



**SAVE A FAMILY PLAN**

IN INDIA SINCE 1965

# Ektha - UNITY

THE SAVE A FAMILY PLAN NEWSLETTER

Most of us are aware of challenges people face in many developing countries, but seeing it is altogether a different experience



Dr. Krystyna Gorzelska is happy to meet Mrs. Jenico Srivalkyndam and her son, Sibraj, in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, India.

## A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE IN INDIA

**In this letter, Dr. Krystyna Gorzelska shares wonderful memories and personal insights of her unforgettable adventure to India.**

From time-to-time, Save A Family Plan (SAFP) receives delightful correspondence from contributors who have made a trip to India and wish to share their experience with others.

Earlier this year, an American contributor, Dr. Krystyna Gorzelska, shared with us what she described as her "unforgettable adventure". Here is an excerpt from her story...

"We have been affiliated with SAFP for more than 40 years and this was [the] chance to connect with the two families [I] presently support through them. SAFP, although affiliated with the Catholic Church, serves people of all faiths in India.

Upon my arrival at Aiswaryagram (means "place of perfect contentment"), SAFP's headquarters

and agricultural/training center, I was met warmly by Father Marshal Melappely, the Director of SAFP India, Mr. Jose Varekulam and other staff members. I stayed there over Christmas and participated in Christmas masses, decorating, nativity scenes, processions, fireworks, carols, presents and visits. It all added up to a lovely Christmas - very different from our commercialized and often diluted "holidays" here.

Father Marshal and Jose arranged for me a series of trips through both the states of Kerala and neighboring Tamil Nadu so that I could experience life in India. I saw how the poorest of the poor live and what is being done to alleviate their daily struggles. I was particularly impressed by the work being done by WIN (Women's Initiative Network) run by Sister Alice and her team

in Allappuzha area of Kerala. I visited families living in water-logged marshes, where Elephantiasis (caused by parasitic worms) is still too common. I saw the fields in which the women toiled, building up the soil to barely inches above the stagnant sea water. I ate "snake melons" that finally grew after three consecutive crop failures due to the rising salt water table.

In Tamil Nadu I met Mrs. Jenico Srivalkundam, a young widow who was a mother of one small child. Sadly, due to local custom, remarriage is not an option for this still young woman. She buys fish from the coastal fishermen daily, carries them in a heavy cooler to the local marketplace and sells them there to the public. SAFP is helping her build up her small fish business and I hope to keep in touch with Father Valan and Mr. Antro Martin to see how Jenico is doing.

Most of us are aware of challenges people face in many developing countries but seeing it with my own eyes is a different experience. What kind, patient people they are with such positive outlooks! Their spirits are high and their faith is unshakable. As I left Mumbai airport, I had reached the end of this remarkable trip but I keep the Indian people's spirit with me. "



Dr. Gorzelska smiles for a picture as she visits with a group of school children.

## THE SUCCESS STORY OF MR. KOLLANUR THOMAS PAULSON AND FAMILY



Mr. Thomas, his wife Kochurani and children, Printo and Priya Paulson



Mr. Thomas proudly works in the Petty Shop he opened with the help of Save a Family Plan

The success story of Mr. Kollannur Thomas Paulson is a true success story of kindness and perseverance. A true representation of the improvements that can be made possible with the support of contributors in Canada and the United States. It shows how a family can slowly move towards integrated development. They followed the directions of the plan with dedication, determination and hard work.

Mr. Thomas migrated from the Thrissur district and married Ms. Kochurani. Their children, Printo and Priya, are very dedicated to their studies. When the family was selected for SAFFP assistance they were facing extreme poverty.

He was the only earning member of the family, working as an agricultural wage labourer. But since his wage was not regular, his family struggled hard to meet their daily needs.

Knowing the terrible situation of the family, the parish priest of St. Sebastian's Church in Arapara sent an application to SAFFP through the People's Service Society Palakkad (SAFFP's local partner).

In spite of all this difficulties, Mr. Thomas managed to save some money and he started a dairy business comprising of two cows with the help of SAFFP and a bank loan. His wife, Kochurani, is a hard work-

ing lady. She became involved in the income generating project by looking after the cows and the agricultural works. They have 0.8 acres of land of their own and managed to plant one hundred rubber trees on their field with the savings from their dairy business project. Additionally, he has leased one acre of grassland to rear the milk cows. He pays a small rental fee to the landowner as a lease. He was then able to plant a good variety of grass seed which is assisting in the raising of healthy cows.

*His family overcame extreme poverty and are well on the road to a better future*

After saving funds from the cow rearing project and the rubber tree enterprise, they were able to open a petty shop near a local high school in their town. The business has been improving step-by-step, at present, their dairy business and provision shop are both running very smoothly. They have managed to pay 60% of the bank loan and feel extremely happy.

With their earnings they have also been able to build a small house of their own. They are living

happily in their new home.

Mr. Paulson and his wife take keen interest in looking after the house and their income generating projects. They now have the skills necessary as well as a plan and method to earn their own income. He is earning a steady profit from these projects. They are utilizing their income toward the education of their children and the day-to-day affairs of the family.

The general health of the family members has improved immensely. They now have access to a reliable source of nutritious food. They are no longer suffering the overwhelming fear and worry of having to survive on a day-to-day basis but are now living a peaceful life where they can plan ahead for a better future.

His family overcame extreme poverty and are well on the road to a better future. They thank the individuals that have contributed financially to their success and the SAFFP office, who prepared the way.



Interested in meeting your family in India?

➤ Contact our office to arrange a visit ➤



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**PARTNERING WITH THE POOR FOR A JUST WORLD**

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