



Volume 3 | Issue 1
July, 2018

Upcoming Events

Friday, November 30, 2018

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Friends of Kalangarai
Fund-raising House Party
29 Lincoln Road
Lincoln, MA 01773

Hosts: Jane O'Rourke & Ursula
Matulonis

Call for Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to help with marketing and fund-raising. If interested, email us at:

Kalangarai.friends@gmail.com

Board of Directors

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Friends of Kalangarai

A Non-profit Organization Supporting the Human Rights of Widows in India

Our mission is to support community-based programs working to enhance dignity, self-reliance, and the wellbeing of widow-headed families in South India

Dear Friends,

While I was on sabbatical in India this past spring, I visited Kalangarai and was amazed at what a difference our 2017 donations made in the lives of the families of the widowed women who participate in Kalangarai programs. With our two fund-raising appeals in 2017 (Mother's Day and End-of-the-Year Appeal), Friends of Kalangarai enabled 69 students to attend school. We raised \$2,388 which provided scholarships ranging from \$15 to \$75 to students attending St. Joseph's Community College, nursing schools, undergraduate and graduate programs in various colleges, and secondary schools (10-12 grades). Students are starting school in July and need our support. Please consider making a donation to the Friends of Kalangarai to support their education.

Also, during my visit I collaborated with Professor Vijay Kumar from Loyola College (Chennai) on documenting the lives of several members of Kalangarai's self-help groups. Kumar took photos of the widows while we interviewed them. We will share their stories and the photos on the Kalangarai website (kalangarai-india.org). In December, there will be a photo exhibit of Kumar's photos at the Loyola College gallery.

Warm regards,
Karen Kayser
President, Friends of Kalangarai
Kalangarai.friends@gmail.com

From the Field: Empowered Voices

Meet Susai Mary. Susai's husband died 11 years ago soon after the tsunami. She survived with two children—a son and daughter. While she didn't experience poverty during her life before his death, she came to know poverty after he died. She experienced troubles while arranging for her daughter's marriage, and paying for school expenses.



Susai joined the Kalangarai self-help group 7 years ago. She says, "I learned a lot of things in the self-help group and got a loan of 5000 rupees." She invested her money into farming and later started a business in making chili powder. She multiplied her investment to 15,000 rupees. What brings joy to her life: "Standing on my own feet and not being dependent on others."

Kalangarai Launches New Program in Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs have been referred to as “change agents” and “innovators.” Simply stated, social entrepreneurs engage in a business to advance a social or environmental cause or address a social need. The widows’ first project is producing basil plants called tulsi. Tulsi is a type of basil native to India. It has antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, immune-stimulating and adaptogenic (stress removal) properties. The plant gives out large amounts of oxygen which is good for the environment by absorbing harmful gases like carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.



Mr. Thulasi who is the founder of Global Green Growth Group provides the women with the basil seeds and customer orders for seed balls. The women put the seeds inside a ball of soil and organic fertilizer. They earn a set amount for each ball that they make. The business not only gives the women an income but produces a product that is good for the environment. Mr. Thulasi who wears several hats as an entrepreneur, social worker, and philanthropist is training the women in other businesses with the goal to promote the sustainability of the environment.



Five self-help groups are preparing to begin a second project to recycle organic waste into bio-fertilizer/liquid manure using micro-green bins. The bins convert all of the kitchen waste to organic compost and liquid bio manure. Friends of Kalangarai donated funds to purchase 5 bins but 20 more bins are needed. Again, this is an enterprise that provides an income to the women and produces a fertilizer that is environmentally safe. For details on how this works, go to <http://mygreenbin.in>



Friends of Kalangarai is a U.S.A. non-profit that supports the programs of Kalangarai through fund-raising, education, and research. We are a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

***Please send donations to:
Friends of Kalangarai, Inc
P.O. Box 5366,
Louisville, KY 40255***

To learn more about the programs, visit www.kalangarai-india.org

My Green Bin Compost

In 2018, Friends of Kalangarai bought six compost bins for five widows. In the first six months an external source was buying the compost regularly for Rs. 25 per kilogram (US \$0.35). However, in the second half of 2019, the external source became an unreliable buyer and Kalangarai decided to buy the compost for the same rates to use as an organic fertilizer in Kalangarai's garden. Kalangarai is currently exploring other buyers.



Kalangarai in the Media

Caste, the Patriarchy, and Climate Change: The Dalit female farmers of India's Tamil Nadu state are working together to overcome a daunting set of challenges, 2/15/19 by Namrata Kolachalan, for Slate

In this report, the author describes how collective farming has offered Kalangarai's widows upward mobility, but she also explains how changing patterns of rainfall due to climate change can thwart these efforts.

This news article describes the rational and success of 11 farming collectives that were developed among the Kalangarai widows groups. It also features the efforts of one widow, Thamizharsi, who now has "hired 10 men, lends money to those in need, and works on land she can call her own."

Make a Difference in the Lives of Widows

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Please consider supporting these efforts by making a donation. Checks can be sent to:

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Louisville, KY 40255

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