

Karuna Society for Animals and Nature

Annual Report

April 2016 – March 2017



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Introduction

Karuna Society had another busy year, filled with hundreds of rescued animals, thousands of treatments, dozens of projects, daily challenges and endless activities.

Major events this year included ongoing efforts for our new Wildlife Centre to become certified by the Central Zoo Authority; receiving support from the government for our Animal Birth Control program for dogs; the ongoing severe drought and associated challenges in procuring cattle feed; the victory of our Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme Court; and progress towards community outreach and Public Relations.

Unfortunately, our excess of expenditure over income was nearly 7.5 lakh rupees. We continue to struggle daily to maintain our activities with the shortfall of donations and government aid.

The animals we cared for this year included cattle (cows & buffaloes), dogs, cats, donkeys, monkeys, deer, sloth bears, horses, snakes, birds and even a panther and a civet.

Total Animals Treated: 2,135

Total expenditures: Rs 77,43,051/--

Total Number of Treatments: 19,625

Total Income: Rs 69,95,747/-



Small Animal Clinic

Our small animal clinic continues to be very busy year-round with numerous patients brought in by our staff (strays found on the road), well-wishers and pet owners. Many serious cases turn into new residents requiring lifelong care at Karuna Society.

In February 2017 we received a small animal ambulance from "Caring Hands for Animals" in Hyderabad, because they closed and needed to donate their ambulance. It cost us nearly Rs 35,000 to repair. However, it has been very useful for animal rescues and clinic



errands, such as picking up medicines and clinic supplies.

Some people ask why paralysed pups are not euthanised. This picture shows a dog which we received in April 2016. She was paralysed due to a dog bite. After 10 days she began walking again!

In February 2017 we were called by the municipality commissioner regarding the food leftovers all over the village, with the misunderstanding that Karuna was feeding resident dogs when it was actually done by residents and visitors of Puttaparthi not associated with Karuna Society. We had to explain that Roshni D'Silva is our only outreach volunteer and she feeds only the resident ashram dogs plus five dogs outside who were pushed out of the ashram some time ago.

This year we also had to devote many hours of time and attention to addressing issues with foreigners who do not understand the unique situation of stray dogs in India, specifically in Puttaparthi village and in the Prasanthi Nilayam ashram.

In 2013 a group called "Sai Animal Lovers" posted a petition accusing ashram officials of injuring dogs in the ashram. The group posted several updates in 2017 and we had to mediate between the group, the ashram, and even be on defence ourselves. Karuna Society works closely with the ashram and with locals to assure humane treatment of all animals in the area.

In October we sent out a Newsletter to the over 1,000 people on our mailing list to educate them regarding "Resident Dogs in Sai Baba Ashram, Puttaparthi". Additional information is available here:



http://www.karunasociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/MANAGEMENT_DOG-POPULATION.pdf



Over the last few years the lives of our permanent cats have much improved. Before, they only had one big room to live in. Thanks to several donors, in late 2015 we finalised an outside enclosure and two connected rooms with wooden cat houses and walkways for the cats to climb higher. Life has become more interesting and they can sit in the sun and have several places to hide.

Their maintenance has always been part of "general donations" but their upkeep is worth mentioning especially as we have regular cat inpatients downstairs as well. We feed them cat biscuits in the morning and in the evening a mix of rice and vegetables with chicken. The cost of chicken is approximately Rs 5,000/- per month for 18 cats plus inpatients. Altogether the food expenses is around Rs 80,000/- per year. In addition to this there is always medical care, deworming, surgery and the attendant. The total per year is usually around Rs100,000/-



Permanent Dogs: 74
Permanent Cats: 19
Animals Treated: 1,596

Treatments: 18,811
Surgeries: 57
Expenses: Rs 11,66,523/--

ABC (Animal Birth Control) and AR (Anti Rabies) Vaccination

After a gap of several years due government lack of funding and red tape, in September 2016 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Karuna Society and Puttaparthi Nagara Panchayath (local government) for the implementation of Animal Birth Control and Anti Rabies Vaccination (ABC / ARV) programme. It agrees to cover 670 dogs from 15 September 2016 to 14 September 2017. Every week our employees search the nearby areas for dogs that need to be sterilised. We bring them to the clinic, perform the surgery, keep them for three to five days to make sure they are healthy, and then, after giving anti rabies vaccination, we return them to the areas where they were picked up.

Unfortunately, promised funding for the program has been very difficult to procure and we have to request local agencies for the guaranteed funding multiple times before we receive it.

