

hope

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02 Director's Message



Affirmation! What a word! But the reality behind this word is so much greater and more wonderful.

Affirmation is confirming a person, encouraging, strengthening that person, when they have need, when they need to hear and know that person is loved and valued and has a purpose beyond his or her knowledge.

Encouraging and strengthening a child is crucial to that child's growth and health. Without it the child may wither and not blossom. Oh, the need for those who will give of themselves in this way, not only to children, but also to adults who have never known this strengthening of their inner person. Affirmation produces what it gives: strength of character, a sense of purpose, love and generosity.

As we have freely received, freely give!

My friends, let us give of ourselves in service to those who need this empowering of hearts and lives. Love one another! Serve one another!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kiran Martin".

Dr. Kiran Martin

Asha is a community health and development society dedicated to improving the lives of slum dwellers in Delhi.

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03 Spotlight



A journey of struggle and success

Shefali is much more than just a name. This middle-aged woman hides many stories behind her strong personality. Shefali, who hails from West Bengal, was married at a tender age. Marriage brought her to the unpleasant and overcrowded space of East Delhi's Thokar No. 8. Her husband worked as a labourer in a factory nearby where he managed to earn a meagre amount of Rs 5000 (\$ 72.59/ £ 54.87) per month. "Soon we were blessed with four kids and our world revolved around them," said Shefali.

In April 2006, with less than 24 hours' notice, Thokar No. 8 was demolished by the government. Residents were forced to live by the roadside in make-shift tents with no food, water or sanitation. They faced the daily wrath of police trying to prevent them from protesting for their rights. "I can never forget the day when our houses were demolished, and we were left on the road abandoned. Dr. Kiran and the whole Asha team stepped in to help us," said Shefali. Three months later, with the worthy efforts of Asha, the slum dwellers were given the land rights of 18 sq. feet of barren land at Savda Ghevara. 30 kms away from

Delhi this land was isolated, mosquito-infested, with no water, toilets, clinics, schools, roads or even public transport.

Along with many more, she started her life from scratch at Savda. "Now we own a small house which was built by Asha's supporter, the Ballymena builders team from the UK". Everything was fine until her husband fell ill and was bedridden for five years. Shefali started working as a domestic helper, but her income was not enough to feed six mouths and pay the medical bills. Thus, her eldest daughter (Suchitra) is being raised by her grandmother while the other three are growing under the wings of Asha.

Her husband passed away in early 2018, leaving the responsibility for four children on Shefali.

While Shefali works day and night, her second daughter, Shivani, takes care of her sibling and attends college regularly. With the help of Asha, Shivani secured 90.5% in her high school and is now pursuing a B.A (Political Science) degree at a prestigious college of Delhi University.

As Shefali talks about her life and her children you can see the pain, the troubles and the miseries she has faced and overcome with her hard work during her lifetime. But, from all the emotions you see on her face, an unusual sense of confidence, which she has derived over the years through her experiences, is inspirational. "Asha became an inseparable part of our lives. When I look back, I am filled with gratitude for this unconditional love and support. Asha which means hope truly stands for its name" smiled Shefali.

04 News at a glance



Prime Minister of Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen visits Asha

On 20th January 2019, Asha had the honour and pleasure of welcoming the Prime Minister of Denmark, His Excellency Lars Løkke Rasmussen, along with his wife, Ms. Sólrún Løkke Rasmussen, to Jeewan Nagar slum colony. They were accompanied by the Ambassador of Denmark to India, Mr. Peter Taksøe-Jensen, and his wife Ms. Gitte Taksøe-Jensen, and other members of the Prime Minister's team.

They had a wonderful time with Asha ambassadors and the members of the Children's and the Women's Associations. They provided an overview of the ground-breaking initiatives in the area of slum development- Asha's Higher Education Programme.

Prime Minister Rasmussen was also delighted to learn about Asha's work particularly its health initiatives and the Women's Association's work in the local slum since 2006.

Dr Kiran shared Asha's three-tier healthcare model, explaining the role of the community health volunteers. She spoke about the clinics in the Asha centres and their role in combatting the mortality rate, infections and incidences of disease.

Prime Minister Rasmussen said, "There is hope for everybody, but you have to work hard and invest in yourself. I am proud and humbled to have known and met you all. This visit gave me a lot of hope and optimism."



Dr Daniel Hendrix, Audiologist

Dr Daniel Hendrix visited Asha along with the Reservoir Team from Boston, USA. During his week-long stay he conducted several clinics in the Asha slum communities and the Polyclinic for hearing-impaired slum patients. Dr Daniel also provided them with hearing-aid devices free of cost.

Send your Best Wishes for the students taking their High School leaving examinations

March is an extremely crucial month for thousands of Asha students sitting the Class XII Board examinations. Months of preparation, hard work and occasional apprehension will boil down to the few hours in the exam hall. Board examinations are not only about the journey of the student, but also about all the support of the students provided by the Asha family. Textbooks and sample papers, along with guidance, are provided to each student. Passing the Board examinations is a vital step towards getting to University.

05 News at a glance



Dr John Peteet, Psychiatrist

Dr John Peteet visited Asha along with the Reservoir Team from Boston, USA. The Psychologist conducted several clinics at the Polyclinic and held counselling sessions for many patients in the slums. A separate workshop was also conducted for the Asha team at the Polyclinic to provide awareness of mental health.

Visitors from around the globe



Dr Jack Leder and Prof Gilah C. Leder, Australia



Deakin University, Australia



Robert Johanson, the Chairman of AFOA Australia



Mr. Michael Spence AC, The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Australia

Activities in the Asha slums



"Every human has a right to lead a dignified life and dignity should be the basic guiding principle for all actions."

