

## 24 children in foster care

### **Project to ensure a family for children who can't be adopted**

Twenty-four destitute children from various children's homes in the district now have a family to go home to, with the District Child Protection Unit's (DCPU) *Sanatha Balyam* foster care project taking off on Friday.

Over the next one year, the DCPU aims at entrusting up to 100 children to foster families under the project, which envisages a society where every child has a home of their own, even if it is not their own.

The project was devised for children who cannot be adopted as they are not orphans, and those who do not have sponsors. These children cannot live with their families due to financial difficulties, parents' illnesses, and other reasons.

The children will be sent to the care of families, selected through comprehensive scrutiny, for an initial period of two months. The children will be allowed to continue with the family after that if both parties are happy with the arrangement. Regular follow-ups will be held by DCPU officials to ensure the well-being of the children, District Child Protection Officer K.K. Subair said.

### **From 3-15**

The children are aged between three to 15. The children belong to Government Children's Home, Kerala State Council for Child Welfare, Nirbhaya Home, Mahila Shikshan Kendra, Divine Home, Sree Chitra Home, Namaste Wings to Fly, Light House Boys Home, CSI Wills Girls' Boarding Home, and SMSS Hindu Mahila Mandiram.

There had been an interactive session with the children and the families, and the children had been mentally prepared to stay with the families, Mr. Subair said. The foster families and the biological families of the children had also been given counselling. Four children were still undergoing the counselling process, and would be handed over to the foster families in April.

### **73 applications**

Forty foster families were selected from 73 applications while around 1,700 calls and 300 emails enquiries were received since the project was launched in November last year. From Thiruvananthapuram, 28 applications were received.

Applications from residents of the State were only considered.

District panchayat president V.K. Madhu inaugurated the ceremony to hand over the children to the foster parents. District Collector S. Venkatesapathy presided.