

February 2023

4 NEWSLETTER FOR HAPPY SENIORS

~ For healthy independent life ~
Yatinuwara Elderly center
in Kandy District



✓ Background: Identification of issues to be established



Although many elderly people have a lot of experience and can work, they are not able to get a job due to the retirement age system and many of them have to live with insufficient income.

This center was established on 1st January 2016 by members to aim to be an independent elderly person, by maintaining good physical and mental health and engaging in income-generating activities to avoid relying on children and staying in nursing homes.

Current organizational management

There are 60 members in the elderly committee among the elders living in this area. Before the COVID-19, the members invite everyone to join the committee.

At beginning, there was no building. From a field inspection across the island, this day center was recognized for its activities and they were awarded and funded Rs 25,00,000/= by the National Elderly Secretariat in 2019, thereby the current building has been built on 2020.02.27.

After that, the day center was awarded by the committee of the area and the necessary items for the center were bought from funds from the councilors' budget.

Before COVID-19, they had savings of approximately 1.1 million rupees. About Rs. 250,000 was spent on developing infrastructure facilities and funds were allocated to distribute dry funds for the members in covid-19 period. After that, they deposited Rs. 600,000 as a fixed deposit. The maintenance of the center is being done by the interest of that.

Messages from the field

Many of the elder people who come here are not financially well off and/or have no family to rely on. However, they are spending their time positively by gathering, chatting, discussing their respective issues, and considering solutions.

Our children usually work during daytime, so it is difficult for them to take care of their parents. However, once the elders come to this center, they can participate in social activities. We believe if we can live happily, we can live long.

✓ Example of the major activities

- Working proactively in programs of the temple. (Ex. Dana, Sheela, meditation, bodhi pooja)
- Conducting ayurvedic medical clinics and counselling services.
- Taking the lead in the development activities of the area and raising funds for elderly welfare.
- Promoting yoga and meditation for the physical and mental health.
- Improving singing and dancing skills.
- Contribution to tree planting, gardening and conservation of the environment.
- Organizing trips for members (For entertainment and pilgrimage)
- Providing cooked foods as well as providing financial support for a funeral of a member.



Yoga practice



Traditional dance

✓ Good outcome

We can walk again!

Some members who were unable to walk in the past are now able to walk without assistance by attending the day center and exercising.

Increase positive mind!

Members gather here to sing, dance, talk, and do things they can't do at home, which increases their motivation, trains their minds, and turns them into positive thoughts.

Prize receipt!

In 2019, the committee won the first prize in a contest on activities for the elderly held in the Province and received chairs, tables, chessboards, cooking tools, and construction of activity spaces.

Challenges

- Sources of income have been stopped due to various reasons related to the covid-19 pandemic.
- Because of corona, it becomes difficult to gather periodically.
- They started gardening, but the crop in the field was damaged by animals and humans.
- Rain and insects come through the mesh covers of the building and damage the goods at the day center.
- There is no prospect of funding right now, but the committee would like to receive training, build toilets, kitchen and set up a library near future.



Sing and play

(The pictures of people are published with their permission)

Please send good activity in your community to
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Directorate of Elders and Disabled, Ministry of Health
National Secretariat for Elders, Ministry of Social Empowerment
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Project for Capacity Enhancement of Elderly Service in the Community