

Welcome back Asha patrons,
It has been a busy few months for our Asha volunteers who have been working hard to make the Give Asha.. Give Hope, campaign a success. Throughout the month of October and November the Asha Seattle team organized many fundraising activities to help us inch closer this years target of \$975k . As a part of the Microsoft Give campaign we organized a painting class and an Art & Picture auction. We would like to thank Ms. Malti Pande who graciously volunteered to give us some of her creations to auction off at the art event. We would like to thank you for rocking to the beats of AllGoRhythms 2010 and making the event a huge success. Asha raised \$2175 on pledges alone at the event.

The Miles for Smiles campaign has also been a great success. This year 13 members of Team Asha took part in the Seattle marathon and 2 of our very own Asha volunteers scaled the summit of Mt Rainier to raise funds for Asha. In this edition of Asha Kiran we showcase Gyandeep Vidyalaya, a project which is striving to provide education, basic healthcare and is fighting against child labor in Villages near the Ghazipur District of Uttar Pradesh. Also featured is an article by one of our very own Asha volunteer who scaled the heights of Mount Rainier. Thank you for your time and support.
- Asha Seattle Team

Gyandeep Vidyalaya

By Pooja Jain, Asha Volunteer

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead



Ms. Savitri Devi

We all may have heard this quote several times in the past – perhaps, clichéd. However, nothing better can describe the transformation underway in the Dora, Ukraon, Admapur Cchapra, Pyarepur & Sasanaa villages near Ghazipur in eastern Uttar Pradesh, shepherded by Ms. Savitri Devi. Barely 42 inches tall, her dreams have brought cost free holistic education to an otherwise deprived Musaha and Natjati community.

The community earns their livelihood by working in the brick kilns, utensil making from dry leaves, street performances

and seasonal labor during potato harvesting season. The average monthly household income is about \$30/month. Education, healthcare, human rights etc. could be described as luxuries for them.

Gyandeep Vidyalaya was established in 2003 with 10 children to provide access to education to these communities. Today, the project has expanded to 142 children, 5 education centers in 5 villages, a vocational training center, the community's first library, a relentless effort to create awareness about human rights and fight social issues like



Health Camp (March 2010)

child labor. The project has made it possible to bring formal

healthcare to the community.

A typical education center is characterized by an educator with a black mobile chalk board and students with books and supplies under a tree shade; the basic essentials.

Since 2003, several children have been integrated into government schools. The vocational training center for women made it possible to supplement income via sewing and knitting. Heath camps facilitate general hygiene education and vaccinations. And a library has been a common attraction for children and adults alike. Although illiterate, the adults enjoy staring at pictures from the outside of their small world.

Asha for Education started supporting the organization in 2005 and is the sole source of funding for Gyandeep Vidyalaya. So what does it take to enable such a transformation?

The answer is barely \$2.81/month/child

Annual budget = \$4,800.

Learn more about the project at <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=461>

My tryst with Mt. Rainer

By Srijan Chakraborty, Asha Volunteer

Time 6:00 pm, elevation 14,411 feet, temperature well below zero and wind gusts of up to 50-60 miles per hour – not a great combination and I would not fancy being outdoors in such a situation. Yet I was and with 3 other Team Asha climbers, on top of Mount Rainier on September 5th, 2010. It was painful but still a unique experience and an enjoyable moment!

The goal was to summit Mount Rainier to raise funds for my dear non-profit Asha for Education, Seattle Chapter. The journey started almost 6 months back – end of February when our training for the climb begun. Since I've moved to the Seattle area, hiking in the mountains with friends has been a part of life in the summer/fall. But I never thought I'd do anything more technical than that! While hiking had always been fun, training for the climb was not easy. Every time I have gone up a steep slope carrying a 35lb backpack or I had to wake up at an unwieldy time to start a hike, I questioned why I was going through this! When we climbed

Mt Adams, the night at the base-camp was so windy and cold that I was almost at the brink of giving up. But once we cross that state of mind and push our limits, the feeling at the end is always one of great achievement and satisfaction. And that satisfaction is multiplied manifold when I know that this effort will help raise essential funds for a cause that's close to my heart.

Last year, 2009, one Asha volunteer summited Rainier to raise funds for Asha. This year, a fellow Asha volunteer Sandeep Nain and his climber friends offered to guide other novice climbers including me up Rainier. Finding a perfect weekend to attempt the climb was a challenge and it was getting very late in the season. Finally we decided to try our luck on Labor Day weekend even though the weather was far from perfect – with very cold temperatures and high wind predicted. Our plan was to take the Disappointment Cleaver route.

