

# Asha Berkeley Newsletter



Volume 1 Issue 2 March 2011

## Jamghat Provides a Haven for Street Children of Delhi

### Jamghat: An Overview

**Location** - Ladho Sarai, Delhi

**Number of Students** - 15

**Amount funded by Asha Berkeley** - \$3,500.00

**Years Funded** - 1

**Community Served** - Children from Urban Slums



By Vijay Rajamani

On a chilly December morning my brother and I made our way through Old Delhi on a motorbike heading towards a day-care shelter run by Jamghat, the registered NGO where my brother, Vasudev, volunteered to help raise funds.

By the stairs of the building which housed Jamghat's "Outdoor Programme", I could hear the voices of children reciting alphabets. Just as I reached the doorway, I heard a stern female voice

In addition to its day-care shelter, Jamghat consists of a 24-hour shelter that houses 15 boys.

saying "Jao naha lo." Go take a bath. Anticipating an angry lady with a cane in her hand, I was pleasantly surprised to be greeted by the smiling face of Priyanka, a young volunteer who runs the show at the day-care shelter. She explained to me that personal hygiene is an important part of the day at the center and all the children are asked to take a bath when they

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come in.

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## Asha Berkeley for Education Alumni Fund

By Devang Parekh

The Asha Berkeley chapter is proud to introduce the inaugural 2011 Asha for Education Berkeley Alumni Fund. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 in the coming year to support ongoing projects and adopt new projects. Each year we will set a new funding

focus. As this is the inaugural year, we will focus on supporting our current projects with these funds. We hope to attract matching donors and utilize corporate matching programs to help us reach these targets.

Volunteers have been at the

*Continued pg 2: Alumni Fund*

## Jamghat: *Continued from page 1*



The 15 members of the Jamghat indoor programme see each other as family

Sponsored by Max India Foundation, the center is open 6 days a week from 10am–6pm, and provides a safe place for the street children of the Jama Masjid area to spend the day. The center is regularly visited by 20-50 children, both boys and girls. A doctor from Max Healthcare visits once a week to provide medical attention. With the help of two caretakers and several volunteers, the center also provides basic education and a host of activities like workshops on HIV and sexual abuse, art and theatre, and the occasional outing to see a movie or go for a picnic. The free lunch provided is one of the major attractions, especially for the first timers. “After a few visits, most of them do come back regularly,” said Vasudev. It was not long before the children noticed me, or more importantly, the camera in my hand. After 20 minutes of clicking and reviewing photos, it was time to head across town to Lado Sarai, where Jamghat has their “Indoor Pro-

gramme, a 24-hour shelter where up to 15 boys live, learn, and grow together as a family.

The children who are part of the “Indoor Programme” were identified and selected from the “Outdoor Programme”. The boys choose to join the home where they commit to healthy choices: overcoming drug and alcohol addictions, attending vocational training or formal/non-formal education, eating healthy meals, and caring for each other as brothers. The apartment which houses the “Indoor Programme” has several rooms with bunk beds, along with a large living area furnished with a couch and several book shelves. Almost all of the children had been living there for more than a year and appeared to be much more disciplined and composed compared to the children from the day-care center. When my brother told them that I was a scientist by profession, they were eager to hear about my work. I attempted to explain my research to appease their curiosity and we thoroughly enjoyed the discussion. I was convinced that this place was working and was eager to get back to Berkeley to pitch the project to the Asha team. The project was approved in April 2010 and Asha Berkeley decided to support the education aspects of the “Indoor Programme” by providing \$3500 for one year to cover costs for books, a tutor and school uniforms.

Established in 2003, Jamghat is comprised of young adult professionals and volunteers with a variety of skills and experiences. Apart from the two centers, Jamghat also works to create awareness by organizing street plays, theatre workshops and night walks. Future initiatives include a second home for boys and another one for girls.

## Alumni Fund: *Continued from page 1*

heart of Asha for Education since its founding. For over 20 years now, members of the Berkeley community have helped support and grow Asha into the premier educational charity for underprivileged children in India. Now more than ever, the children of India need to be empowered through education, not just to better their own lives but to better society as a whole.

Apart from the monetary aspect of the fund, we also hope to engage alumni in helping us achieve Asha’s goals. Though many of you may not be able to attend our weekly meetings, your advice and support remain important to us. Whether it is suggestions for possible projects to support, help conducting site visits in India, or potential fundraiser ideas, all advice is welcome and appreciated. For any questions or suggestions related to the Asha for Education Berkeley Alumni Fund, please contact Devang Parekh at [ashaberkeleyalumni@gmail.com](mailto:ashaberkeleyalumni@gmail.com)

To donate to the alumni fund, visit <http://www.ashanet.org/berkeley/alumni.php>

### Donate to Asha:

Visit <http://www.ashanet.org/berkeley/donate.php> to donate by credit card OR Send checks drawn in favor of “Asha for Education” to:

Asha for Education  
c/o ASUC Office of Student Affairs  
University of California  
400 Eshleman Hall, MC 4500  
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### Get Involved:

Visit <http://www.ashanet.org/berkeley/volunteer.php> to join our mailing lists OR contact [berkeley@ashanet.org](mailto:berkeley@ashanet.org) for more information about upcoming meetings, events, and other ways to get involved.





