



# muskaan

## ...A Smile Miles Away

A newsletter from Asha Colorado

November 2004

### Editorial

#### Moving forward, looking behind.

The year 2004 is coming to a close. Fundraising is one of those ever present realities for non-profit organizations. Asha Colorado has been lucky in that we are continuing to have a very good year financially with an increasingly broad spectrum of generous donors and community centric organization such as the First Data Western Union. In 2004, Western Union made a generous contribution of \$73,000 toward one of our projects.

Through the financial upturn, family life, and job situation, Asha-CO is in need of a few good men and women to join us. Please volunteer to be an active member. There is a lot we can accomplish with small contributions from each of you -- even as busy individuals. We NEED YOU!

2004 has been a rather quite year for Asha CO. With the steady flow of funds and the volunteer base stretched thin, we did not have any major fundraising events as we did in the past years. But, we will make a splash in 2005 with your help.

**“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”**

B.B. King

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### WAH 2004: An hour of your time...hope for a lifetime

Education has opened up new avenues for us so that we can appreciate this world much better and enjoy our lives to a fuller extent. However, about half the number of children in India (more than 40 million between the age of six and fourteen) are serving as bonded, agricultural or casual laborers, as servants in middle-class households, as prostitutes, or simply living on the streets by begging or rag picking.

This is the seventh year of Asha's largest worldwide event! Each year volunteers from around the world come together in a show of great human spirit, to help educate underprivileged children in India. Work An Hour, or WAH, as it is popularly known, is a simple concept. We ask you to symbolically contribute one hour of your time towards the cause of children's education by donating an hour's worth of your salary or more. The event symbolically begins on July 4, the American Independence Day, reaches an apex on August 15, the Indian Independence Day, and finally culminates on September 5, which is celebrated as Teachers' Day in India.



*Hopeful Kids of Tomorrow*

Asha's project partners chosen for WAH support typically require larger sums of money than what a single Asha chapter can support, in order to facilitate fixed expenditure on items such as infrastructure, construction and other one-time costs. Like all Asha projects, they are closely monitored by Asha project coordinators to ensure that the funds are being properly utilized and the proposed benefits are actually being realized by the children at the project.

WAH 2004 raised \$164073 from 1296 donors.

### WAH 2004 Projects

#### **Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha. West Bengal:**

Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha (BTS) is a social organization based in Kultali block, situated on one of the larger islands of the Sunderbans in West Bengal. Kultali is a remote, under-developed area, with a majority of its inhabitants living a hand to mouth existence. "Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha" (known in short as "BTS") was initially started by a group of youngsters who were trying to help the victims of a major flood that hit the Kultali Island in 1982.

BTS realized that education was the primary weapon to empower people. The group organized awareness camps and campaigns and in 1983 a primary school was started in the village of Baikunthapur. The center for pre-school education was later upgraded to the primary level and came to be known as Patha Bhavan, which today accommodates about 200 children in four classes (class I to IV).

The WAH budget of \$37,778 is to expand the BTS Patha Bhavan, build a children recourse library, offer Computer literacy for school children and rural youth, and develop the infrastructure of 3 government-aided primary schools.

#### **Juanga, Orissa**

The Michael A. Daube Charitable Trust was created in 1996 to help provide rural development in and around Juanga in Orissa. Although Juanga is only 50 km from the city of Cuttack, it is nearly inaccessible due to poor road conditions and monsoon rains. The village lacks medical or educational facilities. The Trust founded a hospital in the village of Juanga to serve an area of

approximately 25 km and a population of approximately 70,000 in the surrounding villages.

The Juanga Orissa School (known locally as the Vivekananda Public School) was built in 2001 after the cyclone of 1999 destroyed almost all of the existing decrepit government schools. The Juanga Orissa School is central to a network of villages on the south bank of the Mahanadi. The school began with 184 students and has progressed to 226 students, many from scheduled castes and some who have lost their relatives in the cyclone.

