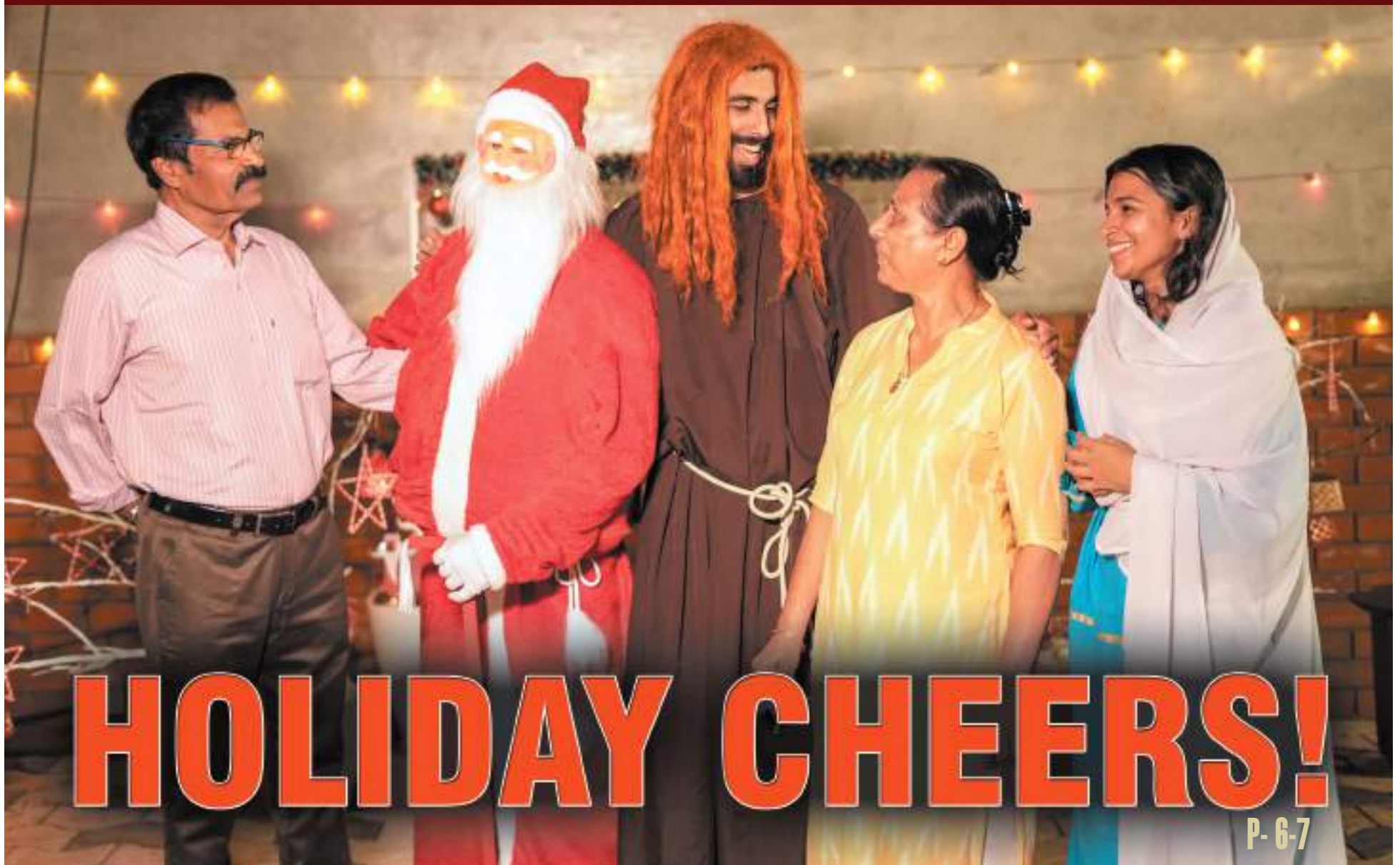




THE ODYSSEY

16TH VOLUME - JANUARY 2024

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WALK DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

Step back in time with Bless as our residents come together for a heart-warming journey down memory lane for Children's day. Mrs. Gladys Jose, Dr. Mariamma Alexander, Mrs. Reena Thomas, and Mrs. Sunitha Lazar along with our staff members recently transported everyone into their cherished childhood moments, presenting a brilliantly enacted comedy skit with the charismatic Mr. K. T. Thomas taking on the role of their teacher. Their performance undoubtedly left a ripple of laughter, promising an evening filled with warmth and nostalgia. Dr. V. B. Kartha and Dr. Geetha Devi, captivated by the theme of revisiting joyful memories, shared delightful anecdotes from their own happy childhoods. As we bask in the tales of yesteryear, let's take a moment to applaud Dr. K. Sudheer, who fondly reminisced about his time as the first children's Nehruji from Kerala.



His recounting of the joyous moments spent dressed as Nehru years ago adds an extra layer of charm to the evening. We were joined virtually by Ms. Athira M. K., a promising future PhD candidate, who revealed her inspiration from none other than our dear K. T. Thomas Uncle. His influence played a pivotal role in shaping her career,



highlighting the profound impact residents can have on the aspirations of the younger generation.

This nostalgic journey, rich with laughter and shared memories, exemplifies the essence of Bless as a place where residents not only live but thrive in a community that cherishes the past while embracing the present and future. ■



In a vibrant display of camaraderie and talent, Bless embraced the spirit of International Men's Day with a series of thrilling competitions that brought our staff and resident gentlemen together in celebration.

Residents and staffs were divided into five groups with each group comprising of one resident and one staff each. The festivities commenced with an intellectually stimulating Quiz Round, challenging participants' knowledge and quick thinking. The creative prowess of the community surfaced during the Malayalam Challenge and Pen Challenge, unveiling the diverse talents within.

CELEBRATING MEN OF BLESS

However, the pinnacle of the celebration was the ultimate multitasking challenge. Each teams showcased their culinary skills and artistic flair, racing against the clock to create both delectable dishes and stunning decorations. In a fitting finale, kudos were extended to Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Binson, who emerged victor-

ious, demonstrating their prowess in the face of the day's challenges.

Special recognition was also given to the outstanding performance of the runners-up, Mr. Abdul Rahman and Mr. Anish, who added their unique touch to the event.

Laughter echoed through Bless as the day unfolded, weaving together the threads of friendship and commemorating the outstanding men who contribute to making Bless an extraordinary place. Here's to the resilience, creativity, and camaraderie of the Men of Bless! ■



Dr. P B Boss, the visionary Founder and Chairman, accompanied by Mrs. Bissy Boss, Director of Osaka Group, brought warmth and generosity to Santi Bhavan with a significant contribution to its ongoing initiatives.

This visit went beyond a financial gesture, representing a heartfelt recognition of the impactful work dedicated to the elderly community. Dr. P B Boss, a thoughtful and visionary leader, expressed profound appreciation for the noble cause, underscoring the importance of unwavering commitment to making a difference.

In an engaging conversation, Dr. Boss shared his belief that unwavering dedication opens doors to success. His sincere interest in understanding the project revealed a compassionate heart eager to contribute to meaningful social causes. He left an inspirational note, stating, *When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping*

OSAKA GROUP'S GENEROSITY SHINES AT SANTI BHAVAN!



you achieve it. A commitment was made to return for another visit, establishing future partnerships to further enhance the welfare of the elderly community at Santi Bhavan. ■



INTERGENERATIONAL INTERACTION WITH RAJAGIRI PUBLIC SCHOOL

In a touching display of unity and compassion, students from Rajagiri Public School Kalamassery recently visited Bless Retirement Living, creating a profound intergenerational bond.

The excitement in the air was palpable as delightful moments and stories were shared, transcending age boundaries. The students were genuinely captivated by the remarkable life experiences of our



residents, leaving an indelible mark on both generations.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the students for their generosity, as each one brought a delightful snack (it was all so delicious). To the students of Rajagiri Public School Kalamassery, your visit has enriched our residents as they love to interact with their younger generation.

To the students of Rajagiri Public School

Kalamassery, your visit has enriched our residents as they love to interact with their younger generation. Thank you for spreading joy, making a difference, and exemplifying the beauty of intergenerational relationships. They also showered our Santi Bhavan participants with love and kindness during their visit to Bless. Each student brought a delightful snack item, they presented all of them in two lovely carton boxes, accompanied by a heartfelt note. Your generosity warms our hearts, and we eagerly anticipate hosting you at Santi Bhavan in the near future.





HUMAN RIGHTS DAY WITH INSIGHTFUL DEBATE ON RETIREMENT AGE

In a thought-provoking commemoration of Human Rights Day, Bless hosted a spirited debate on the prevailing retirement age in both the private and government sectors in India. Our residents were divided into two groups comprising of residents with experiences in various fields.

Team A, comprising Mr. N. M. Mathew, Mr. Mohan Joseph, Mr. K. T. Thomas, passionately engaged in the discourse. Simultaneously, Team B, featuring Dr. Radhakrishnan, Mr. P. Ramachandran, and Mr. C. I. Mathew, brought their unique perspectives to the table.

Despite initial disagreements, a unanimous conclusion resonated – the current retirement system must undergo a transformation. This event marked a significant milestone as Bless witnessed its first all-male participation, sparking insightful conversations that echoed throughout the community.



The passionate voices of the participants as well as the audience echoed through the venue, highlighting the importance of addressing and reforming the existing retirement age norms. Let's continue to champion and encourage meaningful discussions that pave the way for positive change. Human Rights Day at Bless was a testament to the power of dialogue in shaping a future that upholds the rights and dignity of every individual. ■

In a remarkable turn of events, our esteemed Chairman, Mr. Babu Joseph, played a pivotal role in the 12th Edition of TiEcon Kerala, where the theme revolved around "Driving the Change: Unlocking Potential." A captivating highlight was his participation in a thought-provoking

TYCOONS AT TIECON

discussion titled "Kerala and its Silver Economy: Potential and Challenges," sharing the stage with distinguished panellists Dr. Karthik

Narayan R. (M. D. Athulya Senior Care) and Mr. Tom George (Founder & M. D. Guardian angel Homecare). Steering the conversation with finesse was the dynamic Mrs. Suja K. Kunnath (ED National Institute of Speech & Hearing), who served as the insightful session's moderator.

The excitement didn't end there; Mr. Babu Joseph also took center stage in a riveting round table event, delving deeper into the impactful topic that centered on the Silver Economy. The event not only sparked meaningful discussions but also laid the foundation for a promising future of change and growth. ■





BLESS RETIREMENT LIVING SPREADS HOLIDAY CHEERS!

As the holiday season descended upon Bless Retirement Living, the air was filled with joy and festive spirit. Commencing the celebrations in early December, residents and staff joined forces for heartwarming activities that brought the festive spirit out of everyone. From crafting Christmas greetings to making handmade candles and baking delightful cupcakes, every moment resonated with warmth and camaraderie.

The culmination of these festive preparations took center stage on Christmas Eve, as residents joyfully received the delightful goodies they had actively contributed to creating. Going beyond the confines of their community, Bless Retirement Living shared the holiday spirit by gifting friends with a special holiday hamper, delicious cakes, and a personalized Bless calendar.

A magical Christmas Eve unfolded as residents and staff gathered to celebrate the joyous birth of Jesus Christ. The evening began with a festive tone set by Bless's own Joseph, Mary, and Santa, accompanied by a talented staff band that filled the air with beautiful carols.

The heartwarming event commenced with Mrs. Alice Mathew placing Baby Jesus in the crib, initiating a night filled with love and joy. Residents and staff joined in harmony, filling the air with the sweet melodies of Christmas carols. Adding a personal touch to the celebration, resident K. T. Thomas shared the Christmas message, while Mr. George Kadankavil reminisced about his cherished Christmas memories. To cap off the evening, everyone present indulged in delicious cake and wine, creating unforgettable





moments of warmth and togetherness.

In a dazzling display of festive joy, Bless Retirement Living hosted an extravagant Christmas and New Year bash on December 27, 2023.

The event was elevated by the esteemed presence of His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joshua Mar Ignathios, adding a touch of grandeur to the celebrations. Mrs. Lizy Rajan, Mr. George

Varghese & family were also present for the celebrations.

Residents and staff joined forces to curate an unforgettable experience, transforming the venue with enchanting decorations and delivering captivating performances. The lineup was a delightful mix of heartwarming Christmas carols, charming couple dances, and the traditional Margam Kali dance form.

