



ASHAKIRAN

The Asha for Education Newsletter

April 1998

From the Editors:

Hello and welcome to the first edition of the ASHA-wide newsletter!

We hope that the newsletter succeeds in its purpose: that of sharing information between the various ASHA chapters. Chapters can find out about different fund raising strategies, the various projects being supported and the activities ASHA volunteers are involved in. Sharing the project information can also give a boost to proliferate the ASHA Stars concept. The newsletter also intends to bring the chapters closer together as an organization without compromising on the flexibility and independence of each chapter.

As most ASHA members know, there has been a lot of activity on the organizational front. We have a letter from the Board of Directors addressing this issue. On behalf of all ASHA-ites we would like to thank the folks who have been handling the legal and organizational issues and the ASHA web pages. We would also like to congratulate **D.P. Prakash** and **Ranjit Kumar** on being elected President and Secretary respectively.

-Eds.

Prithvi Prabhu , Garima Bhatia & Ashok Naidu.

Note from the Directors:

Asha has grown tremendously over the last six years from the initial group of 4 students to the current movement that includes 30 chapters worldwide.

We started under the nurturing guidance of Indians for Collective Action (ICA), a San Francisco Bay Area non-profit organization engaged in development activities in India for the last 25 years. Asha has operated as a legal and administrative component of ICA, and ICA's support over the years has been instrumental to Asha's growth.

Now, in our seventh year, Asha is a stable organization, capable of handling its own affairs. We have mutually decided to become independent of ICA and register ourselves as a new organization. We are changing our name to "Asha for Education" to emphasize our commitment to children's education. We are still in the process of registering as a non-profit organization in the US, and expect it to be completed in a few more weeks.

Our chapter in Delhi has also been busy with logistical changes. Asha had been registered in New Delhi as a trust in 1991. Recently, we received FCRA clearance to receive foreign funds. This allows the

Delhi chapter to start funding projects, in addition to providing logistical support in Delhi.

So, we approach our seventh anniversary with several changes in the organization. However, our commitment to children's education is the same as ever as is our goal to keep Asha free of bureaucracy and administrative overheads. As we head into the new millennium, we shall continue to strive to make Asha a widespread movement instead of a just large organization. We look forward to your ongoing support for our efforts.

By Year 2000 AD

Every second illiterate person in the world may be an Indian!

Contribute for FREE

Asha-AT&T Program

If your long distance carrier is AT&T, please take a moment to call **1-800-426-0015, select #3** and sign up for this program. Be sure to choose "Asha" as your beneficiary association. **It costs you absolutely nothing.** If you are not with AT&T and have plans to switch to AT&T as your long distance carrier, please consider using the above number for switching.

Event Listing

April 4th: The Jazz Fusion group Nataraj will be performing at the fund-raiser concert for *ASHA NYC/NJ*. The concert will be held in the Altschultz auditorium at Columbia University.

April 11th: The Jai Hind group will be holding the 2nd annual ASHA fund-raiser dinner in the Memorial Union in the Arizona State University campus. All proceeds from the event will go to *ASHA-Arizona*.

April 11th-12th: The Thyagaraja festival is being held at Cleveland State University from the 11th to the 17th of April. Watch for the *ASHA-Cleveland* stall on the first two days of the event.

May 2nd: *ASHA-Indiana* will be holding it's spring fund-raiser, UTSAV '98 at the Knights of Columbus hall

May 3rd: The deadline for the ASHA creative writing contest is on May 3rd. *ASHA Chicago* is organizing this event with autographed books by renowned authors (Shashi Tharoor, Chitra Divakaruni, Vikram Chandra and Mitali Perkins) for prizes.

If you know of any groups or projects in India that Asha could consider for funding, drop us a note and tell us about them! We are always on the lookout for deserving literacy efforts in India.

* For more info. on local events please contact your local chapter.

Happenings!

Arizona: Indian Summer, a local Phoenix band, performed on the 8th of March in the Memorial Union at Arizona State University. The concert was well received with over 300 people from the local community present for the event. The band gave an eclectic performance with numbers from Santana to *Chura Liya* and *Ravoyi Chandamama*.

Chicago: The 3rd annual Net-IP Charity Ball

The Network of Indian-American Professionals, Chicago held its 3rd annual charity ball on the 7th of March. The proceeds from this event were donated to ASHA-Chicago. Donations, ticket sales and a raffle for a round trip ticket to India (sponsored by Air India) brought the total proceeds from the event to about \$6,900/-, all of which will be used to fund schools in Bihar.

Neil S. Dhillon, formerly one of the highest ranking Indian-American officials appointed to the Clinton administration, was the keynote speaker. D. P. Prakash, the founder of ASHA-L.A and the ASHA Stars program and currently the ASHA President, spoke about ASHA at the event.

MIT: Asha MIT volunteers, Shehla, Ashita and Srikrishna, gave a presentation at Aspentec Corp. on the 27th of March. Handouts with information about ASHA, the ICM/AT&T scheme and the ASHA calendars were distributed to the audience. Information and photographs of ASHA-MIT projects were available for members of the audience to view. Corporate presentations are a good way of increasing ASHA's exposure amongst the professionals in the community.