WAH budget for this project of \$39,680 is to:

- Provide reliable transportation for students who normally are not allowed to attend school (especially girls).
- Provide reliable transportation and educational/medical supplies for a mobile health care team to provide health care for students.
- Obtain adequate land for expansion of the existing school.
- Provide an extension to the existing school building to accommodate more students, a library, and an area that could be utilized as a cultural center.

#### **Project Look Ahead, Rajasthan**

Project Look Ahead provides year-round education and employment needs of 50 blind girls and 50 blind boys by partnering with two organizations - One in Drishti Viklang Sangh, Jaipur, Rajasthan and the other in Kamla Mehta School for blind girls, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Because transportation is a critical issue for the blind, for the purpose of training and employment, these computer centers are being initially established in major cities of India. Gradually however, Project Look Ahead intends to shift its focus to villages.

Drishti Viklang Sangh, located in a region with the lowest female literacy in the country, and run by a blind executive, will help up to 50 blind students a year. Most of the enrolling students are expected to be boys in the initial year. In the conservative Rajasthani society blind girls may not be allowed to go out of their homes. The project plans to encourage participation of blind girls in the future.

Kamla Mehta School for Blind Girls in Mumbai will entirely focus on female computer literacy. Popularly known as Dadar School for the Blind, this school has been imparting education to over 100 blind girls a year since 1906.

The WAH budget for this project is \$24,000 (for both centers) to establish computer vocational training with computers, speech software, Indian Language Braille software, a Braille printer, translator, and graphic software.

### **Vanashree, Karnataka**

Vanashree trust is a non-profit organization based in Sagar (Karnataka), which works for the overall development of tribals in that region. Vanashree runs residential schools in Sagar and Bachodi. Further, the group has worked towards improving the socio-economic status of the community, by working towards providing solar power and building better road transportation.

The school in Bachodi, a village near Jog Falls is a residential school that has been functioning since 1990. The school provides education to children from classes I to VII. After class VII, the children of Bachodi go to school at Sagar, also run by the trust that has classes VIII to X.

Currently, in the Bachodi residential school, there are 32 girls and 88 boys housed in a small building without proper bathing and toilet facilities. They have to rely on the stream nearby for taking their morning bath. Also the school lacks furniture, and the children end up sleeping on the floor. Further, among these 120 children, several are orphans. The families of the rest of the children live in the hills, and the only means of commute from their homes to school is by walking.

The WAH budget for this project is \$35,000 that will help the residential facility in Bachodi. This residential facility will provide basic amenities such as better kitchen facilities, toilets, bathrooms, more living space, and basic furniture, to about 120 children who live in the complex.

**“The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.”**

*- Robert Maynard Hutchins*

### **To Reach You, Tamilnadu**

TRY - To Reach You, started in 1996 is a multi-purpose social-work organization, located in Mudichur, Tamil Nadu, reaching out to the socially, educationally, and economically backward sections of the society irrespective of caste, creed and religion. TRY's primary focus is to provide shelter, food, education, healthcare and rehabilitation for the children of commercial sex workers and to rehabilitate their mothers.

TRY needs to establish a permanent home. It is very hard to convince landlords to rent them their houses since they do not want to deal with sex workers. The children have already moved 4 times, and every time they move TRY has to get school certificates for the children, and get them admitted into new schools. With the help of local donors, TRY has purchased a land in Mudichur, in the outskirts of Chennai about 25 Kilo meters from the heart of the city.



The WAH budget of \$29,580 is cover construction costs for a house (with two floors) on the purchased land.

### **Champa Mahila Society, West Bengal**

Champa Mahila Society (CMS) was established in 1984 in the Basanti area of the Sunderbans in West Bengal. The group was created to build a self-reliant community with a focus on women's groups. At present CMS works on education (for younger and older children), health (both preventive and curative), Self Help Groups (SHG) promoting micro-credit, kitchen garden and animal husbandry. CMS also runs a hospital, which provides health care at a subsidized rate to the local community of 30 villages. The hospital is equipped with an Operation Theater and the doctors who come on a weekly basis perform simple operations. However they lack multiple

surgery kits and it takes a day to sterilize the equipments. So they cannot do more than one surgery per day even if the doctor is present. The hospital does not have long term commitment from doctors because of monetary issues. CMS wants to remove this obstacle. In addition CMS has obtained an ambulance, which needs to be fitted with clinical equipment to be fully functional.

