being - Ralph Waldo Emerson



Robo Shankar and team at the Celebrations :

Robo Shankar, the entertainer par excellence spent quality time mesmerising with songs, dance and a variety that he is known for. Robo Shankar is today right on top in the realm of film and television entertainment.



Robo Shankar being welcomed



Enjoying every bit of it



At his best

Fashion Show :

Adding a welcome variety to the day's program was a Fashion Show for women self-help-groups (SHGs), below 35 years and above. The quality of the some performers would put professional and experienced models to shame.



Ms.Nazreth Felista, our senior coordinator welcomes Ms.Kaveri, the Chief Guest



The finalists

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own governments to save the environment. - Ansel Adams



Valedictory Function :

The Valedictory function to conclude the day's program was again eventful. Providing glamour to the event was the popular Film and TV actress Ms. Kaveri. She distributed prizes and trophies for a variety of competitions leading upto the valedictory. She was also the Chief Judge for the Fashion Show.

Providing the much needed serious contribution to the day was address by Mr. Nandakumar, I.R.S., a Joint Commissioner , Income Tax Department. He shared his early days as a child labourer and the inspiration that he gained from his mother and later on, from his wife. On a day such as this, this message was most apt.

The action- packed day was not just fun and games. It proved what the self-help movement can do to the lives of its members. A great deal of planning, excitement and anticipation were part of this program. All in all, it was a learning process for everyone involved.

MCDS is grateful to the Principal and Community of Santhome for putting its Indoor stadium at its disposal.



Bro. Patrick s.g., Director, MCDS welcomes Mr. Nandha Kumar I R S



A word of thanks from the Director, MCDS



Winners of the Dance Competition



The winners with the chief guest



P O N G A L at MCDS

Pongal, the harvest festival of the State of Tamil Nadu, is an event eagerly look forward to by everyone at MCDS. This is celebrated at various centres by members of our women and men self-help-groups (SHGs), the youth, members of the senior citizens' forum, children from our child labour rehabilitation program and all our 'special children'.

Here is an pictorial account of the celebrations :



The Chief Guest with Bro. Patrick s.g.,
Director, MCDS



Ms. Lakshmi Ramakrishnan,
well-known Actress at the Celebrations



It is pooja time



Men SHGs too at the celebrations



On display



All set to share

In the beginning, the Earth's atmosphere contained very little oxygen (less than 1% oxygen pressure)



MCDS celebrates "Transit School" Day

With as many as 11 **Transit Schools**, MCDS manages the largest program for child labourers in the country. After a year of preparation, these children, with official Transfer Certificates from the Government, will be admitted to neighbourhood schools by June next. Survey is on for the 2014-'15 academic year and our target is 18 'Transit Schools'.

22nd February 2014 was an unforgettable day for all our present 'Transit School' children. They were all taken to the campus of Montfort Higher Secondary School, St. Thomas Mount for a day of fun and games to mark the Annual Day.

Here are some interesting photographs of the event.



Too smart to be working



Sharing her experience



A token of appreciation to the staff



They should be in school and not at work



In deep conversation - The Director with Mr. Greeto, Coordinator and Mr. Arjunan, Project Director, NCLP



Recycle, recycle, recycle! It takes around 450 years for a plastic bottle to degrade.



Residential Training Programme

Thirty boys , all members from our Youth Development Program underwent a 3-day Residential Training Programme from 7th to 9th February 2014. This programme , organized for the 5th year in succession, is an initiative of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board(TNSCB) in partnership with MCDS.

We were happy to have Mr. Zafrullah, a Community Development Officer with the Board to be actively involved during all the three days. Competent resource persons handled the following topics :

Youth, Mass media & Communication, Positive thinking, Goal setting & Time Management, Sex & Sexuality, Yoga & Meditation, Gender Inequality & related issues, Leadership & Team building, Youth for Community Welfare and Self-Esteem & Self Motivation.

We are thankful to Rev. Bro. K K Thomas, Principal, Montfort Higher Secondary School, St.Thomas Mount for making available the campus and officially inaugurating the program on 7th February.



Mr. Aravind, our Yoga Instructor at a session



Mr. Zafrullah, Community Development Officer, TNSCB at the camp



The Campers with the staff

1 out of 4 ingredients in our medicine is from rainforest plants.



