



P.O. Box 6750
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Pattamundai Resident Home and School For Children Opens in May

Grassroots Asia made a second visit to the *Hariharananda Balashram* project in the Pattamundai region of Orissa this past January. The school is scheduled to open in May, one year earlier than expected. Grassroots Asia is providing on-going help in construction and basic operating costs for the school.

The Balashram is conceived as a shelter for destitute children from Orissa, who have lost their parents and relatives during the cyclone and flood disaster in 1999. This event was one of the most devastating natural catastrophes that India has ever known. According to UNICEF more than 3.3 million children were affected and about 50,000 persons died as a result.

The aim of the Balashram is to give a new home and good schooling to destitute children and provide them with a solid foundation for the future. By offering the opportunity of an English medium school as well as a technical education, these

children will acquire an adequate background to get a job or advance further in their studies.

The "Balashram" is an uplifting project which combines the notion of a warm-hearted home, and a high quality standard education, in a spiritually open and tolerant environment.

The Balashram is a residential school for children of mixed gender, from 4 until 17/18 years of age. Four languages will be taught including English, Hindi, Oriya and Sanskrit. Practical Instruction will be received in diverse fields such as gardening, art crafts and cooking. A spiritual dimension will also be added to the all-around education by teaching some basic yoga practices, and providing a foundation for tolerance and love.

Medical check-ups and preventative health education will be assured by the Health Drive for schools, conducted by Prajnana Mission..

The first class will contain 30-40 children selected from orphanages and isolated villages. Each year an additional group of 30-40 students will be accepted. In 12 years, the Balashram will accommodate 480 children. If you are interested in contributing, phone 923-1200.

A special thanks to the Duane Stranahan Estate for their generous contributions this year, to the Snowmass Village Rotary and to the many donors who have made Grassroots Asia a success



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Grassroots Asia presents FREE slideshow March 19 at ACES

On the Ground

Emergency Relief, Basic Care and Education



www.GrassrootsAsia.org

Friday, March 19. 7pm An Evening With Grassroots Asia Aspen Center For Environmental Studies

On March 19, Grassroots Asia will host a thank you for the donors and friends who have helped make Grassroots Asia a success in the past year. **FACES OF ASIA**, a slideshow featuring street children, child prostitution, orphanages, village life and humanitarian projects in India and Cambodia will be shown. The evening's event will take place at the Aspen Center For Environmental Studies, Hallam Lake. Anyone may attend and the slideshow will be FREE and open to the public. A reception for donors and friends will begin at 6:30pm. The slideshow starts at 7pm, followed by a question and answer session. The evening is expected to conclude by 8pm.

Grassroots Asia is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that offers emergency relief, basic care and education for children and the underprivileged in Asia.

Phone Debbie Pennington at 923-1200 for more information



India's Sponsor-A-Cow Campaign—An Update



For all of you who have adopted a cow for the India's Sponsor-A-Cow campaign... I have good news and bad.

First the bad... I do not yet have the actual picture of the cow you adopted and will not until late summer. This is because of the inability to

purchase and place the cows at the selected projects prior to a suitable cowshed being built. Cowsheds are now underway.

Now the good news...The preliminary work has been completed and all cows that have been donated have been allocated to their new homes. 20 lucky cows have been happily accepted at the *Hariharananda Balashram* resident home and school for children in Pattamundai, Orissa where 30-40 children will be adopted this spring. Children will be

selected from orphanages and isolated villages. (see pg.4). A dairy will be developed at the *Hariharananda Balashrama* which will provide the children with nourishment, vocational education and help the school to be more self-sufficient.

In addition, Grassroots Asia will place 11 cows at the Sanvay Ashram Orphanage and school in Bodhgaya, Bihar, where 36 children reside. It is managed by Ghandian Dwarko Sudrani. He will begin a dairy and a

cow urine production business for the orphanage.