# Environmentally Friendly Travel is a Key Way to Reduce our Carbon Footprint

**By Barnali Ghosh**

My husband and I are good Berkeleyans. We recycle, compost and take transit to work - so why do we have Hummer-sized carbon footprints? The culprit: plane flights, responsible for 4.9% of the entire human impact on the climate. Our two tickets from San Francisco to India and back have the impact of driving a car for two years, undoing all of our other efforts. And the countries most affected by our actions are the ones we come from.

To understand this web of climate, aviation and transportation, we decided to be citizen journalists for a year, while travelling around the world without flying. We started with a road trip to Seattle, where we caught a container ship to Japan. The ocean crossing meant ten days without phone or Internet - it was wonderful!

Backpacking through Asia by train, bus and ferry, we continually encountered the real impacts of climate change. In Vietnam, college students worry about a future where half the nation's rice paddies might drown by 2100 due to rising sea levels. In Bangladesh, we met landless peasant leaders organizing networks for climate justice. In Bangalore, Indian Youth Climate Network members are grappling with the fact that India is both a major greenhouse gas emitter and the world's second most vulnerable country to climate change.

*Plane flights are responsible for 4.9 % of the entire human impact on the climate.*

Everything clicked by the time we arrived in the UK, our last stop of the year. Aviation is responsible for 11% of the UK's impact on the climate. While most industries are slowly decarbonizing, the air industry plans to

increase pollution. It was powerful seeing citizens, NGOs and elected officials working to address the issue at a policy level, while corporations and individuals explored alternatives like rail and videoconferencing with increasing comfort. If they can do it, so can we.

As my husband and I end our year of investigation, we've come to realize that as jet age immigrants, our histories are built on artificially cheap air travel. It's only now that we see the hidden costs expressed as erratic farming seasons in India, floods in Pakistan, rising sea levels in Bangladesh. We're not ready to swear off planes for good, but there are steps we can take to cut back: fly less, make each trip mean more and invest in alternatives. Patting ourselves on the back for recycling just isn't enough.

*"In Bangalore, Indian Youth Climate Network members are grappling with the fact that India is both a major greenhouse gas emitter and the world's second most vulnerable country to climate change."*

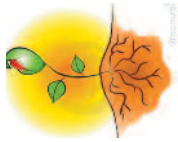
Barnali Ghosh is an Asha Berkeley volunteer and former Project Coordinator. Her experiences during her year abroad are documented at <http://www.yearofnoflying.com/>

## Harshavardhan Purandare Discusses his Experiences In Social Activism and Development through Information Technology

We started with the simple idea of educating young minds in IT basics and introducing them to the Internet. Indian society today is divided into two sections - one that has gotten all the benefits of globalization and is on a fast track to progress, and the other which is excluded even from the basics. The gravity of this disparity is reflected in the digital divide between these two sections. The attempts to bridge this digital divide and, in effect, the knowledge divide, are strategic to finding India's own model of sustainable development.

Asha projects like the Agashi Knowledge Initiative are working essentially towards this objective of sustainable development. Since June 2010, Asha Mumbai has given \$2560 to the Agashi Knowledge Initiative based in Vasai, Maharashtra, which drives many endeavors in the realm of sustainability and technology.

Take, for instance, environment education (EE), an initiative against degradation of the environment. We started training school teachers so they could spread environment education to students. The schools gave a tremendous response in terms of teacher participation, and CEE (the government's excellence center) aided with the experts' and teachers' training. This stands to be a popular initiative now, and its economic impact is also seen in encouragement of local green entrepreneurs and policy-makers.



In response to mass unemployment of workers, NREGA (the government act that guarantees 100 days of work and wages to every household in rural areas) is being targeted for its due implementation through partnership with NREGANET. The absence of information exchange between the target beneficiary and the government is bridged by deploying IT for common people's usage. Our young social entrepreneurs of Agashi Knowledge center have been able to move communities on this issue.

A click of the mouse starts the process of connecting people to the issues and opportunities and navigating

in the virtual world gets them thinking about real world problems. And when Education really starts becoming Knowledge, it creates the direct action for development - finally young leadership can take over the situation. Krishna and Chetan do work for the Agashi Knowledge Center. Their cell phones and laptops are busy all the time. They represent the same generation of activists against the digital divide that overturned unjust powers in Egypt. They are the drivers of modern social change!

-Harshavardhan

To learn more or donate to this project, please visit  
<https://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=1072>

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