



ASHA KIRAN

The Asha for Education Newsletter

Vol. 2, Issue 5, Sept-Oct 1999

About Asha

Asha for education is a non-profit voluntary organization dedicated to the support of basic education in India. Asha strives to provide financial assistance to educate underprivileged children in India and to increase awareness within the local community about these issues. Asha's actions are based on the firm belief that education is a critical and effective catalyst for social and economic change in India.

The Rejuvenate India Movement

Dr. Parameswara Rao's path breaking effort, targeting Indians in the USA to discuss and resolve India's problems, has blossomed into a nationwide movement. The movement's mission is to catalyze rapid development and positive change in India.

Volunteers from a number of organizations are participating in this effort. Asha volunteers, along with people from AID, CRY, IDRF, ICA, ILP, LFG and other organizations have met at various locations in the US. These brainstorming sessions focused on how to get people in India to act and what we can do to facilitate this action.

As a first step, the group decided to undertake a cleanliness campaign. The aim of this project is multi-purpose: to build confidence and to gain working experience with groups in India. The details are yet to be worked out, so watch this space!

Shop the web!

Visit <http://www.ashanet.org/shop.html>

Use the iGive virtual mall and help Asha every time you browse or buy.

Give gifts (India Gift Shop) or flowers (GreatFlowers) through the website and donate 10% of the sales to Asha.

All this at no extra cost to you!

Work An Hour for Education '99

6 weeks, 1100 pledges and over \$50,000 raised: Work an Hour '99 was a phenomenal success! The Work an Hour (WAH) team built on last year's accomplishments and blew past the goal of raising \$40,000 by August 16th.

Behind this success was a lot of hard work. In June, Jayashree (Seattle) and the project team spent weeks to identify projects for WAH '99. They analyzed and discussed the projects amongst themselves, cleared the various doubts that arose, and finally, made their recommendations.

June also saw plenty of work on the WAH web page. Ramu (St. Louis) and Shailen (Berkeley) cranked away for a couple of nights to iron out all the kinks, and launched the website at 4 AM on the American Independence day. And what a site it was! Attention grabbing graphics, detailed information about the projects, a host of publicity material, donor statistics, chapter-wise break up of pledges, you name it, it was there!

Once the website was up, Neeta (Seattle) started the publicity working group. WAH coordinators from different chapters stepped forward to join the group. The synergy on the publicity group was cool! Within a few days volunteers had created posters, banners, a press release, and ads for the radio and TV. The website was the glue that held it all together: all the publicity material was placed on the web and volunteers from across the world were able to use the material.

Individual chapters got going at this point. Volunteers placed posters and flyers at grocery stores, restaurants, and social functions. Everyone did their utmost to spread the word. From the feedback received, emails, word of mouth, and personal requests were the most effective ways to reach people. The chapter pledge meter whetted the competitive spirit of the volunteers: NYC/NJ ended up with 111 pledges followed by Arizona and Silicon Valley. The banners placed on various websites were especially helpful in attracting online traffic to the WAH home page; over 200 pledges were from people who were not affiliated with any chapter!

Weeks after we all think Work an hour '99 has ended, the finance team in Seattle continues to collect checks, crunch numbers and send thank you notes. The WAH team is still collecting feedback about the event and will use it to improve Work an Hour 2000.

In Neeta's own words, "WAH '99 was an experience of a lifetime. The energy was immense, the pace exciting, and the enthusiasm contagious. Our spirits soared with every pledge we received. The congratulatory comments from our donors were especially heartening. It was something the WAH team will remember for quite some time, and we highly recommend it for a dose of high spirits, the next time around you need one!"

Work an Hour '99 proved yet again that Asha, with its dedicated and spirited volunteers, can and will bring about significant change. Work an Hour 2000 here we come!!

