

Hariharananda Balashram Children Win Awards and Move to New School Building

Grassroots Asia visited the *Hariharananda Balashram* this past summer to visit the children and see the continuing construction. There are now three classes of 40 children each. The first students, who arrived in 2003, started their first year of elementary school this year and have moved into the newly built dormitory and school building. The nursery building continues to house the 80 younger children in Upper Kindergarten and Lower Kindergarten.

The children are showing unbelievable talents. Last year five gifted children from kindergarten level were invited to compete in Bhubaneswar, the state capital of Orissa, at the "Anjali National Children's Festival". Over a thousand boys and girls from all over India

were present at this event. Megha, Saras, Saran, Dipak and Om joined the different workshops featuring art, crafts and modern dance. Megha, in particular, did an outstanding job by performing Odissi dance, the ancient classical dance style from Orissa, at the closing function. The kindergarten class also joined an art competition at the "Vivekananda Art School" in Bhubaneswar. Megha won a special prize for his painting based on nature.

Prajana Mission started the school in 2002. Applications are taken from the poorest and most needy children from rural villages in Orissa. Children are hand selected in a lengthy interview process conducted in their villages by school management. Grassroots Asia came on board in 2003 to help supplement Prajana Mission's noble efforts.

"The Hariharananda Balashram continues to be the most successful project we have been associated with," says



Grassroots Asia's President, Debbie Pennington. "The monks who run the school and the staff, many who have given their lives in selfless service for the children, are some of the most dedicated we have seen. It's such a loving environment. That's its real secret!"



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**Mahanadi Floods:
Thousands Lost Life
and Property.
Prajana Mission and
Grassroots Asia
respond with food
and medical care**

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Flooding in Orissa Grassroots Asia and Prajana Mission Respond

Due to heavy monsoon and low pressure rain in the state of Orissa, almost all rivers and tributaries flooded in September, causing great loss of life and damage to countless homes in hundreds of villages. Volunteer doctors and staff from Prajana Mission, with the financial aid of Grassroots Asia, were quick to respond.

Six relief camps in Kendrapara and Puri districts treated 7,548 people who were offered



emergency food supplies and medical treatment. Prajana Mission is one of our implementing agencies in Orissa, India and was one of the first responders on the ground. Volunteers worked round the clock for several days, serving those who needed help.



After battling the floods, a villager is examined at a Prajana Mission health camp



Several bridges collapsed, flooding hundreds of villages. Many were cut off from supplies and aid workers struggled to get boats into the remote areas.

12-year-old Girl Seeks Aid for Younger Brother

Five year old Santos Sahoo is the youngest son of four children. His parents struggle to support their children by cultivating rice on a small plot of land in rural Orissa. Santos was born with four congenital and

Santos' 12-year old sister was



one of the selected students in Grassroots Asia's book scholarship program. After receiving her books, she ran to her nearby village to get her mother and brother, hoping and praying that Grassroots Asia would do something to help her brother. The mother and son approached the Grassroots Asia driver, shy to ask for help.

Arrangements were made for Santos to be examined by Dr. Ranjan Singh at the

Sema Hospital in Cuttack. Dr. Singh is well known for his surgical skill and is currently helping to coordinate an Int'l. Matching Grant with The Rotary Foundation and Grassroots Asia.

Santos' surgery was successfully performed by two surgeons and he spent two weeks recovering at the Sema Hospital. Three of the four congenital defects have been corrected. An additional surgical procedure will be conducted when he turns 15, but this will be minor.

Thanks to the Medical Dental Fund at Grassroots Asia, Santos will begin school next year with his peers.



One surgical procedure corrected Santos Sahoo's right leg and foot and he will now be able to walk normally

A Day at Ruchika Shraddha Bhaban: A Personal Story

Grassroots Asia visited *Ruchika's Shraddha Bhaban*, the rescue home that we began in 2004 with the cooperation of Ruchika Social Services in Bhubaneswar. The *Shraddha Bhaban* was the first rescue home in the State of Orissa to allow women to keep their children and to allow for longer stays, giving them a chance to attend school and vocational training classes. All services are supplied free of charge. Emphasis is placed on self-sufficiency and life management skills.

While we were visiting, a 15-year-old

girl ran away from the home after a dispute with the other children. She returned to the red light district in Bhubaneswar and was considering discontinuing her education. Grassroots Asia asked her friends if they wanted to write a letter to her, asking her to return.

Grassroots Asia President Debbie Pennington, along with the house mother, traveled to where she was staying to deliver the letter personally. It took a long time for her mother to trust us,

but once we gained her confidence, the discussion led to a tearful and beautiful scene as her mother encouraged her to return with us and pursue a more fulfilling life. The teenager read her friends

letter with tears in her eyes and decided to come back and commit to her education. It was a touching afternoon for all concerned. The women and children at *Shraddha Bhaban* are in fact one big family.



