

Annual report

2014-15



Pravaḥam

Bishop Ananda Rao Samuel's community for peace and Justice
297, Venkatapuram, Vellore Dist.632507

Pravaham

A community which lives to enliven

Receives to enable, with God as its source

Christ as its model

People as its partners.

Our Belief

Pravaham believes in the vision of the Kingdom of God on earth;

- Where love, peace, justice, compassion and righteousness prevail.*
- Where every individual is accepted, loved, respected and cherished as a person created in the image of God, irrespective of caste, colour, class, gender, ability and wealth or status.*
- Where there exists seamless integration and unity across the spiritual and the material, the manual and the intellectual, the private and the public.*
- Where prayer, service, sharing and simplicity guide our lives and relationships.*

Our Vision

Pravaham endeavours to be with the people in realizing their special purpose in the mission of God and in partnering with the poor and the oppressed in their struggle for human dignity, social justice and freedom.

Community Education Program:

Pravaham is a community with a vision for peace and justice, working in the field of education, awareness and spirituality. One of the programs in the field of education is Community Education program, where school dropout girls from rural areas belonging to marginalized communities are given vocational and life skills.

For the past eleven years in a small but significant way Pravaham is striving to uplift the lives of youth especially girls from marginalized communities in and around Vellore, Thiruvannamalai and other neighbouring districts bringing great transformation, economic independence and internal strength to 275 girls and their families.

I am happy to present to you the 11th annual report of Pravaham community college.

Student profile:

After thorough scrutiny of the applications and background checks thirty five girls belonging to economically and socially backward communities were admitted to the 2014-15 batch of Pravaham Community College.

All these years our enrolment numbers were 20 to 25 but this year we were able to take 35 students because of the support given by Christian education fund, Kassel and Global Ministries, USA .Ninety five percent of the students are first generation literates. 13students have failed class 10 and 22 students even though passed class 10 could not continue their studies because of financial and family problems.

Orientation classes for the 11th batch started from 7th of August 2014 and was formally inaugurated on the 6th September 2014.

All the 35 students opted to study Diploma in Health Assistance Course. The curriculum consists of training in vocational skills, communication skills and Life Coping Skills giving them holistic education.

Equal importance is given to the health and physical development of the students .All the students were sent for medical examination to the community health department of CMC.

Many girls were found suffering from Anaemia and stomach ulcers. By giving them special diet and medication all of them recovered completely.

Hospital exposure visit:

Pravaham Community College students visited CMC hospital on 14th of March. The PRO of CMC took the students on a guided tour of the hospital and helped them to have a closer look at the working of a hospital .It also gave them exposure to the hospital environment and helped them to have a broader understanding of their profession.

Internship at CMC Rehabilitation centre:

Pravaham students under went four weeks of internship at CMC Rehabilitation centre from 2nd of March till 10th of April. They learnt practical skills involving patient care and ward management and get exposure to physiotherapy and speech therapy. This internship is of great value to the students in gaining confidence and put in to practice what they have learnt in theory. We are thankful to the nursing superintendent CMC and to the Director of Rehabilitation Centre for giving this valuable opportunity to the students.

Life Skill classes at Christian Counselling Centre:

One of the unique opportunities Pravaham Community College offers to its students is, four week counselling sessions at Christian counselling centre, Vellore. This course gives the

students valuable experience as most of them come from broken homes or have traumatic family circumstances. By the end of the course, each student comes out a stronger individual identifying her strengths and weaknesses and understanding herself better to face the challenges in life. Classes were made very interesting and lively, making a lasting impression on the students.

We are deeply grateful to Dr. Prashantham and Mrs. Meena Prashantham , who take personal interest in planning the program and taking classes for Pravaham students free of cost for the past 11 years.

Our sincere thanks to Dr. Arivanandan and Mrs Arivanandan and, the team of counsellors at CCC for the special attention given to the students.

The students had their final examinations in the month of July and completed the course by the first week of August. This one year residential training had great impact on the students in physical, emotional and spiritual areas of their life and they emerge as stronger individuals with values and confidence to stand on their own.

Campus recruitments:

Pravaham provides job opportunities to all the students who graduate successfully.