We were a group of 11 climbers – among them 5 were experienced climbers and the others were either first time or novice climbers. After getting permits, we started on 4th September morning from Paradise parking lot (elevation 5500 feet) – all geared up carrying our backpacks weighing anywhere from 35 to 65 pounds! It was very foggy and Rainier was nowhere to be seen. As we started climbing we had a few glimpses of Rainier through windows in the cloud! Gradually as we emerged from under the clouds into sunshine, we could see Rainier and all other major peaks including Mt Adams, Mt Hood & Mt St Helens rising majestically above the clouds. Our basecamp was Ingraham flats at roughly 11,000 feet. We reached there around 4:30 pm, set up our tents, had dinner, watched a magnificent sunset and slept off promptly. The temperature was frigid and it was extremely windy. In those conditions doing the simplest of the tasks like tying our shoe-laces, was an effort! You can't do it with your gloves on and without gloves your hands would freeze!

Our plan was to stay in this camp Saturday night; Sunday do some climbing training, eat, hydrate and sleep early. Then wake up around mid-night and summit early Monday morning. Then we would come down, pack up and go all the way to the trailhead. Our climb-leaders looked at the weather report, talked to the rangers and other guides and found that

Monday weather was going to be worse - higher winds, possible snow storm etc. So, there were really two options for us - cancel our plan and go back or make a summit attempt right then! But it was already late (10:30 am) and it'd take a lot of time for us to get ready - so it was almost impossible for all of us to do the summit attempt. There were some hard decisions made and we decided on two rope teams of 4 climbers each to attempt summit and the other 3 would stay back. We started to get ready.

By the time we reached Disappointment Cleaver, it was already 2:45 pm and we still had to go a long way to the summit. We would have day light only until 8:00 pm and at that rate we wouldn't be making it to the summit in time to get back safely. We had to make another hard decision at this time. One of the rope teams was called off and after some reshuffling, 4 of us continued on our way to the summit while the rest turned back.

From that point on, it was just a battle of the mind against the elements. We were all dehydrated, wind gusts were sweeping us off our feet every now and then and we just had to keep walking to keep our body warm. I had to push my limits to keep climbing - only thought in my mind was that I was very close and I knew I could do it! Once we reached the crater - it was a great feeling! The true summit (Columbia Crest) was on the other side of the crater - for that we had to cross the crater and climb the last few ft. It was just adrenalin that carried me through the last few steps! It was very late (6:00 pm) and the conditions were not really amenable to enjoying our moment of glory. We had to turn back. A long way to get back to the base camp. But not before we took a picture of the Asha-banner at the crater bowl - it was a challenge keeping it down against the blowing wind. We were finally back at our base camp safe and sound around 9:00 pm.

Looking back, it was an experience to remember and there were many things to learn from this. I had run couple of 1/2 marathons before and also biked more than 200 miles in Seattle to Portland classic bike ride to raise funds for Asha.



Asha Volunteers at the Summit

But nothing really challenged my physical as well as mental limits quite like this. This has to be the hardest thing I've ever done in such rough conditions. While I was hiking up, if you would have asked me if I'd consider climbing Rainier again, I'd have emphatically said never ever would I even think of doing this!! But there is something called the call of the mountain and if you ask me now, my answer would be different!

Asha Impressions

By Vibhavaree Gargeya, Asha Volunteer

Something special happened here.
 Redmond, emerald green in the spring
 A software giant - powering almost every personal computer
 Yes, that is special.
 But no, not that.
 Comraderie, bonds - bonds of friendship!
 Deep bonds - bonds with people across an ocean
 Bonds - bonds with little ones, mired
 Yes, them.
 No, not them.
 A happier picture emerges.
 Yes, there they are, suddenly free.
 Bright, strong indeed,
 Something very special happens here.

- Written on a bus ride to an Asha meeting.

EVENTS

Climb For Asha	5 th Sept	Art Auction	20 th Oct
AllGoRhythms 2010	2 nd Oct	Asha Diwali Morning Concert	7 th Nov
Subeer D Manhas Charitable Golf Tournament	3 rd Oct	Seattle Marathon	28 th Nov

Asha for Education

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100% of your contributions go towards Asha's projects in India. Your contributions are Tax deductible.

To learn more join us at our bi-monthly meetings. All are Welcome!

October 20, 2010 Wednesday 7.30PM-9:30PM
RTC/LWSD No 414, Morton Johnson

November 3, 2010 Wednesday 7.30PM-9:30PM
RTC/LWSD No 414, Morton Johnson

November 17, 2009 Wednesday 7.30PM-9:30PM
RTC/LWSD No 414, Morton Johnson

Contact Ken (206-706-8158)

For additional meeting dates and information
www.ashanet.org/seattle/resources/meetings/

For specific requests and queries, please contact us at:

Email: seattle@ashanet.org

Phone: 425 890 8515

Donations are welcome, and will go a long way in changing many lives in India.

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