

**Summary of the annual 2013 progress report of Volunteers to Assist Children with Disabilities**

**(V.A.C.D)**

1. 2013 began with minor changes to the VACD Steering Committee with the appointment of Mr.K.A.Rathnayaka as the VACD Team Leader replacing Mr. Ranjith Manawadu while Ms Damayanthi Munasinghe was appointed the Secretary of the charity. Mr.Ratnayaka was also given the added responsibility of being the Public Relations Coordinator of VACD.
2. The number of families registered with the charity presently stands at 186 with approximately another 138 applications (that were submitted by the medical authorities) being assessed for potential VACD registration, by the steering committee.
3. The **Mothers' Union** of Children with disabilities that was formed during the start of the year has been a great success with various teams showing tremendous enthusiasm and initiative in organizing VACD events. Four groups of mothers were formed with specific responsibilities for 1) Education & Training 2) Health & Nutrition 3) Sports & Cultural 4) Home, Finance and Economic development. This is in keeping with the VACD charter that aims to empower, train and equip parents to ultimately take responsibility to steer the charity forward in order to support their children.
4. Programs implemented with the cooperation of Mothers' Union in 2013
  - *March 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>*

A group of volunteers were given training so as to assist in future VACD projects. Of the 44 applications received, 33 were interviewed with 24 volunteers participating at the inaugural training program that was held in Bandarawela attended by Dr. C.C.P.K. Kekulawela, The Officer in Charge of the Women's & children's Bureau of Bandarawela Police Station and the Secretary of the Governor of Uva province.
  - *April 24<sup>th</sup>*

A sports meet for Children with Disabilities to celebrate Sinhala & Tamil New Year was held at Obada-Ella Grounds that included a musical show and short dramas. Traditional customs were performed at Mr.K.A. Rathnayaka's residence.
  - *September 14<sup>th</sup>*

An awareness program for the newly joined mothers was held at Sir Razeek Fareed School where discussions were led by Dr. Nalin Athauda of the Children's Unit of Diyatalawa Base Hospital.
  - *November 14<sup>th</sup>*

A tour of Kandy (the ancient capital of Sri Lanka) was organized for the children and parents of VACD to commemorate 'World Children's Day'. The Disabled

Children along with their mothers participated on the excursion, visiting the historic Temple of the Tooth and Peradeniya Botanical Garden.

- *November 24<sup>th</sup>*  
The first ever “Awareness Program” for fathers of Disabled children was organized by the Mothers’ Union and held with the participation of 47 fathers out of 50 invitees. This program was led by Dr.C.C.P.K. Kekulawela from the Diyatalawa Base Hospital.
- *December 10<sup>th</sup>*  
The 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary meeting of Mothers’ Union was held which was followed by a discussion with Dr.C.C.P.K. Kekulawela on Medical Clinics for Disabled Children.
- *December 19<sup>th</sup>*  
Distribution of school books and uniforms for school going Disabled Children was held at the municipal hall in Bandarawela.

*Among other significant events;*

5. *May 10<sup>th</sup>* – AGM of VACD. The annual report and budget were presented and accepted.
6. *June 9<sup>th</sup>* – An evaluation program of VACD activities attended by the VACD Steering Committee, Mothers’ Union and Volunteers.
7. Proposed VACD Centre – Mr. Phil Quinton, the Architect from Australia, visited Bandarawela for two weeks in order to draft a plan to modify the house which Mr. Rathnayaka pledged to donate to VACD as a Children’s Centre. Mr. Felix Stephen also visited Sri Lanka during this period to assess the feasibility of the project.
8. Steering Committee members visit families of Disabled Children whenever time permits and assess their needs (lodging, food etc.) in particular for Children who are directed to Kandy General Hospital for treatment.
9. VACD leadership work closely with the Children’s Unit of Diyatalawa Base Hospital and liaise in respect of regular Medical Clinics for the children and in providing hearing and visual aids etc..
10. The steering committee of VACD formally met 5 times while the Mothers’ Union met 11 times during the last year.
11. The steering committee and volunteers agreed to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Conduct of VACD.

Milton Anthony Perera, Project Leader – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014