Looking back at our ABC program it has become clear that our approach is very much different from the government approach. The Government is focussed on one-time mass sterilisation / vaccination in one area after which the project moves on to other areas. Our experience is that only a combined dog welfare program, which includes in and outpatient care, is effective and results in a healthy dog population without rabies. Without the threat of rabies and large numbers of dogs there grows a new awareness within the community, seeing the dogs as living beings who are part of a community, living with people in different ways.

Large numbers of animal hospitals which include dog welfare and ABC/AR need to be established to have a national impact.





Help Animals India" (HAI) from the US (www.helpanimalsindia.org) supports us with annual donations for our ABC/AR program, sterilizing stray dog and cats in Puttaparthi and surrounding villages. Additionally, they provide support with funding for feed for rescued cattle, doctors salary, and drip irrigation to save water.



We receive continued support of Animal Care Austria (www.animalcare-austria.at). They have been supporting us since 2012 with donations for our ABC (Animal Birth Control) programs, sterilizing stray dogs which are roaming the roads in India.

ABC Dogs: 385

ABC Cats: 20

Anti-Rabies: 473

ABC Expenses: 4,89,374/--

Received from Municipality: Rs 50,000/--



Cattle Rescue Project



We continued to experience a severe drought during this fiscal year. There was no grass in the forest for grazing our rescued cattle; they had to survive on crop residue like rice grass, maize grass and grains. However, without water the farmers lost most of their crops and there was no crop residue to use as animal feed. Many of the cows and buffaloes owned by farmers were sold to slaughterhouses because they had nothing to feed them.

Payments for buying fodder needed to be postponed because we had no funds at hand. It is the first time that the rescued cattle of Karuna had to stay inside the compound as early as December and January to be fed, instead of March when the grass in the forest dries up.

The last sufficient rain in our area was during the 2015 monsoon season. The last monsoon season was in June to December 2016 and it was completely without rain; bore wells even dried up in the area. This is the first time in 20 years that we had to buy water from the water tankers to supply our animals with drinking water. The government is supporting farmers and villages, but not NGOs like Karuna Society.

In December 2016 our application for emergency drought cattle fodder funding was approved by the Marchig Trust and we received over Rs 4,17,000 which was a tremendous relief.

We also sent out a Newsletter, "Karuna Struggles through the Drought," to the 1,000 people on our digital mailing list, hoping for donations to assist us. The newsletter provided information that the government's declaration of drought areas included Karuna's location.



The good news is that there is a plan for water supply through canals which we hope will be working the next year.



A farmer "donated" his calf which had a fracture of the hind leg, a fracture that was already two weeks old.

In such cases the animal is officially signed over to Karuna and we begin caring for it. We are happy to have saved one more little cow from a life of abuse, reproduction and slaughter only for profit for the owner. The downside is that we must take care of her for the rest of her life.

When the owners of the animals throw their hands up in the air, we step in and help, for the sake of the animals.

Karuna's rescued cattle do not only have a right to life, they are also NOT for profit / milk. They are free to move around, to bond with each other, groom each other and experience love and respect.

Karuna has rescued many bulls from illegal transport to the slaughter house. Some of them are with us for more than fourteen years. They must be in their twenties now. Just like old people they slowly lose their muscles and become skin and bones. Finally, they lie down and within a day or two the light is out. It is a peaceful process.



Our donkeys should not be forgotten, though they are the least valued workers in our area. They haul huge loads of illegally cut firewood from the forest, till their backs have open, infected wounds. Sometimes the owners bring the suffering donkeys to Karuna for treatment. After recovery they cannot go back to work and stay with us.

The picture below is one of our rescued donkeys who was pregnant. We make sure all our permanent donkey residents are sterilized as there is a “no reproduction” policy at Karuna Society.

What about the donkeys where there is no shelter to take them in? In the end they cannot work anymore, and they are discarded or sent for slaughter. Yes, People eat donkey meat too.

Karuna has seven rescued donkeys, some disabled as they were left on the road with broken legs or large open wounds. Moreover, they are on the bottom of the ladder of "appreciation"! They are actually very lovable!

In-Patients:

Cows: 24
Bulls: 26
Buffaloes: 21
Donkeys: 4
Horse: 2
Number of Treatments: 542

Permanent Large Animals

Bullocks: 53
Cows: 92
Buffaloes: 124
Camel: 1
Horses: 4
Donkeys: 10

Total Large Animal Expenses: Rs 38,73,093/--



Plastic Cow Project Update

This was a big year for the Plastic Cow Project: on July 15th the Supreme Court ruled in our favour regarding our Public Interest Litigation “Plastic Cow” case that has been going on for years. The judge heard our case and disposed it. However, the court has asked the activists to set up monitoring committees and implement the court order, which will be nearly impossible due to the drastically limited resources of individuals and animal welfare NGOs.