The evening commenced with an air of excitement as residents and staff worked hand in hand to create a festive ambiance that resonated with the spirit of the season. The event served as a fitting conclusion to the year, leaving everyone with cherished memories and a sense of anticipation for the promising year ahead. ■



TRIUMPH ON THE NATIONAL STAGE ASLI TALENT SHOWCASE

Our cherished residents shone bright at the 3rd Talent Showcase hosted by the Association of Senior Living India. Heartfelt congratulations to them for their remarkable achievements in all the events!

The month-long online event witnessed the Bless team emerging as the most active and notable performers. Our residents enthusiastically participated in various competitions, showcasing their diverse

talents. Mrs. Mary Joseph (Meera Aunty) engaged in the unscrambled words contest, Mr. Ramachandran competed in the Sudoku championship, and Mrs. Nirmala Pothen, Mrs. Lizy Rajan, and Mrs. Raji Kartha submi-





tted their works in the poetry, short story, and painting categories, respectively.

A group of talented individuals including Mrs. Nirmala Pothen, Mrs. Kamala Gopinath, Mr. Joseph Vattakkavan, Mr. George Kadankavil, Mrs. Sunitha Lazar, Mrs. Seetha, and Mrs. Lalithakumari showcased their vocal harmony in a group song. Mrs. Jaya Radhakrishnan, Mrs. Gladys Jose, Mrs. Nirmala Pothen, Mrs. Kamala Gopinath, and Mrs. Philomena captivated the audience with their group dance performance.

Mrs. Kamala Gopinath, Mrs. Lalitha John, Mrs. Rugmini, and Mrs. Lakshmi Kantham exhibited their creativity in the colorful Rangoli competition. However, the most remarkable highlight of the event was the fashion show, where our resident aunties stole the show on the national ramp during the ASLI Fashion Show. Dressed in vibrant sarees and gold blouses, Mrs. Gladys Jose, Mrs. Reena Thomas, Mrs. Nirmala Pothen, Mrs. Sunitha Lazar, Mrs. Lalitha John, Mrs. Philomena, Mrs. Annie Mathew, and Mrs. Tessy Manavalan showcased their elegance. They walked the ramp on the theme *Evenings are Beautiful*. Sharing the spotlight was none other than our Chairman, Mr. Babu Joseph who walked the ramp to accompany our ladies.

Kudos to our residents for showcasing their incredible talents and spreading joy on a national platform!





BLESS IN THE NEWS



VAYASINAZHAKU

Thrilled to share that Bless made headlines on Manorama News's Vayasinazhaku Segment. The segment spotlighted the lives of our beloved residents, highlighting Bless and the importance of retirement homes. Our dear residents, Dr. Madhavi Ramachandran, Mr. M. A. Jose, Mrs. Lizy Rajan, & Mr. George Kadankavil, shared their heartwarming experiences of living at Bless. Their stories truly capture the essence of community, care, and joy that Bless brings to our residents' lives.

PADMINI VARKEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Our Resident in Waiting, Dr. K. C. Rajasree, bagged this year's prestigious Padmini Varkey Memorial Award. Heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Rajasree on this remarkable achievement!



SECRETS OF MANGO RAIN BY NIRMALA PILLAI

Our dear resident-in-waiting, Nirmala Pillai, has just unveiled her masterpiece, "Secrets of Mango Rain"! Embark on a mesmerizing journey through the heart of a Kerala Tharavad, where the tapestry of tradition and modernity beautifully entwines.

This captivating novel delves into the rich customs and values of a matriarchal family, unraveling the intricate complexities of family ties. Get ready to be swept away by the vivid storytelling that brings the essence of Kerala to life.



SCARF FOR THE SNOWMAN!



As the Christmas festivities were unfolding, we encountered a dilemma regarding the choice of clothing for our Snowman's scarf. Fortunately, we didn't have to search too far, as Anitha Menon Aunty kindly volunteered to assist us by crafting a shawl for our snowman. Her beautiful work helped us enhance our festive spirit. ■

DOODLES BY THE DAUGHTER



Mrs. Anne Louis the daughter of Mrs. Thankamma Sebastian & Xavier Sebastian has shared with us doodles she made awhile she was staying in Bless with her parents. ■



WHAT'S NEW AT BLESS?



