For decades, repairing people’s shoes is all 41-year-old Sree Felanu Robidas has ever known. It’s a job that was passed down through his family, and as a result, instead of finding him in the classroom at 13, you’d see him mending shoes in front of someone’s shop. Life as a cobbler in his village in Bangladesh is not easy. For his hard work, he earns approximately 100 taka (C$1.55) a day.

A few years ago, Sree noticed that he couldn’t feel pain on his feet and was developing plantar ulcers, thick lesions on his skin. He went to a traditional healer in the village and, over the course of three years, he sold the bit of land he had and spent everything on treatments that didn’t work.

“My mother and wife begged, going door to door,” says Sree. “Sometimes they would get money and sometimes they would get rice.” Distraught over failed treatments and being unable to provide for his wife and their two-year-old son, Sree became deeply depressed.

Eventually, Sree’s relative realized what was happening and told him to visit a leprosy center. Sree was told he had leprosy and was sent to a hospital where he received free treatment and was cured. Sree now has no symptoms and is back to working full time as a cobbler.

“Now I can continue my work,” says Sree, a cobbler who has been cured from leprosy.

“If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast”

Psalm 139:9-10
Global Prayer Requests

DEMONCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Thanksgiving for our program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is helping to diagnosis people affected by leprosy, lymphatic filariasis and other neglected tropical diseases. Pray we will find more people who may be located in remote areas so we can provide them with an accurate diagnosis and treatment. Some people are unaware of disease symptoms and also don’t realize that they can be cured or treated.

INDIA

Pray God will bring compassionate and dedicated medical staff to work in clinics, programs and hospitals that we support. Pray they will have all they need to serve, so patients will receive the best possible care.

Pray for protection and good health for our teams in India, who sometimes work very long hours in hostile environments.

BANGLADESH

Pray efforts to improve health systems in Bangladesh will positively transform lives among people in need. Pray health workers who are being trained will be able to retain what they learn and accurately diagnose people affected by diseases to prevent permanent disabilities.

Pray for innovative breakthroughs among research scientists at the Leprosy Field Research Bangladesh.

CANADA

Pray for World Leprosy Day plans and events. Pray that with greater awareness and funds, people affected by leprosy will receive treatment and the discrimination they currently experience will be reduced. Pray for open hearts across churches and organizations in Canada that will be participating in prayer.

Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance in upcoming marketing campaigns. Pray we can share the work we do more broadly and inspire new and current donors to help people in need.

Praise and thanksgiving for our faithful supporters who give sacrificially and willingly to help people who are suffering around the world. Pray their gifts will provide healing, encouragement and hope to people affected by neglected tropical diseases.

There’s still time to register your church!
Please contact Lynda at wld@effecthope.org

www.worldleprosyday.ca

WORLD LEPROSY DAY
JANUARY 26, 2020
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Sree refused, believing there was no hope for him. One of our social workers visited him and, after much convincing, Sree was diagnosed and sent to our partner for care. We provided him with the cure for leprosy, multi-drug therapy, counselling, and protective footwear. The three-year ulcer was gone within two weeks.

“I was so pleased with the care I received,” he says. “Now I can continue my work.”

There’s a common refrain to many stories we hear from leprosy patients. When sufferers begin to show symptoms of the disease, most are either isolated from others or choose to isolate themselves. There is a sense of hopelessness and fear. It’s disheartening when some believe God has cursed them with the disease and abandoned them.

Through your prayers, we are restoring hope. We are treating patients, helping them understand the disease, and walking them out of a darkness that can seem overwhelming at times. Thank you for supporting our work, our staff, patients, and partners.

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NEWS

Neglected Tropical Diseases: The Gender Gap
By Dr Maria Reballo Polo, World Health Organization, Regional Office for Africa

Of the 1.5 billion people who are affected by Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) worldwide, women and girls are disproportionately suffering. Women need to be more visible if we are to eliminate NTDs by 2030 and a gendered perspective is crucial to understanding how this can be achieved.

The reasons for this issue cannot be isolated — not only do biological and physical factors lead to an increased vulnerability, but socio-cultural factors greatly increase the risk of women and girls contracting an NTD. According to a 2016 report by Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases, women and girls perform two thirds of water collection, exposing them to water-borne diseases such as schistosomiasis. Likewise, women are also typically the primary caregivers and are therefore far more likely to come into contact with NTDs such as trachoma infection. Indeed, research has suggested that women account for up to 80% of disability-adjusted Life Years that are linked to blindness caused by trachoma.

The indirect impact of NTDs can also disproportionately affect women and girls. Women are more likely to give up their jobs or drop out of school in order to take care of a sick family member, which has a longer term negative economic impact and can place financial burdens on the family. The disfigurements and disabilities caused by NTDs can also lead to social stigma and result in a loss of social opportunities, such as employability or marriage.

Improving the provision of healthcare across Africa is an important priority, but to tackle challenges such as NTDs we need to ensure we equitably improve access to reach the most vulnerable populations such as women and children, and those communities most affected by poverty.

Every person should be able to access the quality health services that they need without facing financial hardship. Accessing donated NTD medicines without out of pocket cost is critical. NTD interventions are fundamental to achieve Universal Health Coverage once and for all, protecting not only women, but everyone, everywhere.

Excerpt from Africa.com, Dec. 18, 2019
“It was You who set all the boundaries of the earth; You made both summer and winter” (Psalm 74:17).

We praise You for the seasonal changes we witness each year. We are reminded of the amazing way You have created the earth. The beauty in each season reminds us of Your care for life, especially ours.

Thank You for bringing us to another winter, and another New Year. Resolutions can seem like impossible tasks to take on when it’s cold outside and the lack of daylight makes the days seem shorter. “You are the Architect of the seasons.” The Architect of our hearts. You have gone before us, and you know what lies ahead. You are a good Father, and Your love for us is perfect. We can trust You to pull us through the winter.

Bless us with hearts more like Jesus, patient and perseverant. Watch over our cloud of despair that threatens to set in with the gray skies. Bring bright memories of sunshine and warmth to the top of our minds when we need to be reminded that just as sure as the winter came, it will go. Help us to enjoy every day You bless us with on this earth, seeking Your purpose first, and always, through every kind of weather.

Excerpt from: https://www.godtube.com

effect:hope is a Christian mission that follows Jesus’ example of love and compassion by helping people with leprosy and other debilitating diseases. Through the kindness of like-minded Canadians, we cure and care for our patients, reduce stigma and support research to end these isolating and painful diseases for good. Visit our website at www.effecthope.org.

This Prayer Update keeps more than 2,000 individuals and prayer supporters informed on the work of effect:hope, The Leprosy Mission Canada. Please consider sharing this Prayer Update with your friends, family and congregation to increase our prayer support.

Many of our staff would be pleased to visit your church, organization or company to talk about our work among people with leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases. Please contact us at info@effecthope.org for more information.

All photos courtesy of Tom Bradley.

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Prayer Update
JANUARY - MARCH 2020

effect:hope
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