On 25th June Mr. Jebaraj director of Amazing Love Home, Chennai, along with Mr. Jacob visited Pravaham and selected girls to work in their Eldercare nursing home at Padapai, Chennai.

On the 31st of July Advantage Health Care Services from Bangalore , recruited 27 students to work in their three centres at Bangalore, after interviewing the students and their parents.

Six students have already started their work at ALH at Chennai and the rest will leave on the 6th of September for their place of work.

Intercultural exposure and experiences:

Living in Pravaham community offers students many opportunities to interact and learn from people from different countries, cultures and walks of life.

The students and the staff of social work Department of Auxilium College,Vellore interacted with Pravaham students as they stayed at Pravaham during their field work from 20th to 30th of August. They took Counselling classes and gave awareness on many social issues like child labour, child marriages, protection against abuse.

Ms. Christy Van Vaugt conducted art therapy classes from 12th to 21st of September. Christie allows the students to work with paints, crayons and art material and encourages them to express themselves without fear and inhibition. This helped the students to unwind and bring out their hidden talents and creativity.

Ms. Sonia Gurnamal from Hong visited Pravaham in July 2014. Having experienced the love of God from interacting with the students of Pravaham, she came back three times since then to teach English and counsel the students.

Rev. Barbara Currie, Volunteer from Global Ministries, USA visited Pravaham and spent five days with the students. She had individual counselling sessions with all the 35 students. She said that she had an enriching spiritual experience ministering to all the girls.

Flower arrangement classes were given to students by Ms Arlene Senthilvel and the students were thrilled to learn this additional skill of making bouquets and different floral arrangements.

Spiritual and Moral classes:

Pravaham believes that spirituality and spiritual practices have the ability to transform individual lives and help eliminate the evils found in the communities in which we live. Great

importance is placed on five daily practices, Prayer, Reading of Scriptures, Meditation, Integrity and Service. During their course of study many opportunities are given to the students to develop their inner strengths and capacities which enable them to transcend selfishness and self-centeredness and develop a healthy and happy life.

Ms. Jennifer Colon, a friend of Ms. Anita Coleman has developed a 15 minute workout for our students called 'fire fit' based on the theme - God as the fire which empowers us to be fit and Healthy. Students start the day with prayer and exercise along with meditation. This has become so popular that some students started teaching this dance exercise to children in their neighbourhoods.

Eight week Alpha course is given to students from November by Ms. Arlene and Ms. Lakshmi and every week they taught them crafts and in a very informal way through discussions, enabled them to understand the relationship between God and man. On 23rd February students had a two day retreat conducted by Alpha .Mr. Stanley and team ministered to the students.

Mr. Viswanath and their team take scripture classes for the students every Tuesday evening, with the focus on practical application and biblical approach in tackling and dealing with life's challenges.

PCC students attended one day youth retreat on 2nd October conducted by the Youth Prayer Fellowship at Vellore. It encouraged them to live a life set apart to do God's will and wait upon Him for guidance.

Seminar on value based living was conducted on 11th and 12th of October by Mr. Ravikumar Chennai. Through videos and true stories Mr. Ravi captured the attention of the students and conveyed the message. They were also sensitized to recognizing the traps and protect themselves from exploitation and abuse.

Mr.J. Ramesh a Christian film director, from Chennai took bible study for PCC students on 4th and 5th of October ,on creation from the book of Genesis.

Extra curricular activities:

Pravaham Community College students have put up a beautiful cultural show combining with Christmas celebrations on the 15th of December 2014. This gave a platform for all the 35 students to show their talents and perform on stage. For many of the students this was an opportunity to go on stage for the very first time. Mr. R. Ramesh, Christian film director who witnessed the program congratulated the students and said that all the dances and dramas were beautifully choreographed and enacted.

Appreciation from a professional like Mr. Ramesh, once again reiterates that a little polishing, opportunity and encouragement brings out a treasure of talents hidden in these rural girls.

Many friends not only from Vellore and Chennai but also from faraway places like Hong kong and Singapore came to be part of this event and encouraged the students. Sr. Regina, Head of the Department of Biotechnology, Auxilium College delivered the Christmas message.