Children write a letter to their friend, prompting her return to *Shraddha Bhaban*

Samvav Youth Center Scholarship Program Proves Successful for Teens

In June 2004, Grassroots Asia and Sanlaap, a Kolkata based NGO, began renovation on a property in S. Kolkata to establish a care center for children and young teens. *The Samvav Youth Center* is now operating at full speed with over 100 youth participating in programs that they design and operate under the supervision of Souvik, the young man at Sanlaap that has dedicated his life to these children.



Teen programs have included computer training, youth leadership, counseling, tailoring, a library and now a scholarship fund for those who need help paying fees to stay in school. Scholarships were awarded to 15 youth this year who may otherwise have been forced to drop out.

The children have a safe haven at *Samvav Youth Center*, away from the dangerous brothel districts after school. They have made *Samvav* a second home and a solid base for exploring new opportunities in life. To see the transformation in them is truly inspirational.

Grassroots Asia and Sanlaap also purchased a school bus in 2005 which is used to serve 14 red light districts in Kolkata. The school bus provides hundreds of children, teens and young adults with transportation to care centers and vocational training.



School bus that transports hundreds of children from the red light districts of Kolkata to youth centers, medical care and vocational training

Many of these projects and programs have been funded, or funded in part, by a grant from the Duane Stranahan Estate of the Toledo Community Foundation. Grassroots Asia extends a warm thank you to the Duane Stranahan family and all of its donors for making this work possible.

Bijayalaxmi Rout Receives Scholarship to Ali College

16-year-old Bijayalaxmi Rout from Ali district of Orissa, was awarded a scholarship from the Grassroots Asia Tripathy Scholarship Fund. She lost her father five years ago and lives with her brother, mother and grandfather. Her grandfather took up a collection in her village for the first year's tuition, but it wasn't even close to being enough.

Bijayalaxmi's scholarship included college fees for two years, books, uniforms, and a bicycle for transportation. The scholarship amount was \$109.

The Tripathy Scholarship Fund was started by Dr. Ghana Tripathy, who currently lives in the US. Tripathy was born and raised in Orissa and the fund is for children attending the Mahu High School, originally built by Tripathy's brother.



Raincoats Distributed to Children During Monsoon

Raincoats of various sizes were distributed at two high schools just before the monsoon season began. Children who have to make long treks to school in the rain, and who cannot afford a raincoat, were selected to receive them.

Grassroots Asia to Spend Christmas/New Year in Orissa

Grassroots Asia will sponsor small tokens of love to children in Orissa and Kolkata in W. Bengal. Rather than materialistic holiday gifts, Grassroots Asia will distribute gifts that are practical and fun. Pens, notebooks, art supplies, books and new clothes will be in Santa's bag throughout the holidays.

Anyone wanting to help with the **2006 Santa Fund**, must send in their donation by 12/12. For more information, phone Grassroots Asia at (970) 923-1700. Donations may also be made on-line at GrassrootsAsia.org



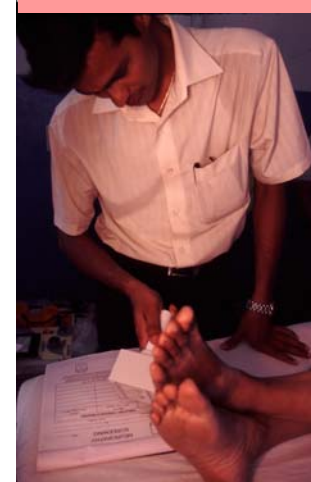
Books, Books & More Books!

- 120 additional children's books were delivered to the Prajnana Library at Patitapaban High School this past summer.
- Teacher's training manuals were delivered to three high schools.
- The Grassroots Asia scholarship program distributed hundreds of free textbooks to students in need of financial aid.
- The rotating classroom at Pattamundai High School looks like it is going to be a successful experiment. We will have details in the next issue.



Children line up at Mahu High School to get the new textbooks that they have not been able to afford. Grassroots Asia provides free books and scholarships to the poor

PRAJNANA MISSION ESTABLISHES DIABETES HEALTH CAMP AND NEW MEDICAL LIBRARY



Doctor examines a patient for diabetes. A new Diabetes Clinic was coordinated by the doctors at Prajnana Mission in June. Several cases were diagnosed and patients are now receiving proper medical care as a result.

Prajnana Mission conducts specialized health camps in Orissa and W. Bengal at their *Hariharananda Charitable Health Centers*. The clinics treat over 35,000 patients each year.

Their mobile medical and dental unit travels to more than 40 remote schools and 150 villages, treating over 6,000 patients each year that have no access to medical care. Villagers suffering from acute poverty and starvation do not have the ability to make it to a medical facility, so Prajnana Mission doctors go to them.

Grassroots Asia helps to fund doctor's salaries, the new ob-gyn unit and donates supplies for the mobile medical and dental unit. This year, we began a small medical library for the doctors. Anyone with quality and current medical books are welcome to contribute.

About Grassroots Asia...

Grassroots Asia identifies and empowers grassroots projects in Asia which offer a high social return on investment. Emphasis is placed on emergency relief, basic care and education for children and the underprivileged.

Grassroots Asia is a volunteer organization. 100% of contributions go directly to projects. There are NO administrative fees.

Grassroots Asia is a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

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