10 cows and funds for a cowshed are needed in Ichatpur, Orissa where an impoverished village is seeking to support their children in basic education. Children in Ichatpur have a difficult time paying the 5 rupees (10 cents) per month tuition. To donate a cow, phone 923-1200



Grassroots Asia Begins SRADHA BHABAN Rescue Home for Trafficked Children In Bhubaneswar

Grassroots Asia, in cooperation with the People's Cultural Center in Orissa, will open a transit home for children who have been trafficked for labor or prostitution. The rescue home, scheduled to open in Bhubaneswar, Orissa in April has been named *Sradha Bhaban*. Sradha means "love and affection with dignity" and Bhaban means "home".

Over 200 NGO's currently operate in Orissa's capital, one of the poorest cities in India. Thousands of destitute children are left to fend for themselves every day. The government of Orissa and the NGO's in Bhubaneswar recognize the need for a transit facility, but, due to financials constraints, have not been able to fund it.

Sixteen brothel districts have sprung up in the capital of Bhubaneswar in the last few years as a result of natural disaster and forced migration. The result has been a steady increase in the purchasing of village children for forced labor and prostitution.

In lengthy budget meetings and over endless cups of tea, the staff of Grassroots Asia and PECUC eventually came up with a bare bones budget to begin the home.

The joint relationship with People's Cultural Center (PECUC) and Grassroots Asia will insure a full package of services for up to 60 children. The home will provide 24-hour security, counseling services by a full-time social worker as well as food, shelter, medical and dental care, house mothers and basic learning materials. The home will also offer a variety of follow up care services such as re-uniting children with families (if appropriate), continued counseling and home visits, foster care, mainstreaming them into local schools and vocational training.



If you are interested in the subject of the trafficking of children, please attend the documentary film titled *The Day My God Died*, playing at the Wheeler Opera House on March 30. The film showing will be a benefit for *Sradha Bhaban* (see article pg. 3).

Grassroots Asia visited several brothel districts in Calcutta in January and is pursuing a fund-raising project for a crèche (nursery) for the children of sex workers. For information, phone 923-1200

GRASSROOTS ASIA AIDS PARTNERSHIP FOR DENTAL CARE IN ORISSA VILLAGES



Grassroots Asia took \$4,500. in dental supplies to Orissa in January for use by the Prajnana Mission mobile medical & dental unit that serves villages and schools for the poor. The dental supplies helped them serve a larger number of villages with upgraded dental care. Grassroots Asia also donated a portable Honda Generator to the mobile unit in February.

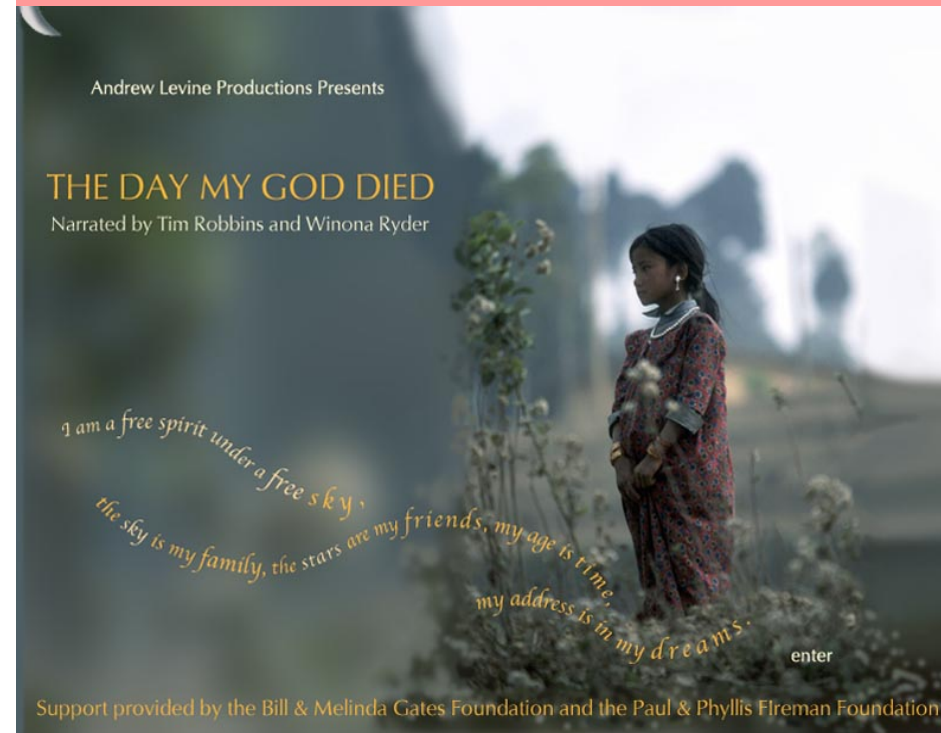
Medical Clinics Receive Vitamins for Lactating Mothers