Sports Round Up

The finals of the T 20 World Cup was a disaster for India. They batted as though they were playing a Test match. Of the 20 overs available, the first 10 overs saw less than 65 runs from the board. Yuvaraj Singh, one of the greatest limited over batsmen, responsible for winning World Cup 2007 and 2011 walked into bat at 64 for 2 in 10.3 overs. He struggled to score just 11 runs off 21 balls with 10 dots. With Yuvaraj on one end, the in-form number 3 batsmen Virat Kohli faced just 7 balls in the last 4 overs. No wonder, India cut a sorry figure overall.

Come the IPL, and all this will be forgotten. And all the players (performers) will laugh all their way to the bank.



The Best (right) & the second Best



Absolutely Outstanding

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television for three hours



The Joy of Giving

**A human hand is designed more to receive than to give.
There is an effort needed to give, something to be cultivated.**

Montfort Matriculation School, St. Thomas Mount over the years, has been synonymous with 'giving'. It is a combined initiative on the part of the principal, staff and students to look for opportunities to give. 'The Unified Sports' involving Montfort School, students from a number of 'special schools' and Montfort Community Development Society (MCDS) is typical example of giving, sharing. This year they mobilized useful articles and handed them over to MCDS to be distributed to the poor and the handicapped in the slums of Chennai. Materials meant for the latter were packed and students and staff of Montfort were at hand to hand them over to the MCDS 'Special Children'.

Our gratitude and appreciation to the principal,
staff and students for this generous gesture.



The Joy of Giving and Receiving



Never under estimate the Power of Giving. It shines like a beacon throughout humanity. It cuts through the ocean that divides us and brightens the lives of all it touches. One of life's greatest lies is that you cannot hold a torch to light another's path... without brightening your own



MCDS Programs at a Glance

MCDS & Health Care :

MCDS Clinic on Wheels : Providing health care to the underprivileged is among the priorities of MCDS.

Sl.No.	Description	Total
1	Number of people cared for during this reporting period by Clinic on Wheels	2412
2	Number of children treated by the Mobile Dental Clinic	166
3	Participants at the TB Awareness program by Resource group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH)	60
4	Participants at the awareness on Alcoholism by Voluntary Health Services (VHS)	175
5	Participants at the camps on Eye care and Eye Donation by Sree Sankara Hospital, Pammal, Chennai	378
6	Participants at the Seminar on Stress Management	60
7	Participants at the Awareness on Kidney related problems by TANKER Foundation	150
8	Participants at the care of the mentally sick by Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF)	63

Other programs of MCDS :

- ✓ Career guidance for MCDS Youth by Rev.Fr.Isaac, a well-known Chennai based Career Guide.
- ✓ Legal Aid Awareness by Advocate Angayar Kanni, Chennai

MCDS Open School :

This is meant for young people wishing to reappear for Std 10 and 12 public examinations as private candidates.

Sl.No.	Description	Total
1	Number of Students appeared – Std 10 (Boys and Girls)	18
2	Number of Students appeared – Std 12 (Boys and Girls)	7





A Child Rights Protection Forum, at a session



Our children at Arul Kadal for Pongal Celebrations



An Eye camp for our Special Children



Parents of our 'Transit School' children



At a Dental Camp



Proud owners of a brand new auto with the MCDS Director. Don't miss the sticker!

Photo Gallery



Exciting days ahead for the youth



Yet another batch at the conclusion of a Tailoring session with sponsoring Rotarians and MCDS staff

Computers pose an environmental threat because much of the material that makes them up is hazardous. A typical monitor contains 4-5 pounds of lead.



PoTpoURri



Mother's Day

... An inspiring story about mother

A man stopped at a flower shop to order some flowers to be wired to his mother who lived 200 miles away.

As he got out of his car he noticed a young girl sitting on the kerb sobbing.

He asked her, "*What was wrong*" and she replied,

"I wanted to buy a red rose for my mother"

"But I only have seventy-five cents, and a rose costs two dollars."

The man smiled and said, "*Come on in with me. I'll buy you a rose.*"

He bought the little girl her rose and ordered his own mother's flowers.

As they were leaving, he offered the girl a ride home.

She said, "*Yes, please! You can take me to my mother.*"

She directed him to a cemetery, where she placed the rose on a freshly dug grave.

The man returned to the flower shop, cancelled the wire order, picked up a bouquet and drove the 200 miles to his mother's house.

