

Asha Austin Chapter

Project:	Prasanna Jyothi
Purpose:	Monthly update call.
Time/Date/Location:	9.00pm (CST)/8/19/09/ Conference Call
Attendees:	Sundari Maami, Sharanya Rao & Shriya Ravikumar

Meeting Minutes:

General Updates on Children:

- 1) Summer Field Trip - The children went on a 3-day field trip to Mysore, accompanied by Ratna maami and some of the PJ Trustee volunteers on May 22nd. They visited a local museum and took a bath in a river while they were there. Sundari Maami will be sending some pictures from the field trip to be shared with Asha volunteers and donors (will not be posted on the website or distributed to anyone other than the stipulated list). Additionally, Maami will also have one of the older kids write a short essay on their trip to Mysore.
- 2) Summer Classes – Vacation for the kids started in May. The original idea to send the kids to dance or art classes for the summer could not happen because the fees for these extra-curricular activities were at minimum about 2000 rps which PJ could not afford.
- 3) Art Class – A volunteer teacher has been teaching some of the children crafts and painting for free during the summer on Saturdays from 3.30 – 5.30pm. One of the children was specifically identified as being good at arts and crafts.
- 4) Tuition Classes – During the regular semester and in the summer, children older than 1st or 2nd standards have been attending tuition lessons. Although tuition lessons are not compulsory, most of the children have been taking classes in at least one or two subjects. All the children have been taking math lessons.

There is a paid tuition teacher who comes to PJ everyday from 4.30 – 7pm and she takes all subjects. There is no fixed number of specific children who take lessons from this teacher. The teacher teaches the children who require additional tuition in a specific subject for that day. The number of children ranges from 6-8.

The mother of one of the Asha volunteers, Sanjeev, also volunteers at PJ as a tuition teacher. She comes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays typically and teaches all subjects, but mostly math, to some of the children. While she is doing this for free now, Sundari Mami has offered to pay for at least her travel costs, which she has refused as well.

Additionally, both Sundari and Ratna mami also take tuition for some of the kids and help some of the younger children in LKG, UKG, and 1st or 2nd standards with their homework. She mentioned that 1st standard is a crucial year for the children.

One of the older children also assists the younger kids with their homework sometimes.

- 5) Other Summer Activities – Other than the arts and tuition lessons, the children have been enjoying themselves this summer and playing a lot of games both indoors and outdoors.

Construction of PJ School –

- 6) Overview - Construction work around the new 2-storey PJ school has not yet started. There were delays in getting an architect who would do it for free or at a nominal fee. The architects are still working on the scope and plan for the school. Work is expected to commence sometime in September or October of this year, after the monsoon season is over, and is expected to be completed by next summer, in time for the new school year to start.
- 7) Land area for the school – Pillars have been placed in the land area where the school will be built to secure the ground/foundation. The building will be built on top of the pillared area so the monsoon rains will not damage the building.

The land for the school also covers some of the children's current play area (30-60 sq. ft.), the vegetable and flower garden, and the watchman's house. Once it is built, the children's play area will be reduced by this but will not be a major impact, as the children do not play outside a lot now itself because of the garden. They play at their school playground a lot and at PJ, mostly play indoors in the evenings and weekends.

The watchman's house will also have to be demolished in the construction process but he and his family will instead have a room assignment on the 2nd floor of the school building.

- 8) School Construction – The construction will be done by know individuals with proper supervision. It will happen during between 9am-5pm, when the children are mostly in school and when they return around 4pm, they will not be allowed to go outside and play during the construction or around the construction area for safety reasons.
- 9) Cost – Since the building plans are still in the work, the cost for the school has not been determined yet. Mami will ask Sunderji to provide additional details on when the construction will begin and what the cost estimates are.

- 10) Purpose of School - The goal is to have a 2-storey building where LKG-2nd standard classes will be taught for children in the local slum dwelling and impoverished areas. Additionally, any new PJ children in that age group will also attend the PJ school once constructed. All children older than 2nd standard will still attend the local schools.

The school will be of English medium and will serve lunch for the students. Students will also do their homework in school as they may not have the support system at home to do it. Teachers will have to be recruited and trained for the school as well. Mami will e-mail us when she has a more detailed cost breakdown structure. Sunderji is still in conversation with the government regarding getting the appropriate permits and approvals to build the schools.

Monsoon –

- 11) The monsoon season has not been that bad this year and PJ has had little issues around flooding during this period. The city has a mandatory 4-5 hrs electricity cut everyday but PJ has a generator and has had few problems around this.

Updating Sundari Maami on SAC – Ice Cream Social

- 12) Sharanya and Shriya updated Sundari Maami on the Austin SAC –Ice Cream Social event that will feature PJ and ASV. Pictures and updates on the kids from PJ will be included in the presentation but as always will not be distributed. The purpose of the social is to get more people interested in PJ via Asha's SAC program or in general.
- 13) The information mami provided on the ex-PJ children are for those who stayed in PJ through 10th standards. Some children only end up staying for about 1 or 2 yrs at PJ for whom it is hard to find additional information around. As a result, Mami was unable to get information on 5-6 girls.
- 14) One of the girl's went back to her family earlier this year although her father was very keen on keeping her at PJ. Mami has tried contacting the father to get updates on the girl but has not been able to get in touch with him. Given that the father had always been enthusiastic about educating his daughter, Mami is fairly confident that the girl is attending school regularly and doing well back at home.
- 15) Mami is in the US now and was invited to attend as a guest speaker to the SAC social. She said she would check and get back to us on whether she will

be able to attend. It is probably unlikely that she will be able to as she is here on a personal visit and her husband is not feeling well and is in recovery.

Other Updates:

- 16) The school fee structure varies for different levels. LKG and UKG have one (~ 9500 rps.), 1st-7th standard have one, and 8th-10th standard have one. This breakdown in the same for all government schools. Mami was not sure about private schools.

Admission fees to a new school are initially high, however this is not a recurring expense. The school does not provide an itemized expense. Admission fees typically include exam, computer, sports, and other miscellaneous fees. School fees have been increasing every year and along with the admission of a few first time students, PJ's education costs have increased this year. Mami will send the amount incurred for these school expenses.

- 17) A new girl has been admitted at PJ. She is 3 yrs old. They will wait a few months to determine if she will stay for a longer period of time before nominating her to be in the Asha SAC program as well. As a general note, new girls are taken in only when there is capacity. At any point, PJ will only have a maximum of 25 girls. This year PJ had 22 girls, and 23 now with this new girl. Prior to being admitted, the girls are screened for their history to determine if she is eligible based on the values and mission of PJ. This new girl's father is not around and her mother works at another orphanage and is unable to take care of her and provide for her sufficiently as a result.

- 18) Sharanya will send Mami an update on the current donor coverage by e-mail.

Action Items:

No.	Action Item	Assignee	Status
1	Request one of the older children to write a short essay about the trip to Mysore.	Sundari Mami	
2	Provide pictures of the children from the Mysore trip.	Sundari Mami	
3	Ask Sunderji to send any updates on the PJ school construction and related expense.	Sundari Mami	
4	Send Mami current donor coverage.	Sharanya	
5	Send background on new girl.	Sundari Mami	