- Dr Kiran Martin



Sewage pipe installed in Asha's Ekta Vihar Slum Community



Celebrating the International Women's Day in the Asha slums



Asha Ambassadors taking mock exam of class 12 students

06 Spotlight



An act of 'compassion' transformed a family forever

This is the story of a 48-year-old woman named 'Mala' and her family. Mala, who dwells in Asha's Anna Nagar slum community, is much older than she looks. When this is mentioned to her she comments, "Practising gratitude and compassion have helped stop my ageing".

She migrated from Bihar with her husband, Sudama Yadav, some 25 years ago. He works as a delivery man in a factory, earning a small income of about Rs 10,000 (\$ 140.40/£ 109.08) per month, which is barely enough for him and his family.

Years ago, an Asha CHV (Community Health Volunteer) visited the community and found Mala's son, Shubham, struggling with his studies. Instilled with the Asha values, the Asha CHV encouraged Shubham to work hard at his studies. Also, noticing his keen interest in tennis, the Asha CHV, with the help of Asha Ambassadors, counselled and motivated Shubham.

Their hard work paid off!

The following year, Shubham scored excellently in his examinations and started looking out for a future career opportunity in tennis. Presently, Shubham is a tennis supervisor in a renowned firm based in Gurgaon (Delhi-NCR). "I would have never even thought of making tennis my profession. But my Asha family not only recognised my potential, but also helped me pursue a career doing what I love. I know that I can count on my Asha family for life," says Shubham.

This act of compassion touched Mala!

She couldn't sit back anymore. She walked down to the Asha centre nearby and enrolled herself there. As she started learning the Asha values, she began paying-it-forward and so did her son. Earlier, Mala used to be a naive and simple housewife who had no say in any of the family decisions. But now, she has changed and is much more confident.

"From deliveries of my children to loans for subsistence, Asha has done it all. I feel proud when I see my children paying the Asha values forward. Be it filling up the forms of college aspirants in our community for free or providing aid to sick neighbours, my family does it with pride," says Mala. Mala, a mother of two sons and a daughter, has been learning and growing every single day since she became an active member of Mahila Mandal (Women's Association).

07 Volunteer diaries



Dr. Elaine Smith
Rheumatologist, UK

"I returned to the Asha slums once again in order to carry out clinics, along with my friend and fellow rheumatologist, Dr Louise Dolan. We worked in four different slums and also worked at the Asha HQ Polyclinic. Personally, I can see that the good work of Asha, and all the team members, continues to improve the well-being of the slum dwellers. The hard work and optimism given by the team is very palpable. It was also wonderful to see so many members of the team, who have become like old friends, once again. Well done everyone! The fruit of your labours are clear to see. Elaine"



If you would like to volunteer at Asha,
please contact info@asha-india.org



Alice Green
Volunteer from UK

"From the moment I stepped into Zakhira's ASHA centre I felt welcomed and part of the community. Being away from home can be hard, but the subtle things like being welcomed every morning with hugs and smiles, storytelling and the children trying to teach me Hindi has made it that much easier. Overcoming the language barrier and creating new and exciting ways to teach English has its challenges, but the laughs, engagement and enthusiasm from the children always make it worthwhile. I cannot thank the ASHA team enough for hosting and supporting me over the past two months. I wish I could do more for the inspiring and dedicated people in Zakhira."

Harriet
Trinity College, Australia

"I and the whole team are going to carry these memories forever. The time we spent here with these beautiful children is something I will never forget, nor would I want to. Despite their destitution the slum dwellers keep on smiling and bring happiness to others. I think these slum dwellers are better than all of us. We practised the Asha Values which will keep inspiring us".



Steve Watson
Long term supporter, Reservoir Pastor, USA

It was our joy to spend the week leading activities for children's groups in Chanderpuri and Mayapuri – singing songs, making art, reading stories, practising English, and using art and video to develop connections between American and Indian youth. It is our honour to participate in Asha's work reducing isolation and increasing opportunity for slum residents in Delhi! We also took joy in sharing some of our community's professional expertise with the talented and experienced Asha team – advising on community mental health, training leaders in women's health exercises, and fitting some residents with hearing aids. As we see the Asha values of dignity, empowerment, joy and more in action, we long to live more by the Asha values in our own communities and professions.

08 Transforming lives

Promoting Education

\$ 100 – One year of books for one child

\$ 160 – College preparation for 30 children

\$ 320 – One year of university tuition for one student

\$ 640 – One year of entire university expenses for one student

Promoting Health

\$20 – Vaccinations against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis for five children

\$ 60 – Basic health education for 1,000 people

\$ 100 – Vitamin A supplements to prevent night blindness for 60 children

\$ 160 – Recovery treatment for 10 TB patients

Promoting Empowerment

\$ 18 – Training for 1 Community Health Volunteer

\$ 45 – Celebration of events and interactive activities

\$ 90 – Training workshops on infrastructure and environmental improvement

Asha (USA)

If you would like to contribute to the lives of poor slum dwellers in Delhi, then you can become a Friend of Asha. Asha (USA) aids our activities through donations, fundraising events, volunteering opportunities and raising awareness of the work we do.

Donations

Supporters from the US can make tax deductible donations to Asha.

The American Society for Health for All ASHA (USA) (EIN #010557632) can collect funds for Asha from the USA.

2. To donate by cheque:

Make a cheque payable to ASHA (USA) and mail to:

ASHA (USA)

15 Notre Dame Ave, Cambridge
MA 02140, USA

For more information, contact:

Mrs Louanne Hempton

National Coordinator & Treasurer, ASHA (USA)

asha.usa.info@gmail.com

1. To donate online for tax deductibility,

go to: <http://www.asha-usa.org/donate.html>

3. To donate directly to Asha India,

go to: <https://asha-india.org/get-involved/donate/>