

## Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary - Update

**W**hile not a TOS programme, the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary is near and dear to the hearts of many TOS groups and individuals, who have helped support it in the past. We want to share with all of you some good news! The BMAD recently received a large donation that will make many of the necessary items on their 'wish list' a reality. They are also making use of 'bit-giving.' Surgical equipment and medicines have already been purchased and the rehabilitation of the facility will be underway soon. An army of volunteers, who are mostly young people, are also working hard in clean-up efforts, as shown in the photos below.



The Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD) is an outreach programme for animal welfare run by the TS and seeks to provide free care for the street and community animals in the neighbourhood. Located in the verdant Besant Gardens, adjacent to the *Sapota Thottam* (the orchard area of the TS), it has been functional for the past 25 years.

The centre provides vaccination and treatment for injured and abandoned animals, including completely free outpatient care for dogs and cats. At present, there are about 50 dogs and several cats present at the shelter receiving treatment and care. But since the December 2015 floods and the devastating cyclone Vardha in 2016, the facility has been extensively damaged and needs to be rebuilt and upgraded. New surgical equipment has to be purchased, the kennels have to be repaired and the ancient water pipelines need replacement. New drains have to be constructed for the discharge of waste water and regular fumigation of the kennels and yards has to be undertaken to rid the place of ticks and fleas, all requiring

huge amounts of funds and a dedicated workforce!

The TS has been lucky in roping in Shraavan Krishnan, an animal rights activist and wildlife rehabilitation expert, to help in putting the facility back on its feet and transforming it into a compassionate and caring centre for the treatment and care of the many community animals found on the streets of Chennai. The facility has an examination room and operating theatre, and a comprehensive and effective Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme within the city to keep a check on the population of street animals.





Shravan plans to paint and repair the existing medical ambulance for use in the rescue and on-the-spot treatment of injured animals within a 5-km radius of the shelter, covering the south Chennai region, and to provide free vaccinations as well as treatment to the local dogs for any ailments that they might have. He has been able to attract a number of volunteers (some as young as 7 or 8 years old!) to do hands-on work at the shelter. They have been coming regularly and helping in the cleaning of the yards and kennels, giving tick baths to the dogs, helping with adoption of many abandoned animals and spending quality time with them. Dr Kannambal, the competent and compassionate veterinarian at the shelter, has been at the forefront in providing much needed medical treatment for the shelter animals and at the outpatient facility.



Shravan Krishnan is a reputed wildlife activist based out of Chennai and has been working with animals since the age of 10. He has rescued snakes, blackbucks, jackals, pangolins, spotted deer — all these apart from hundreds of dogs and cats — and has also been an active force in the turtle conservation community in Chennai. He is also the founder of “Hotel for



Dogs” and its shelter, “Shelter Furever”. Recently, Shravan was instrumental in the rescue of Bhadra, a four-month-old mongrel puppy that was thrown off a terrace by two college students in Chennai. She had suffered fractures in her hind leg and spine, and was nursed back to health by Shravan after making sure the offenders were booked for this heinous crime.

