

Friends of SOJASI - February 2016

Security for the children and staff of Morningstar Home

Four of us traveled to India in October, 2015, to visit SOJASI's projects and to share some time with the children at Morningstar Home. We returned with a plan to keep Canadian donors more informed about the ongoing work, by highlighting a variety of themes, with facts and observations.

Our theme for this update is 'Security'. It is something we all value highly, because we have seen, and can continue to see the terrible effects of its absence, and we wish it sincerely for all people in this world.

In Canada, our sense of security is well established, in our homes and communities, in our way of life, and in our institutions. Over many years, we have been blessed to have the many forms of security which everyone desires. Our recent visit to Kurseong, reminded us of how people living in small Indian towns and villages may not be assured of many things that we may take for granted, like pensions, food, health care, or personal safety, to name a few. We also saw again, the results of Father Abraham's efforts, so many years ago, to bring more security to the lives of many poor people.



During our two week visit, we asked Cecilia George, the live-in manager of SOJASI's Morningstar Home in Kurseong, about her current priorities in providing a clean, nurturing and safe refuge for children. She highlighted her concern about potential intruders. Morningstar is a large, 4 level house, on a steep hillside above Kurseong. It has a public pathway running alongside it, used by many neighbours and local residents. Anyone passing by can walk right onto the Morningstar property and into the home, at any time of day!

Cecilia and her female staff, and sixteen girls, ranging from 6 to 18 years of age, along with two young boys, are the only residents. It would be difficult for them to deal with an unwanted intrusion. The police are down in the town, a 200 meter climb, or a 15 minute car ride away. There is no 911 service. Cecilia told us she wished to have a security wall, with a gate, surrounding the property. A six foot high wall, made of concrete and steel, would be high enough to prevent casual entry and unwanted observation, and the gate would be locked at night.

Cecilia was quoted a price of 300,000 rupees (as of Feb 13/16 - \$6150 CND). She brought her proposal to the SOJASI board, and they approved this important, but previously non-budgeted, expense.



We returned to Canada, on October 31, 2015, and embarked on fundraising for this important project. We are delighted to report that a new donor in Australia was inspired by Cecilia's efforts to continue Father Abraham's work. The donor could see that, by ensuring a secure and safe base in Morningstar Home, Cecilia is helping the children to pursue the education which is so vital to their success in life. The generosity of this donor provided more than enough funds for the security wall.

What a delightful outcome! We immediately telephoned Cecilia, and shared the great news with her. We look forward to reports and photos on the progress of the work.

We have witnessed, once again, how the smallest of seeds, planted with love and faith, can grow and bloom into something one could not have imagined, in its beauty and impact. For this, we are very grateful. We continue to look for ways to support SOJASI's work, so that the tremendous legacy of Father Abraham, and the continuing work of his dedicated staff, may grow and enrich the lives of the poorest of the poor. We hope that you will join the effort, or continue the support which you may have begun many years ago, with monthly contributions through Canadian Jesuits International in Toronto.

Thank you,

Gabrielle Savard, David Wong, Alison Murray, Clarence Kort

Calgary Supporters of SOJASI