Moreover, CMS wants to conduct a training program for the nurses, village level health workers, traditional birth attendants, SHG organizers and several health awareness camps at different villages for a few years. This will increase the popular knowledge regarding health and hygiene and improve the overall situation.



The WAH budget of \$47,251 is to better equip the hospital needs

### Children's Day Pledge

**E**ven as the nation celebrates the birth anniversary of the first prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru this November 14th, the number of child laborers in the country is on the rise.

The day is celebrated as Children's Day, as Nehru, also called Chacha Nehru, loved children and dreamed of a better tomorrow for them. For the most part, this dream remains a dream. On a given day, you will find many children at a very tender age working in factories and roadside hotels. Even after a long day's work (at least 10 to 12 hours a day), they struggle to two square of meals a day.

*When their very survival is hard, how can they think of education?* The parents of these children prefer sending them to work than to a school to get educated. Their philosophy – education does not buy food, it actually costs them money to send their children to school. In many areas the administration or government are not coming forward to provide education for these children.

It is the efforts made by some individuals and voluntary organizations that come to the aid of these children. Asha partners with such organizations to bring a ray of hope to these underprivileged children in their otherwise dark world. Asha depend on the generosity of our donors to help support our programs.

**This children's day please pledge your support to educate the underprivileged children of India.**

**For information on how you can donate please visit our website at:**

<https://www.ashanet.org/colorado/>

**You can also make online donation through our secure website at**

<https://www.ashanet.org/donate/form-v2.php>.

**“Education is the transmission of civilization.”**

- Will Durant

## SNS, Maharashtra

Smajik Navnirman Sanstha (SNS) is a grass-root organization which provides after-school educational classes and computer education and services in villages dominated by dalit (backward) community in Karad, Satara District of Maharashtra.

### Goals of this project

This project has 2 objectives:

The first objective is to **provide** after school classes to the children in the age group of 9 to 16 in 8 villages in mainly dalit community. The after school classes also include health education and other community activities such as Karate Classes, Rangalo training, and Patha Natya (theater performed on the street which deals with various social issues). SNS also manages 800 book library and women's small savings scheme.

The second objective of the project is to use Information Technology (IT) to bridge the digital divide and achieve socio-economical change using IT resources. This involves providing IT education to school children, village youth and masses. This also involves data capturing, identifying various social issues, and forming village expert committees in identified subjects to solve various social problems using technology.

Asha Colorado is supporting the teacher's salary for after school classes and fixed cost associated with the computer center.

### The organization and people behind it...

SNS is founded and led by Mr. Manik Avghade who has a master's degree in Social Science and is a full-time social worker. Organization is made-up of 9 Trustees from 8 villages where the work is performed. About 15 to 20 volunteers from each of these villages also help them with various activities.

The mission of 1 Village 1 Computer (1V1C) movement is to develop a vibrant village community and to create a self-sustaining open platform for solving important developmental local issues concerning education, communication, e-governance, gender and other prime Problems,

using the establishment of Information Technology Centers and to bridge the digital divide by developing IT enabled Social Capital.

SNS has partnered with 1V1C to achieve social development using Information technology in the field of education, social services, and social development. SNS volunteers are trained by the 1V1C team and are supported in their efforts to implement 1v1c model in their community.

In 2003, Asha CO disbursed \$2,086 toward this project.



To make donations or to learn more about this project please visit our website at <http://www.ashanet.org/colorado/chapter-projects.php>.

### Did you know...

#### You could get paid for your volunteering time

Many companies run Volunteers in Partnership program. Through this program companies encourage and recognize employees who volunteer their time for non-profit organizations. When employees contribute their time, the company contributes dollars to the program.