Excursion: Every year Pravaham Community College takes the students on a two day excursion to Chennai and Mahabalipuram. Even though many of the students live around 150 km radius from Chennai, quite a number of them have never seen a city or a beach. So this trip is both educational and a pleasure trip for the students.

On 16th and 17th February students and staff of Pravaham visited Chennai and saw the historic places in Chennai and stayed overnight at Mahabalipuram. They played on the beach to their hearts content and the excitement and joy of the students was inexpressible.

Program for Education, Health and Awareness Building:

Students along with the staff and Rev.Devadoss periodically visit schools in villages in and around Pravaham to promote awareness on relevant health and social concerns.

Health awareness programs were conducted in Vilapakam, Punganur and Kavanur schools in February. Students along with the nursing tutors talked on the prevention and symptoms of Swine flu and the importance of keeping their surroundings clean, through plays and film show. Rev.Devadoss made students aware of child rights and motivated them to focus on studies and not to waste the opportunity given to them. Pravaham students also cleaned the streets of the villages in support of swatch bharath campaign for a clean India.

Health awareness on diabetes was conducted in Dalit colony of Timiri village on the 28th of March. Symptoms and adverse effects of high blood sugar and control of diabetes was given through film show and talks. Nursing tutors checked BP and Blood glucose levels of the people above 40 years. More than 100 people were benefitted by attending the camp.

On 29th January 2015 Pravaham arranged an Eye camp in Melvisharam village with the help of Karigiri hospital. 76 adults and 172 students got their eyes checked and those diagnosed with cataract were taken to Karigiri and free cataract surgery was performed on them.

International Women's day was observed at Pravaham on the 8th March 2015, one day program on Women's rights, family relationships and health & nutrition was conducted for Pravaham students, their mothers and other women from the village.

Mrs. Florence Jayasankar and Rev.Devadoss were the resource persons. Various issues relating to gender inequality, violence and child marriages were discussed. They also had fun playing indoor games. All the participants had a very nice time. Many of them expressed that it was the first time that they were attending a program like this and it was a unique experience for them.

Thamayanthi a student of Pravaham was very anxious because her mother made plans to marry her off to her cousin soon after she completed her course. After attending the seminar Thamayanthi's mother changed her mind and promised Thamayanthi that she will let her work and study further if she wishes to do so.

Sujatha, mother of Patturoja, is a widow having four daughters. Due to financial problem she got her elder daughter married at the age of 15. After attending the program she made a strong decision that she will educate her 3 daughters and get them married only after the age 21yrs.

Family Seminar was arranged for the students and their parents on the 6th of June 2015. This was initiated after hearing from the students the various family problems like alcoholism, physical abuse of wife and children, and other problems faced by them because of wrong beliefs and traditions. Rev. Devadoss and Ms. Kitty Paul Raj, resource persons for the seminar, spoke on the importance of family relationships and tools to strengthen the bonds between family members. They also counselled the parents on giving equal rights to their daughters and the importance of educating a girl. Many parents appreciated this initiative and said that all the sessions were very helpful to them.

Reaching out to the families of Students:

Thanks to the benevolent fund given by friends of Pravaham we were able to give gift hampers to all the single mothers of our students during Christmas. The gift hampers consisted of provisions (5kgs of rice, 1kg each of all the dhals, 1kg oil and sugar) one saree, a bed sheet and Rs.1000 cash. The mothers were very happy to see us and expressed their

gratitude for extending the help during the festive season. We prayed with each family and shared the love of Christ.

Infrastructure development:

Learning resource centre Phase II:

Pravaham community college was housed in a thatched wall less facility for nine years from 2004 to 2013. In 2013 Irvine Presbyterian Church, USA and Ms. Anita Coleman helped us to construct two class rooms. In July 2015 we were able to complete the construction of Learning Resource Centre phase II consisting of a multipurpose hall, computer lab and toilets. It will be inaugurated on the 2nd of September 2015, on the day of the graduation program. This is truly an answer to our prayers. We are deeply grateful to East-West education, UK, who generously contributed towards the multipurpose hall, St. John English Methodist Church, Bangor, Wales, Ms. Sonia Gurnamal, friends from Hong Kong, Ms. Sangeetha Dawson and other friends of Pravaham who enabled us to make the dream of having a proper community college building come true.