Irvine , September 22 nd , UC Irvine Ring Road. Contact Rupesh (502 852 3183)	Volunteers from Asha Irvine will have a Mehndi booth during the welcome week for freshmen. They also plan to hold another awareness and fund raising event: a banquet for Professors at UC Irvine.
Kentucky , September 18 th , Tom Sawyer park, Louisville. Contact Rajesh (502 897 5665)	Asha Kentucky is organizing its first major event. The cricket tournament is expected to raise about \$600. The cricketing action will be spread over three weekends with six teams in the fray.
Madison , September 7 th , Great Hall, Memorial Union. Contact Kamal (608 236 9852)	Volunteers at the University of Wisconsin will be participating in the 1999 Student organization fair. They aim to promote and publicize Asha at this event and hope to recruit new volunteers as well.
MIT , September 17 th , Kresge main auditorium. Contact Anu (617 776 9096)	The air will be filled with the sweet strains of Carnatic music at 7:30 PM, September 17 th . Prasanna, on the electric guitar and Trichy Sankaran on the Mridangam will be performing at the benefit concert.
Seattle , Weekends, Microsoft campus, Contact Maitheyi (425 869 8074)	Asha Seattle volunteers have started a basic computer education program for people of all ages. This program is generating a lot of excitement amongst volunteers and goodwill for Asha in the community.
St. Louis , September 25 th - 26 th , Forest park cricket ground, Contact Anand (314 514 9764)	Asha St. Louis has also caught the cricketing bug! Unlike Asha Kentucky, they plan to use the double wicket format with 2 person teams and finish the tournament on one weekend.

Briefs: Asha Cornell plans to hold its bi-annual dinner in September.... The Silicon Valley and Stanford chapters will be organizing their annual Diwali/Halloween ball at the end of October. They plan to have tasty Diwali food and live Bhangra and Dandiya bands at the event.... The NYC/NJ chapter organized Spiceweek in association with New York's finest Indian restaurants. This unique, weeklong fundraiser received widespread press coverage.... Princeton volunteers participated in the Festival of India program and had a very fruitful day raising awareness about Asha.

The \$50,000+ raised by Work an Hour '99 will be used for the following projects:



Students practicing dance at the Gurukulam run by Seva Nilayam.

Seva Nilayam houses orphan girls in Tenkasi, TamilNadu. The girls are given food, clothing, medical care, and basic education. Funding was requested to start a school (Vethathiri Gurukulam) and provide vocational training to the girls. Plans: WAH funds will be used to accommodate at least 100 girls. Vocational training will enable the

children to stand on their own feet on completion of their studies.

Funding Request: \$20,000

Caretaker: Asha - Irvine

Bhoomiheen Seva Samiti runs schools (Krishi Audyogik Vidyalaya) at village Aau in the backward Banda district of UP. The society also assists the landless and poor people in the region with their medical, social and legal problems.

Plans: Work an Hour funds will be used to improve the school infrastructure. The society plans to purchase beds for the hostel, sports equipment, scientific tools, library books, musical instruments, and medical equipment.

Funding Request: \$13,000

Caretaker: Asha - Seattle

Vivekananda Education Society is addressing the problem of child labor in and around Jagaddal, in the outskirts of Calcutta.

Plans: Acquire land to build a school and thus have a permanent base to operate from.

Funding Request: \$10, 000

Caretaker: Asha - Arizona

Maharogi Sewa Samiti runs a residential school for the blind, deaf-mute and orphan children. Located in Anandwan, the school is run by Dr. Vikas Amte, Baba Amte's son.

Plans: The physically challenged children at the school usually found employment after they complete education. This perspective led Dr. Vikas Amte to propose a long-term plan for providing these students with some vocational training. This training would be useful in the long-term rehabilitation of the project beneficiaries at Anandwan.

Funding Request: \$35000 (5 years)

Caretaker: Asha - St. Louis

By the year 2000 every second illiterate person in the world will be an Indian.

We need you!

Join Asha	Give Asha	Partake Asha	Buy Asha
Be a part of a motivated group of people	You can make tax exempt donations to Asha	Participate in various Asha events and programs	Buy Asha merchandise (calendars, mugs and cards)

You can make checks payable to "Asha for Education" and mail them to: Asha for Education, Anthony Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. 100% of your contributions go towards supporting Asha projects in India. All administrative expenses are borne by Asha volunteers. Asha for Education is a non profit organization.

Visit Asha on the web at <http://www.ashanet.org/>