Check if your company offers such a program.

### Sebama Foundation, Tamilnadu

Among the rural villages of southern India, children with disabilities don't stand a chance in life. Handicapped children frequently are targets for abuse and neglect because of a common misconception that they are cursed or possessed by evil spirits.

Their only hope is education, but there are no school buses to transport them. Even walking to school is impossible due to distances and disabilities. What these children need is a residential school where they can live and focus on learning.

### Asha means "hope"

Through a USD \$73,000 grant to Asha for Education, First Data Western Union Foundation is fostering hope for hundreds of children with disabilities who live in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India. Asha for Education is a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to supporting education for children in underdeveloped areas of India.

Asha CO is collaborating with the Sebama Foundation in India to construct a much-needed school on the outskirts of Dharmapuri – specifically to address the special needs of children from villages within a 30-kilometer radius.

"We are thrilled to sponsor this vital effort to help children with disabilities to obtain the education and life-skills training they need to lead independent and productive lives," says Anil Kapur, country director for Western Union in India. "There is no worthier cause than helping disadvantaged children thrive."

The new Sebama facility will accommodate 350 children with disabilities, particularly those who have hearing impairment or orthopedic challenges.

"Without Western Union's support, the school could not have been built," states Brother Louis Rayan, founder and managing trustee of the Sebama Foundation. "Self-sufficiency for these children is a dream that now can come true."

To learn more about Asha for Education and the Sebama Foundation, visit our web site at <http://www.ashanet.org/colorado/chapter-projects.php>.



*Construction Site: Second Phase*

### Think Different!

Sometimes it takes imagination to help others and this is exactly what Balaji Sridhar, a high school senior and Ananth Sridhar, a junior from Denver - Colorado did, they launched a creative fund raising effort, a year ago, to sell dinner tickets to friends and well-wisher in their school and community. Prior to selling these tickets, our young entrepreneurs struck a deal with local restaurant to share some percentage of the sales towards charity. Thus, by end of July 2004 they had raised \$2500.00. In August 2004 Balaji and Ananth donated \$2500.00 to Colorado chapter. We commend their creative efforts and sincerely thank them for a substantial contribution.



*Balaji and Ananth*

After listening to all the projects that are being currently funded by Colorado chapter the children decided to channel the money raised to Sebama Foundation, a project that helps children with physical and mental disabilities in Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu.

### Tis the season to give

With Diwali and Christmas time fast approaching, what can be more rewarding than giving to educate an underprivileged child in India. What if for every dollar you donate, another dollar was given? Several local companies running community support campaigns offer their employees an opportunity to contribute to any non-profit organization of their choice and reap the rewards of a corporate matching program. Corporate matching policies differ from company to company. Employees make their pledges and the company matches the gift between 50 and 100 percent. Such companies believe that the matching donation program not only motivates the employees to give, it also allows the company to give to charities that are important to their employees.

The monies donated in the Community Support Campaign go to United Way and Partnership for Colorado. They distribute the contributions not only to their agencies, but to any non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization selected by an employee.

If the corporation you are working for takes part in a United Way workplace campaign, please consider supporting Asha by designating your contributions to us.

It's easy and it doesn't matter where you live. Just designate your United Way contribution to Asha in the donation form by including the following details:

Asha tax ID: 77-0459884

Address: Asha for Education – Colorado chapter  
P.O. Box 123, Lafayette, CO 800 26.

### Asha Colorado Year-end Donation

#### No Amount is Too Small.

**Yes, I would like to give hope of a basic education to the underprivileged children of India though a donation of.**

**Please enter amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to “Asha for Education” and mail it to:  
**Asha for Education, P.O. Box 234, Lafayette, CO 80026**

**Asha for Education is a non-profit organization with 501 (c) 3 status. Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law. Our Federal Employee Identification number is 77-0459884.**

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Newsletter from Asha-Colorado

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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.**

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From,

Asha for Education

Colorado Chapter

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Affix Stamp

To,