Pravaham Learning resource centre goes solar:

University of Strathclyde, Department of Electrical Engineering for development, Scotland together with VIT installed solar power in the class room and the lab in the Learning Resource Centre phase I last year and this year too they will be installing solar lights in the LRC phase II building. This is of immense blessing to Pravaham. We thank and appreciate their commitment to give sustainable energy to rural areas. Thanks to Ms. Christine Donald, Mrs. Meena Prashantham and Dr. Shameen Prashantham for being instrumental in initiating this project at Pravaham.

Trainings and Meetings:

ICRDCE- Indian centre for Research and Development of Community Education, Chennai, conducted 5 day work shop for community college administrators and teachers from November 10th to 15th 2015. Mr. C. Ravi administrator, Pravaham community college attended the workshop. The training was very useful and informative. They also had the opportunity to meet the faculty of various community colleges from 14 states of India and discuss the challenges faced by the community colleges with regard to syllabus, evaluation and enrolment.

Pravaham Retreat and Training Centre:

Partners' visit to Pravaham:

We are very happy that many friends, churches, organizations came forward to partner with Pravaham in the year 2014-15. Pravaham's strength comes from the partnerships not only with organizations but also with individuals who believe in its vision and Mission.

Dr. Scott Strachan, Dr. Mike Dolan and Dr. Puran from University of Strathclyde, Scotland visited Pravaham from 1st to 4th of September to install solar power to Learning resource centre.

Ms. Sonia Gurnamal from Hong Kong visited Pravaham twice –in July and in September and spent a week at each visit and taught the students spoken English.

Mrs. Nirmala from Philippines, mother of Ms. Sonia visited Pravaham from 4th to 10th of September. She took devotions and counselling sessions for the students.

Ms. Christie Van Vaugt from USA was on her annual visit from 5th to 20th of September to teach Art and craft classes to PCC students.

Ms. Marlene van brook of South Asia representative of the Presbyterian church USA, visited Pravaham on the 6th of September and took part in graduation ceremony of the 10th batch.

Students from United Theological College UTC came for their field work on the 11th of September. They took one day session with our students

Dr. Deenabandu, Area Executive, Southern Asia Global Ministries - United Church of Christ, USA visited Pravaham on the 10th of October.

Women's group from New Calvary Church, Chennai visited Pravaham on the 17th and 18th of October. They interacted with the students and shared the word with them.

Rev. Fredrick Stanley from Sydney, Australia, who is a supporter of Pravaham visited Pravaham on the 1st of December 2014. He spent half a day with the students encouraging and motivating them to overcome challenges and move on to achieve greater things for God.

Mrs. Sonia Gurnamal and her friend *Ms. Ravina* from Singapore, visited Pravaham from 14th to 20th of December, to take part in Christmas celebration. Ms. Sonia spent time with the students teaching them spoken English. Ms. Ravina offered financial support to any student who wishes to pursue higher studies. Ms. Sonia gifted watches, sweaters and blankets for all the students.

Ms. Anita Coleman visited Pravaham from 7th January to 14th of January. She took two day seminar on New Man, New Women and New Life based on Marriage, Family and Gender equality, which was the first of its kind to the students. She also taught the girls Fire Fit aerobic exercises which the girls enjoyed thoroughly. We had discussions on the partnership between Presbytery of Las Rancho and Pravaham. We are grateful to Anita for helping PCC get Audio visual equipment.

Rev. Joy and Dr. Geoff Levine along with their daughter and Son-in-law visited Pravaham on the 13th and 19th of February. Rev. Joy took devotions for the students.

Mrs. Daya Durai of East West Education along with Ms. Helen and her daughter visited Pravaham on the 12th of February. They were very happy to see progress of the building construction of LRC Phase II for which they donated Rs. 30,0000.

Dr. Deenabandhu, Area Executive, Southern Asia, Global Ministries - United Church of Christ & the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), visited Pravaham along with *Dr. James Moos, Executive Director of GM,* on the 18th February. They appreciated Pravaham's work among drop out girls and promised to support the program for the next three years.

Ms. Christine Donald Of University of Strathclyde, Scotland and Lady Eileen Macdonald wife of the president of School of Electrical Engineering, visited Pravaham on the 19th of February. They promised that they will provide Solar power to the New building and will also help upgrade the Nursing lab with latest equipments.

Mrs. Minarha David from Melbourne, Australia heard about Pravaham from Bishop. Sundar Clarke's Family and visited Pravaham from 9th March to 11th March. She had a wonderful time listening to their stories and interacting with them. She said she would like to partner with Pravaham in rebuilding the lives of the drop out girls.

Acknowledgments:

I would like express my sincere thanks to our Chairperson Mrs. Meena Prashantham who is a source of inspiration, encouragement and great support to Pravaham and to all the trustees and to Dr. Jayakaran Isaac and the members of the governing board of community college, for their whole hearted support and valuable counsel in taking forward the vision of Pravaham.

My deep gratitude to all the partners and friends of Pravaham in India and abroad, without whose support and prayers Pravaham could not have moved forward. We are especially grateful to Christian Education Fund, Kassel for their support to this program for the past four years. I am happy that the Global Ministries of United Church of Christ, USA, has extended their support to this program and this enabled us to reach out to 15 more students this year. We were also able to take more tutors so that individual attention can be given in mentoring the students.

We would like to acknowledge our sincere thanks to Angie D'Aleo, Christie van Vagt and friends at San Pedro Methodist church, Anita Coleman, Jennifer Colon and friends at Irvine, California, Sangeetha Dawson, Sonia Gurnamal and Bishop Sundar Clarke's family who tirelessly work for the cause of Pravaham.

We are deeply indebted to Dr. Prasantham, Director, and Christian Counselling Centre and to the CMC Rehabilitation Centre for the resource support extended to Pravaham Community College.

Thanks to Mr. Senthil and Mrs. Arlene, architects and Mr. Mathivanan building contractor for planning and constructing the buildings in Pravaham.

Grateful thanks to the team of Pravaham – Pastor Devadoss, Mr. C. Ravi, Mrs. Sugandhi, Ms. Jayashree, Mrs. Ashwini, Mr. Ravi Kumar, Ms. Kumari, Mr. Raghu, Thudiyal, Ms. Raniamma and Ms. Ruth for their dedicated service to Pravaham.

I would like to end the report on a note of profound thanksgiving and gratitude to Almighty God for His continuing Grace and Strength that impels us to carry on the mission of Pravaham.

Pravaham community college Photo Gallery



Graduation of the 10th batch and the inauguration Of the 11th Batch



Ms. Marlene Van Brook dedicating the 11th batch



At CMC Hospital



Hands on training at the CMC Rehabilitation centre



Art therapy classes with Christie



Spoken English class with Sonia



Students taking BP at an awareness camp



cleaning the village



Celebrating birthdays



International women's day at Pravaham





Old school building



Learning Resource Centre phase II



In Nursing Lab with the nursing Tutor



Life skill classes at Christian Counselling centre



Students enjoying singing session and team building games at the Youth Retreat



on excursion to Chennai playing at the beach



Students with their Parents at family Counselling program



Students giving a talk on hygiene at the school outreach program



on excursion to Chennai playing at the beach



Arlene,teaching the students how to make floral arrangements and bouques



cultural program



Pravaham staff visiting the single parents' homes with gift hampers



The team from Strathclyde & VIT Universities inaugurating the solar project at Pravaham



Sonia, Nirmala and Christie visiting pravaham Campus recruitments by Shaji Philip Rev. Devadoss interacting with the parents of the students



Sonia, serving the girls Ravina dancing with the girls Happy to receive the blankets gifted by Sonia



Daya Durai, Helen and team seeing the LRC building Dr. James & Dr. Bandhu with the students Barbara talking to sumithra



Christine Donold & Lady Eileen from University of Strathclyde Sushie Victor from New Calvary church interacting with the students

Success stories of Pravaham students

... *From depravity to dignity*



Kavitha Shankar is the daughter of an auto driver. Her father is an alcoholic and the mother supports her family by working as a maid. He borrows money from others and drinks and her mother ends up repaying the loans as the money lenders harass her. Her younger sister dropped out of school and started to work for daily wages to support the family. Kavitha.