Over 150 bottles of vitamins for lactating mothers were delivered in January to medical clinics in Balighai and Cuttack, Orissa. The clinics are operated by Prajnana Mission. The Balighai Medical Clinic is located near the town of Puri and the Cuttack Clinic is located about 60km north. They serve over 25,000 patients a year from the impoverished villages in the region and offer free medical and dental care. Prajnana Mission also operates a mobile medical/dental unit that travels to rural villages (see box below)



Emergency Relief Fund Helps Homeless Stay Warm In A Freezing Calcutta Cold Snap

During a cold snap in Calcutta this January, Grassroots Asia distributed blankets to the homeless. Eyes were as big as saucers when Grassroots Asia staff pulled up with a rickshaw full of blankets and began distributing them. The local rickshaw drivers, who were also homeless, were rewarded with blankets too.



The Day My God Died is a feature-length documentary that presents the stories of young girls whose lives have been shattered by the child sex trade. They describe the day they were abducted from their village and sold into sexual servitude as, "The Day My God Died."

for former sex slaves. Some victims have emerged to form their own underground railway out of slavery. Maili, trafficked at 19 along with her infant daughter, risks her life to help other girls. We see Jyoti, sold at age 12, lead a raid on a brothel resulting in the rescue of seven girls and the arrest of two brothel owners.

The film provides actual footage from the brothels of Bombay, known even to tourists as "The Cages," captured with "spy camera" technology. It weaves the stories of girls, and their stolen hopes and dreams, into an unforgettable examination of the growing plague of child sex slavery.

Children are the commodity consumed by the voracious and sophisticated international sex trade. Recruiters capture them, smugglers transport them, brothel owners enslave them, corrupt police betray them and customers rape and infect them. Every person in the chain profits except for the girls, who pay the price with their lives. Sexual servitude is a virtual death sentence. In Bombay alone, 90 new cases of HIV are reported every hour and the girls suffer an 80% HIV/AIDS infection rate.

Through the film we come to know victims such as Gina, sold into sex slavery at age 7 and beaten with sticks and aluminum rods. Anita, lured by a friend then drugged and sold at age 12, was beaten and threatened that she would be buried alive. Girls are gang-raped, beaten and forced to service up to 20 clients a day as they are held in perpetual sexual servitude.

The Day My God Died documents the tragedy of child sexual slavery and profiles the courageous abolitionists that need our support. For more information on the film, visit www.thedaymygoddied.com.

The film also introduces us to the heroes of the movement to abolish child sex slavery – non-profit organizations which rescue and care

Tickets are available at the Wheeler Box Office. 100% of ticket sales will benefit Sradha Bhaban, Grassroots Asia's rescue home for trafficked children.



**Tuesday
March 30
7pm
at the
Wheeler
Opera House
Tickets are \$15. at the
Wheeler Box Office
920-5770**

A Benefit for Sradha Bhaban Rescue Home (see article pg. 2) Andrew Levine Productions has generously donated the film for this benefit.

"On the Ground" with Four Dedicated Teachers

Four teachers from the Suddhananda Vidyalaya school, located 30km from Bhubaneswar, went with Grassroots Asia staff on a shopping spree for their students, ranging in age from 6 to 10 years.

Students from the school are from poor rural communities and pay under 50 rupees (\$1) per month for tuition, making it extremely difficult for the school to stay funded. The school is operated by monks who rely on donations.

The fulfilled wish list included a first aid kit, play materials (jumping ropes, soccer balls), a water filter, science equipment, wall maps and educational games.