Asha Kiran

St. Louis: The 2nd annual St. Louis Carrom-TableTennis-Chess open was held on 8th March at the Gandhi center. Viren handled the Carrom tournament, Voora and Vijay took care of Table-Tennis and Sathya organized the chess matches. ASHA St. Louis volunteers cooked and sold food at the event as well. The event raised about \$500/- for ASHA St. Louis.

Seattle: The annual pledge drive is well underway at Seattle. Each year, ASHA Seattle volunteers put together a pledge packet containing a calendar, an annual report and a coupon book. The pledge packets are financed by ASHA Seattle volunteers and by local businesses. Donors are gifted a pledge packet for their donations.

Stanford: ASHA Stanford received a commitment of \$4000/- from Smart Modular Inc. Representatives from 14 NGOs (including ASHA & CRY) met the Indian Counsel General in San Francisco in support of the 83rd amendment. The proposed constitutional amendment makes Education a fundamental right for every Indian child. Visit <http://www.tulipcom.com/pratham/> for more information on the 83rd amendment.

What Is Literacy?

Literacy, as measured by the Government of India, is the ability to read 40 words per minute, write 20 words per minute, and do 2-digit arithmetic.

Current ASHA projects:

Singhbhum Legal Aid and Development Society (SLADS), Bihar

This group needed funding (library, administrative costs) for an existing high school, which targets around 150 children from 50 villages in South Bihar. The project is being jointly funded by *ASHA-MIT and ASHA-D.C.* with \$3000 per year funding approved for a 3-year period. A site visit by an ASHA member was conducted in Sept. '97 and funding started in Oct. '97.

Swanirwar, W. Bengal

The project aims at rural development in 5 villages in Bengal, and *MIT and LA chapters of ASHA* have jointly funded the educational component of the project for 3 years starting June 1995 with \$1500/year. This included 5 pre-primary and 3 primary schools for 222 children in the area. Site visit was conducted in summer 1996, and the project nears completion in summer 1998.

Ashraya, Karnataka

The *Chicago, Cornell and Delaware* chapters of ASHA are jointly funding this group which has started a residential school for the children of migrant labor in Bangalore. The project requires funding of \$2500 per year and clothes, books and medical care for approximately 50 children from the age of 6 upwards.

Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti, Rajasthan

This is an action group of Gandhian volunteers who practice alternative rural reconstruction in the desert villages of Rajasthan. *ASHA-Stanford and Berkeley* have funded their primary schools which provide non formal education to over 150 children from the region.

Abhilasha, Haryana

This project funded by *ASHA-Indianapolis* supports 50 children in a school in a rural region of Haryana. Students are provided with a uniform and ASHA has also helped with construction of lavatories and a water tank for drinking water by funding with \$1800.

Chromepet, Tamil Nadu

This project was funded in 1997 with \$1500 by *ASHA-St. Louis* to rebuild flood damaged infrastructure in a middle school in the suburbs of Chennai. A site visit indicated that the construction was completed in time, and the roof of 3 classrooms rebuilt with the funding sent by ASHA.

Ankuran, Bihar

ASHA-Arizona has decided to fund Ankuran, a non profit agency which has been working in Chatra dist (Bihar) for the past 15 years. The project proposal was for launching 45 educational centers catering to children between 6-14 years of age. However, based on the site visit and the financial situation of ASHA, they have decided to fund 5 centers this year. Future funding will depend on the progress of these 5 centers.

Spotlight :



Prachiti, Maharashtra

This organisation runs a residential school with around 85 children in Padsare, a tribal village in Konkan. ASHA-Seattle & Stanford are jointly funding the project with \$6000/year, which was approved after a site visit by an ASHA member, Pratibha Bachal, in Dec. '96.

Padsare is a tribal village in the Pali taluka of the Konkan region of Maharashtra. The school is residential for students coming from villages outside Padsare and is a regular day school for students from Padsare. Natu Foundation has sponsored the building of a hostel for the school while the operational expenses for the school are taken care of jointly by the *Seattle and Stanford chapters of ASHA*.

In addition to running the school effectively, Prachiti is also working on development of the land using horticulture to provide vocational training facilities for students after they reach Std. VIII and also to aid in making the project self-sufficient. They have also applied to the government to obtain the land along the road for wasteland development. Overall the school seems to be making good progress and other activities are shaping up as planned. With local funds becoming available, an interesting and successful model is shaping up. The villagers seem to be regaining some hope about their future."

Spotlight:

A typical Asha funded project

Prachiti will be followed up by other projects in subsequent Newsletters.

Every Newsletter will carry a detailed project profile of an Asha sponsored project

"Asha for Education" Donation Slip

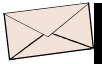
Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____
 E-mail address: _____

- I am enclosing a one-time contribution of \$ ____.
- I would like to make a monthly quarterly half-yearly annual contribution of \$ ____.
- I would like my contribution to be used for the following project(s):

Please make checks payable to "Asha-for Education", and mail them to:
Asha-Stanford, P.O. Box 4985, Stanford, CA 94309

"Asha for Education" is a Non profit Organization
 100% of your donations contribute towards supporting Asha's projects in India

Visit us online at: [http // www.ashanet.org/](http://www.ashanet.org/)



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To:

