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...A Smile Miles Away

A newsletter from Asha Colorado

June 2005

Editorial

A decade of Hope...

Asha for Education - Colorado Chapter completes 10 years! It is remarkable given that we are a 100% volunteer based organization. To celebrate this landmark, we are organizing a 'Walk for Education' to bring our local supporters and their families for a fun-filled event on July 17th 2005.

End of a decade is a good moment to take stock. In a modest way, we have supported over 20 different projects across India. Over the years our volunteers and project stewards have shared their perspectives on the organization's core issues concerning the relevance and effectiveness of what we do.

Rapid globalization over the last decade has brought unprecedented prosperity to many people; however, at the same time many others have been left in hunger, poverty, fear and oppression. It is this deep-divide that makes it essential to re-orient our mission. We still support communities that need education for unprivileged children (MGRS project is a case in point). But at the same time we have also expanded our reach to communities and partner agencies that works to empower people to become aware of their rights to share the full benefits of development (SNS project), shake-off the legacies of inequality and injustice in remote villages (JDS project) and alternative life-coping skills training to children with disabilities (Sebama Foundation project).

We are all products of what we do and what we choose to do. It is time to face up - and ask ourselves, what we can do to change the lives of many poor unprivileged children and communities that have been marginalized.

Asha-CO offers you a unique opportunity to bridge the deep-divide. Come join us as an Asha volunteer to build capabilities of our fellow Indians.

“How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world.”

Shakespeare

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Looking for a great 5k walk/run this summer?

Asha 5k Walk for Education is the first annual 5k Walk/Run being organized by Asha Colorado to raise funds for education of underprivileged children in India. It is a fun-filled family oriented with something for everyone. Come out and join us whether you're a racer, a walker or just enjoy a leisurely stroll.

All proceeds from the event will go towards funding Asha projects in India.

Date: Sunday July 17, 2005

Registration: 8:00-8:40 am MDT

Venue: Northridge Park, Highlands Ranch

How to Register?

Registering for Asha 5k Walk for Education is easy. Go to <http://5k.ashacolorado.org> for details.

Registration Cost

- Before July 17: \$15 (\$20 on day of event)
- Under 12 and over 60: FREE
- Students with valid ID: \$10 (\$15 on day of event)
- Group of 10 or above: \$10 per person

Food and fitness!

Asha 5k, in association with Denver Woodlands, presents a walk-and-meal combo where participants can opt to get a sumptuous meal over the July 16-17 weekend at a substantial discount when you register for Asha 5k Walk for Education.

Come walk for a cause!

Helping Kids Get Back to School

School-based club – DECA (An association for Marketing Students) at the Smoky Hills High School, Aurora, CO raised money for buying school supplies for children affected by tsunami in Nagapatinam district, Tamil Nadu, India.

Alison, a student at the Smoky Hills and member of DECA program contacted our organization early this February and requested us to share with them the tsunami relief efforts undertaken by Asha for Education. Two volunteers from Asha went to the school and talked to the children about the need and ways to raise awareness and donations.

The students expressed their sorrow at the plight of children who had lost everything, their school building, teaching aid, books and other supplies. They were eager to learn from us how the kids in Nagapatinam will be coping in the coming months. As a result of their compassion and desire to help, the students organized a fundraiser in the form of cookie sale and basketball game, and contributed a generous amount of USD 200.00

The students at Smoky Hills High School have not only given 'hope' to many children who will be able to buy and use new school supplies but have also taught us the lesson – that the 'will' to help is the most important human attribute.

Top 4* rating for Asha...

[Charity Navigator](#), an independent charity evaluator with a database of over 3,000 organizations, recently released its latest report on the top charities in the United States. Making its way into the list this year, along side the usual heavyweights like the American Red Cross and United Way, is none other than Asha For Education! And we're not just anywhere on the list - we're right on the top! That's right. Charity Navigator ranked Asha for Education as the top charity operating on less than \$2 million a year, with a total score of 69.82 (out of 70) in the field of International Relief and Development. And while the list is titled "10 of the Best Charities you've never heard of", we believe that to be a motivation for us to continue to spread the message of bringing hope to India's underprivileged children by improving the access to and the quality of education.

Project News

Samajik Navnirman Sanstha (SNS), Maharashtra:

SNS is a grass-root level community-based nonprofit organization that conducts after-school education, computer literacy training and uses information technology for social development in villages populated predominately by the dalit (underprivileged) community.

Project Update:

After-school Education Centers: 98% of students attending classes passed the year-end examination.

IT literacy and development: Technology awareness training in the field of water harvesting and use of JalChitra water management software was provided to 50 participants in 10 villages.

Vocational Training: SNS provides training as well as seed money to youth interested in employment through vermiculture activities. SNS has also purchased candle making equipment to train people who work with local merchants to produce and sell candles in villages affected by power-shading.

If you would like to support the SNS project, please contact the project steward at jagtap@yahoo.com.

Jeevan Daan Samiti (JDS), Uttar Pradesh (UP):

The primary focus of JDS is to provide basic education to children in the community of mostly brick-kiln workers in Math Uchauri and surrounding villages in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh (UP), India. The project operates nine teaching centers for about 250-320 children between the ages of 3-12 years. It also runs two sewing training centers and a screen printing press. If you would like to support the SNS project, please contact the project steward at satya_nm@yahoo.com.

Project Update:

This year JDS has added two more education centers, a sewing machine training center. The program also runs a campaign to promote "right to information and right to food."

Sebama Foundation, Tamilnadu:

Sebama Foundation runs a residential center called 'Mercy Home' for children with orthopedic, hearing, and developmental disabilities in Dharmapuri District of Tamil Nadu, India.

Project Update:

First Data Western Union Foundation through a generous grant of \$73,000.00 to the Colorado Chapter has facilitated the construction of classroom building for Sebama Foundation (SF). The construction is now complete and the building is named - Asha Nilayam.



Completed Building

Thanks to the continued support from our Support a Center sponsors we have raised about \$4800 for funding year. If you would like to support a child from this project please contact minu_palani@yahoo.com.

Mahatma Gandhi Residential High School (MGRS), Karnataka:

MGRS was started provides a residential school to boys who discontinued school after their 7th class to work at the hotels and other places. The school has been maintaining a 100% pass percentage for several years now, and the district education department has recognized the program.

Project Update:

In the 2005 10th standard board examinations the school has received 100% success, with five students getting a distinction (75% and higher), and 12 with a 1st class (60% or higher).

Asha-CO is looking for individual sponsors who can fund the basic living and education expenses for these children through the Support a Center program. If you would like to support a child please contact the project steward at nkekre@yahoo.com.

A newsletter from Asha-Colorado

Asha for Education

Colorado Chapter

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Asha means Hope.

Hope for a chance to go to school

Hope for dreams to come alive

Hope for a better future

Our Mission

**To catalyze socio-economic
change in India through education
of
underprivileged children.**