She studied up to class 12 but failed in the examination. Her father forced her to work as a daily wage worker in the field but her desire was to somehow study and get a decent job. Her mother heard about Pravaham from an old student of Pravaham and she enrolled Kavitha to the Health Assistant Course. Today Kavitha has completed the course successfully and is eagerly waiting to join work. She says that she is very proud that she can stand on her own legs. She says that the Christian values and faith in the Lord Jesus has given her a new hope and confidence for a bright future.



Kavitha, confidently dressing a wound during internship

Saraswathi comes from Karisamangalam village which is about 40 km from Pravaham. She is a Dalit girl who is also a first generation literate. She studied up to class 12 but could not pass in the final exam. Though she dreamed of going to college she could not do so because of family and financial problems. She worked in a shoe factory as a daily wage laborer to support her family as her father cannot do any hard work as he met with an accident and her mother suffers from severe psychological problems with suicidal tendencies. Saraswathi was dejected with life till she met her cousin Kavitha and heard her success story of how she became a Nursing Aid after graduating from Pravaham Community College. This inspired Saraswathi to come to Pravaham to study again. Saraswathi is a happy girl today. She is thankful to God that she is able to have three meals a day in Pravaham and get free vocational training. She is now confident that she too can lead a dignified life after completing her course.





Elizabeth's father deserted her family when she was three years old. Her mother worked as a maid and educated her daughter. They struggle to have three meals a day. They had no ration card or any Identification to get receive help from the government. Elizabeth in spite of all the challenges went to school with the help

received from their mother's employers. She was a bright student and had dreams of studying college. Though she passed class 12 with good marks her mother could not afford to send her to college. She was forced to work in a leather factory for one year get additional income to the family. She heard about Pravaham Community College and with the help of her mother's employer she joined the Health Assistant course in Pravaham. She is thankful to Pravaham for giving her an opportunity to continue her studies. She completed her course and now she is working in Amazing Love Home in Chennai. She would like to work for an year and then study B.Sc Nursing.



Elizabeth found her talent to dance at Pravaham

Surya D was a very shy girl who came to Pravaham from a small village, Bommasamudram,



near the bordering state of Andhra Pradesh. Though she passed class 10 she couldn't study further because there is no higher secondary school in her village and her parents did not want to spend any money on her as she had to go to a nearby town to study further. Her father works as a daily wage labourer. She is the youngest of the three children. Both brothers are addicted to alcohol so there is no support from them to the family. Her

mother having seen how the life of a school drop out from the same village changed for better and how she became the beard winner of the family after studying in Pravaham, brought her to study in Pravaham community college . Surya was suffering from depression when she came to Pravaham. Many times she wanted to quit and go back. She felt that she was good for nothing and a burden to her family .

At Pravaham, with counselling, encouragement and prayers she was able to come out of depression. She realized that she was very precious in God's sight and God loves and cares for her. She slowly regained her confidence and started doing better in her studies. Today we

see a totally different Surya happy and enthusiastic to go for work. Kavitha in brought four dropout girls from her village to study at Pravaham this academic year.



Shanthi Elumalai's parents are both sick. Father hardly goes for work, they have a cow and mother takes care of it and it is the only source of their income. Both the parents are illiterates but they have the desire to educate their children. Shanthi lives in a very remote village and used to walk several miles to attend school. She worked hard, with stood many hurdles and completed class 12 with good marks. Having passed she did not know what to do. They had neither the resources nor know how to send their daughter to college. Shanthi started working as a daily wage labourer. She thought that is her fate and having studied she is no better position than her parents. One day she met her senior Muthu Lakshmi from her school who graduated from Pravaham. That was her turning point in her life. She joined Pravaham and completed Health Assistant Course. In her own words "Pravaham changed my life completely, very soon I am going for work, I am so happy, now I know that God truly loves me and has a great purpose for life."



Shanthi, taking BP at a medical camp