DANCE CLUB RELAUNCH

Our resident's dance club has been relaunched with a special blessing! Dr. Rajakumari, a seasoned expert in classical dance and song, graced the occasion by lighting the lamp, joined by our vibrant dance club members and the dedicated club in-charge, Mrs. Radhika. Heartfelt well wishes poured in from Mrs. Mini Jayaraj, daughter of our dear Seethamma and a founding member of our resident's dance club. The Guru of the Dance Club, Mrs. Radhika was also honoured to receive Gurudakshina from her talented students. ■

REMINISCENCE THERAPY

A special brain gym session on reminiscence therapy was organized for our residents on 16th November 2023. They actively participated on the session and commented on the usefulness of such events. ■



KAVITAMALARUKAL

Our talented resident, Ms. Lalitha N., submitted a copy of her poetry compilation for Bless Library. The book was unveiled by Mrs. Jaya Radhakrishnan who complimented Lalitha aunty for her passion for poetry writing. Her poems are now available for reading at our library. ■

ORGANIZATIONAL VISIT AT BLESS!

Bless hosted social work trainees and faculty members from Kodaikanal Christian College for an insightful organizational visit. Our team had a fantastic time sharing the significance of active retirement homes both now and in the future. Looking forward to more enriching interactions ahead! ■



CHILDREN'S DAY AT SANTI BHAVAN

Santi Bhavan and Govt. Higher Secondary School, Vazhakulam, joined hands for a heartwarming Children's Day celebration! The festivities kicked off with an interactive session, where laughter and stories bridged the gap between generations. Cultural programs and game sessions added a vibrant touch, showcasing the diverse talents of both the children and Santi Bhavan's participants. ■





A Song for Spices

Years may pass, but the flavours endure,
In the depths of my heart, they remain pure.
Tangled with spices, a delicious embrace,
A memory of feasts, time cannot efface.

Oh, the desire that lingers in my mind,
For the flavours of India, so rich and refined.
From the soaring heights of spice and heat,
To the sweetness that makes every bite a treat.

The sour notes that send shivers down my spine,
The spice that brings tears, a joy so divine.



Mrs. Nirmala Pothen

Yet, amidst the heat and the tantalizing pain,
There's a sweetness that lingers, a pleasure to gain.

The amalgamation of these flavours so grand,
In a single dish, a masterpiece planned.
It's more than a meal, it's a sensory delight,
A celebration of tastes, from morning to night.

So, my tongue craves, my heart does yearn,
For the flavours of India, a lifelong concern.
In every bite, a story unfolds,
Of a land where culinary magic molds.



Mrs. Lizy Rajan

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE



What makes life beautiful? What makes the journey complete? Robin contemplated these questions as he waited to board his train for his next business trip. He fondly remembered the days that he looked forward for train journeys. Remembered how he used to fight for the window seat so that he can pass his time enjoying the passing scenery. He tried to recall the trees, hills, valleys, and rivers that he has passed through but never had the chance to explore.

As Robin boarded the train he yearned for his old life, were he optimistically looked for a new adventure. He has now travelled throughout India for his company, he started off as a mere sales man but now he holds a very powerful position within the company. Lately he has been feeling like he was missing something and got himself reminiscing the past for more times than he can count. So, when he heard about a meeting set in the neighboring state he chose to travel through train to fill the gap that felt in his life.

As the train started rolling, Robin came to face his past memories, nothing much has changed, and he still opted for a window seat, passed his time looking through the scenery. He was mystified by the cacophony of noises and smiled through the vendors on different stations calling out for travelers.

On one of those station, Robin started noticing the ailing of a baby, curious he started

checking where the noise is coming from. A woman and her young son has boarded the train, the frail woman was holding on to her weak malnourished baby. They were not there to travel but to beg the passengers for money. He was shocked by their weary appearance and Robin started thinking about why the creator is unfair to some and bless others!

Somehow Robin was reminded of his younger self who once boarded this train looking for new opportunities, this woman was also on a train looking for a new opportunity. He approached the woman and started talking to her. Her name was Roopa and her son was named Aby. She told him how her husband passed away recently and

how she didn't have no means of income. Robin checked for the nearby care homes for woman. He cancelled his meeting and took the woman to the care home.

