Dear friends of Asha,

We are happy to bring to you Asha for Education Silicon Valley chapter’s quarterly newsletter, “Endearing Causes”. We picked this name because what binds our organization is the strength of our love for the common goal of education for all.

We are only 3 months into 2020, but we already have so much going on - budget renewals, new ambitious projects, fund raisers, new volunteers, and of course the crisis brought about by COVID-19! In this newsletter, you will see articles touching upon all of these topics and more.

The year 2020 brings with it new challenges and opportunities for us as an organization. We have assembled a great team of dedicated volunteers to continue our work, but we cannot do it alone. We look forward to your continued support in our mission to catalyze socio-economic change in India through the education of underprivileged children. Thank you!
REWARD Trust has been an Asha project since it was started in 2005. Their goal is simple - appoint additional teachers in government schools to improve learning outcomes. The only cost in the project is the salaries paid to teachers, so REWARD is able to reach a large number of students with a nominal cost per child of Rs. 842 per year. They now have 70 teachers in 40 schools, reaching 8000 children in rural sections of Kancheepuram district, Tamil Nadu. The children come from families of day laborers, with an average household income of Rs. 5000 per month.

REWARD’s model has proven to be effective. In the initial years, the class X pass percentage soared ~3X to 95%. They have now shifted their focus on improving learning outcomes with real understanding of content. Teachers are local community members, hired together by REWARD, Head Master of the school, and local panchayat leaders.

REWARD has created a framework for the teachers where they are able to themselves break away from rote memorization and get enthused about learning. This transformation amongst teachers then transfers to their classroom. As a REWARD teacher put it, “REWARD planted a seed and it has blossomed into a tree.”

REWARD is a large project, and the supporting chapters had fallen short of raising the required funds this year. The volunteers working with the project approached Asha SV for help. Asha SV was able to fund $20,000 in emergency funds to cover the shortfall for this year. The REWARD team is now working on other fund raisers to ensure long term sustenance. $1000 supports a teacher’s annual salary, helping us reach 100 students. If you would like to gather 3-4 of your friends to support a teacher, please contact Melli Annamalai at boston@ashanet.org.

Mr. Sridhar, founder of REWARD Trust, talking to children at one of the schools they support.

2020
So far... 9,553 Children Impacted
$76,859 Disbursed
4 Projects Supported
COVID-19: Stay Safe

The spread of novel COVID-19 infections around the world has brought with it an unprecedented challenge to our lives as we know it. Several of the counties in San Francisco Bay Area have confirmed cases of the infection. As we navigate through this uncharted territory, we at Asha SV want to thank workers in the essential services industry for serving the community in this time of need.

Since there is plenty of fear and misinformation, please refer to credible sources of information, like the CDC, WHO, and Google, in order to keep yourselves, your family, and our community safe. We are in this together, and we will come out of it stronger.

TA Programs Postponed

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, we have suspended ongoing Team Asha [TA] programs - Family Biking, Hiking, and Couch to 5K. We have also postponed TA programs that were scheduled to start in the month of April. This includes running [South Bay and East Bay], biking and triathlon programs. Our annual running event - Asha Spring Run, which was originally scheduled for March 22nd 2020 at Vasona Park, has also been postponed. We have also moved our weekly chapter meeting online.

Success of Team Asha programs is vital to the success of our chapter as well as success of our organization. Even more importantly, it is important for all of us as a community of like minded people who enjoy the beautiful outdoors. Hence our coaches, captains, and coordinators are all monitoring the situation closely and hope to start or resume our programs once we overcome the current crisis. Please watch our website for updates as things evolve. Thank you for understanding.

Fund raising amidst COVID-19

Year 2020 will undoubtedly be one of our toughest years to raise funds. Our projects are reliant upon the funds we raise. Please consider making a contribution in these challenging times, every $ you donate will make a meaningful impact.
Basic Necessities Project

It all started with a thought - Asha supported children should not be deprived of the basic necessities of water and toilet. But as it turned out, a lot of them were.

At Asha SV, we have set ourselves an ambitious goal - by the end of this year, we want to ensure all our projects have sufficient funds to cover expenses for:

- Potable water within school premises.
- Clean toilets within school premises.
- First aid kits within school premises.
- Solar [or electric] lights and fans in every classroom.
- Annual preemptive medical checkup for children.
- Library [min 2:1 ratio of books to children] in the school.

We have taken stock of the situation and are actively working with our stewards and project partners to complete this project on time.

Volunteer Spotlight

Our organization is only as strong as our volunteers. At Asha SV, we have been blessed with a steady influx of dedicated volunteers who have helped us carry our mission forward.

Aditya Prasad [Adi] learnt about Asha through 2019 Holi event at Stanford University. In his words, “Education for the underprivileged children is something which I care about deeply as I believe this is the only way we can uplift the underprivileged masses and help them earn a decent living. Therefore approaching Asha for volunteer opportunities was a logical choice for me.”. Since joining Asha SV in January, he has been part of our Spring Run and content creation teams in addition to taking leadership in exploring options for water conservancy and management at our project sites in India. We look forward to Adi’s continued contribution in the coming months and years.

Light, fan, and toilet added at Bhaganda center

Aditya Prasad joined Asha SV as a new volunteer

Asha SV volunteers at chapter meeting in February

Volunteer with us

You can help us create a better tomorrow. Join today as a volunteer!

fb.com/AshaSV
sv.ashanet.org
sv@ashanet.org
2019: A Year In Review

We want to thank our volunteers, donors, athletes, and project partners for helping us deliver a successful year in 2019. You can find the summary below, but do go through our detailed annual report when you get a chance. We got a lot of work done in 2019, and we have a lot of work lined up for 2020. We look forward to your continued support.

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To A Bright Future :-)