Online address of the article:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Plastic-consumed-by-cattle-apex-court-asks-Centre-to-set-up-committee/article14491969.ece>

In August, the President of Karuna Society, Clementien Pauws, was interviewed by an author at the online newspaper 'The Wire', Rukmini Sekhar, regarding the Court's decision.

Online address of the article:

http://thewire.in/62249/watch-activists-say-plastic-kills-most-cows/?utm_content=bufferd6929&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

The Supreme Court directed, in part, the Centre to constitute a committee for implementation of environment protection laws and consider prohibiting the use, sale and disposal of plastic bags which are consumed by stray cattle making them suffer and die a painful death.



Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, Rayalaseema



Perhaps our most difficult challenge this year, as it was last year, involved the Master Plan and Central Zoo Authority (CZA) recognition of our new Wildlife Centre. In December 2016 the last details of our Master Plan were finally sent to the CZA. We were not yet able to receive prior permission to continue the construction.

We were very lucky to receive funding for our new Wildlife Centre from the Jeanne Marchig

Animal Welfare Trust, UK. However, due to ongoing certification complications with the CZA, we could not finalise constructions of enclosures for the animals and we could not move our animals there. Instead, we worked on infrastructures such as roads, waterways, the compound wall, entrance gate, and constructing a pond outside the gate for the forest animals to drink at night. We also planted fodder grass for the deer on Ahimsa land. We put in drip irrigation and many fruit trees as food for the animals.

Up to 31 March 2017, we spent Rs 38,93,853/-- of the Marchig Trust grant amount for allowed wildlife centre construction.

In addition, it has been extremely difficult to find a wildlife veterinary surgeon. We were fortunate to receive a sizeable donation from Help Animals India which would cover a vet for several months and in August 2016 we were delighted to announce that we had hired a new wildlife veterinarian to our team, Dr. Vimalraj.

Sadly, after several months he “escaped” to more prestigious pastures and we found ourselves back from where we started.

In fact, we do not have full time work for a wildlife surgeon and the on-call local veterinarian we are working with now fulfils our needs.



Ramaa, the single sloth bear cub that we raised, is now almost two years old and happily living with her own kind. The special intimate bond of love and trust between us is still alive; when we meet we reach out for each other, holding hands. We know who we are!



The picture below is of two of our sloth bears, Ramaa and Giri, playing. Ramaa is on the right.





In January 2017 we castrated our two male sloth bears and after they had recovered for several weeks, we opened the door between the two compounds and now the whole bear family of six bears is playing together!

In October 2016, we had the opportunity to release some healthy monkeys and deer back into their natural habitat. Ten monkeys were released in the forest at Kadiri.



We would like to acknowledge the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust of Scotland (www.marchigtrust.org) who funded the post-operative care rooms and support us for feed and medicines. They are also funding the new wildlife rescue centre.

Wildlife Animals

Monkey, Sambar Deer, Black Buck, Peafowl, Panther, Civet, Python, Sloth Bear

Patients: 27
Treatments: 272

Permanent Animals

Deer: 26
Monkeys: 11
Peafowl: 7
Sloth Bear: 6

Wildlife Expenses: Rs 8,44,065/--

Centre Construction: Rs 51,17,412/--

Marchig Grant: Rs 60,00,000/--

Cruelty Free Organic Farming

Karuna Society is not only about animals but also about nature. For the last 14 years we have used the dung from our rescued cattle to grow organic fruits and vegetables for sale in our Karuna shop. "Cruelty-free" means "no abuse to the soil nor to the animals involved in agriculture".

Here are pictures of our ladies sorting herbs.



Karuna Organic Shop in Puttaparthi

The Karuna shop has several functions. Residents of Puttaparthi and visiting foreigners are able to purchase high quality, fresh, organic produce grown on the Ahimsa farm as well as the packed Ahimsa brand organic products (Herbal powders, Himalaya salt, Gomutra, Peanut butter, Tahini, etc.). This helps to generate some funds for the upkeep of the animals in our care.



The shop also serves as a venue for visitors to express their concerns about the local animals, especially those that are not being treated well. Romula D'Silva, our Vice-President, and her daughter Roshni manage the shop and respond to animals in distress. If needed the animals are brought to the clinic for treatment. Some of these animals become permanent residents of our shelter and lead a happy and safe life along with the other rescued animals.



Another vital function of the shop is receiving donations, in cash and in kind, from animal loving people who want to contribute to the care of animals in Puttaparthi.