He constantly checked on Roopa and Aby. He was rejoiced to find that the woman has come out of her rut and has started working as a tailor with other women in the care home. As he took another train to one of his weekly meetings with Aby he recalled how the gap in his life that worried him earlier was no more. Somehow he has found a new purpose for his life in that train journey. He smiled fondly as he looked out of the window as he now knows what makes life beautiful. ■



A BLESSED JOURNEY OF MRS. CAROLINE FRANCIS BY DAVIS FRANCIS, MERIN T. FRANCIS & ISSAC JOJY

With deep appreciation, we write this to share the beautiful experience our parents had at BLESS Homes. Our family went through an inexplicably turbulent time, but Bless homes emerged as a shelter of unmatched care and unflinching support in the midst of a catastrophic tragedy.

Our journey with Bless commenced in May: 2023 a pivotal moment when our loving Mom fell severely sick all of a sudden. Our mother, Mrs. Caroline, is known for her cheerful and bubbly personality but after her diagnosis, she had to fight a decline in memory and partial mobility constraints along with other struggles which required constant assistance, support and care.

While we struggled to organize an efficient home care system near to her treating hospital, two of our close relatives who are current residents and some friends recommended Bless Homes which turned out to be a true blessing.

BLESS with its dedicated team complemented by its vibrant ambience really assured us children who're abroad that Mom & Dad were going to be in safe hands.

The residents and staff have always treated her like a beloved member of their family, going over and beyond the confines of a conventional community format of an old aged group to make her feel absolutely safe.

Our Mom & Dad got to experience the start of the joyful retirement living of their dreams through Bless. With its well-planned landscapes, community events and nature incorporated designs Bless creates a setting that helps to rejuvenate young and old minds and encourage com-



Mrs. Caroline Francis

panionship among their resident members.

Bless not only made sure of our Mom's physical comfort during her post treatment phase but also tremendously helped Mom & Dad's mental wellbeing by giving them the opportunity to build meaningful connections. Regular community events and social activities provide a great opportunity to mingle, socialize and encourages people to be active at all times. Eating together at the common dining area with jokes and laughter that accompany the healthy food, evening walks watching the sunsets, spending time together playing cards and bonding with everyone are few of the experiences that our parents will cherish fondly.

Once, Mom had a medical emergency that was tackled swiftly with unwavering determination displaying great efficiency, commitment and genuine concern. This instance was a testimony to their readiness in managing any unforeseen situations and dedication towards the wellbeing of the entire Bless family.

Now after a long 8 months of happiness and pristine care, our parents have decided to return our own home in – Thrissur. It is with great pride, we express our sincere gratitude to Bless for providing quality care and assistance during one of the most traumatic phases of our Mom's life.

This Home away from Home is truly blessed and will be missed for sure. We consider ourselves fortunate to have discovered. Bless. The entire team's loyalty and commitment have been a source of support and love during our stay and every staff member touched our lives in one way or another and will always have special place in our hearts.

On behalf of all of our family, we wholeheartedly extend our deepest thanks for the invaluable support and care provided by Bless. May this home of love & companionship, service & care, compassion & dedication continue to be a beacon of hope for others in their times of need.

Most importantly, we take this opportunity to applaud the senior management for their effective leadership, attention to detail and unwavering dedication which has been instrumental in achieving the desired goal and have been able to exceed our expectations.

Thank you all and God bless all at BLESS! ■



Raji Kartha



CHRISTMAS AT SANTI BHAVAN

Christmas and New Year celebrations were filled with joy and festivity as our wonderful Santi Bhavan family and bless family came together to create a beautiful memory. A special shout out to Mrs. Xenia Omar Sheriff, a dear Bless resident for spreading even more cheer by sponsoring the beautiful Christmas decorations and Christmas cake for the event.

In fact Christmas arrived early to Santi Bhavan when Xenia aunty visited them earlier to bestow



upon them tools to make their life more interesting. She beought the participants of Santi Bhavan board, markers, books etc to help them continue their learning. Mrs. VineethaShiju, Social Welfare Standing Committee Chairperson and ward member, South Vazha-

kulamPanchayath was the chief guest. Thanks to Al Saj restaurant for treating our dear members to a delightful lunch. The day was filled with music, dance, and fun games, exchanging Christmas gifts and secret Santa, creating unforgettable moments. ■