



## PAUL HARRISON AWARD 2004

**Dr. Joyce Siromoni, nee John, is an alumna of the Christian Medical College, Vellore, having graduated in 1954. She received the Diploma of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, London in 1960. After her marriage to Mr. Paul Siromoni, she worked in an honorary capacity in the various places her husband was posted to. This has included working with patients with leprosy and in the outreach programme of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore. She was instrumental in the initiation and establishment of the Medico –Pastoral Association in Bangalore. This body, aided by trained professionals, provided counseling services to those who needed them. St. Michael's home for unmarried mothers was one such place that benefited from the services provided. Dr. Siromoni was instrumental in getting the Bangalore Corporation to allot land to the Association, thus enabling the establishment of the first halfway home in India. The rehabilitation process in the home lasted 9 months and included intensive counseling. As a result, most residents were able to integrate themselves into their families and society once again. Subsequently, Dr. Siromoni moved to Mumbai and Durgapur before settling down in Kolkata.**

**Dr. Siromoni reading an article in the newspaper about many NCLS (Non Criminal Lunatics) languishing in jails of West Bengal, responded to the need. She visited the jails, and seeing the appalling condition and the dehumanizing treatment given to them, took up the challenge to rehabilitate them. The conditions in the Government Mental Hospital were no better either. Cut off from normal human contacts many of these chronically ill women were ostracized by their families and their communities. Dr. Siromoni established the Paripurnata Half-Way Home, the first Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Centre in West Bengal, in 1992, with 6 beds, later increasing the number of beds to 8.**

**During their stay in Paripurnata these women are offered an holistic approach of pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, non-formal education, domestic, social and vocational training skills, one imparted along with cultural activities. They are also prepared for self-employment, enabling them to live a life with dignity. In 1999, recognizing the work, the Government of West Bengal offered vested land to expand the accommodation from 8 to 30 beds. The building construction is in progress.**

**Dr. Siromoni's message to the society is that people with mental illness should be treated with dignity, love, care and sensitivity. Paripurnata has been a tremendous success. The many women who have found life again are a testimony to its' achievements.**

**Dr. Siromoni's strong faith, courage and dedication to the cause of the marginalized have been outstanding features of her life. The Christian Medical College, Vellore is proud to honour her for her embodiment of its motto 'Not to be ministered unto but to minister'.**

**DIRECTOR.**

**PRINCIPAL.**

**Vellore, 25.10.2004**