The shop also serves to disseminate information on animal and environment related issues.

Agricultural Expenses: Rs 3,65,641/--

Agricultural Income: Rs 3,25,552/--

Humane Education Program and PR

2016-2017 was a busy year in which we improved our community outreach and education.

In early April Karuna released a short informational film on YouTube called, "Karuna, Compassion it is..." thanks to the donation of Karuna supporter Mr. Krishnan and the efforts of creator & producer Kunal Vohra. Here is the link on YouTube: https://youtu.be/74_rrBCUvy0

In late April 2016, Karuna Society President Clementien and film creator Kunal were interviewed by a Hindi radio station in Australia.

Also in April 2016, Aaron Gross, a Professor of Comparative Religion, showed the Karuna film to his "Religion and Animals" class at the University of San Diego, California, USA. He is with an NGO called "Farm Forward" and he had visited Karuna previously.



In Mid-April 2016, we met with Ananth Shankar in Bangalore, to work on designing the Karuna brochure, "A Journey of Compassion." The booklet was completed later in the year and is now used to distribute to those interested in Karuna's activities.

In late April 2016, A group of students from Sri Sathya Sai University who had seen the Plastic Cow film, came to visit Karuna.

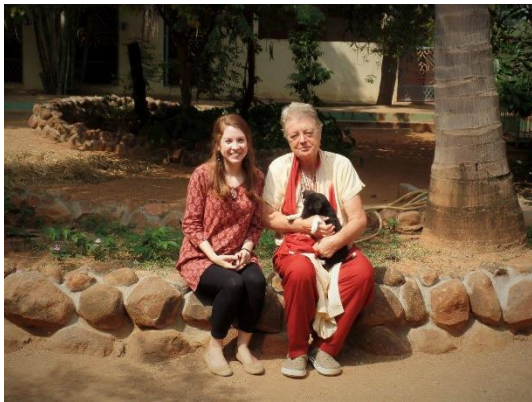
In June 2016, nearly two dozen students of the Happy Home Trust in Puttaparthi visited Karuna Society. Karuna's Vice-President, Romula D'Silva, conducted a session with the topic, "Animals - Our Best Friends."



On 11 June 2016, Karuna's Vice-President, Romula D'Silva, organized a Humane Education workshop at the Karuna Society/Ahimsa stall at the "Bhoomi Habba - the Earth Festival" at Vishar in Kothanur, Bangalore. Most of the AHIMSA products she brought were sold. People (including some Catholic nuns) were quite curious to know about the products and, of course, Karuna's activities. There was a good attendance of students for the Humane Education session and adults for the two Karuna

movies. Romula's daughter Rochelle sponsored the event including the printing of the book marks which were distributed.

In February 2017, two sessions were conducted at the Sri Sai Prasanthi High School on Bukkapatnam Road in Puttaparthi. A total of 70 students from grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 attended these sessions. The topics for the sessions were related to the relevance of animals in our life, the importance of caring for animals and the environment as well as our duty towards respecting and protecting them. An interactive discussion with visual aids was followed by the video, "Compassionate Citizen".



In October 2016 Karuna was visited/inspected by Jessica Ava, representative of "Help Animals India", USA, one of our most valued and loyal donors. She observed that the shelter is well-maintained, well-staffed and prioritizes the animal's well-being. She also concluded that support is most needed in ongoing shelter operations.

In December 2016, Karuna held its 2nd Annual 'Open Day'. We invited the public to have a tour of our facilities to show the kind of support and care we provide for the animals in Puttaparthi and also to answer any questions. There are some misunderstandings about the management and welfare of the stray dog population in this area: what they need, what the law says and what the duties are of an Animal Welfare Organization like Karuna Society.

The free tour included a general introduction at the animal clinic, meeting the permanent resident dogs, cats, cows, horses, donkeys and a camel, and a visit to the wildlife rescue centre which is normally closed to the public. There are deer, six sloth bears, eight peacocks, and a pig living there.

We also invited everyone to Karunapalli, located on the other side of the Chitravathi river, where we have the organic garden, more cows and buffaloes, and the production unit for Ahimsa Organic Products.



Planning 2017 – 2018

We are brainstorming about the time ahead, how to stabilise/fund our work and where to find donors and other support.

We are also considering the improvement of our legal groundwork like the amendment of the MoA.

We need to do everything we can to work with the CZA towards certification of the Master Plan of the new Wildlife Rescue/Rehabilitation Centre, so we can complete construction and move our rescued animals to the new centre.

We have hope that the coming year will bring further improvements of infrastructure, wildlife certification and financial stability and we are actively working to make that a reality.

