

SUMMER 2021 | ISSUE 2.2



ENDEARING CAUSES



Quarterly newsletter of Asha for Education, Silicon Valley chapter



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Asha for Education
Bringing hope through education
Silicon Valley chapter



Message From The Coordinator

Dear Friends of Asha,

Thank you for your continued support towards Asha for Education, Silicon Valley chapter. As you know, the second Covid-19 wave overwhelmed India's healthcare system and hit the underprivileged communities the hardest. In this edition we share how our projects have stepped up for their communities at this critical time. We highly appreciate your donations towards our urgent fundraisers for the Covid-19 response during this time.

With the increase in vaccinations, falling transmission rates and full reopening of the economy in California, all of our Silicon Valley and East Bay Team Asha programs are restarting. Our fund disbursements are also ramping up after some initial hurdles due to the FCRA changes that we mentioned in the previous edition. Moreover, our Edu Impact seed funding contest has received an exceptional response. We will be funding 2-3 new efforts after carefully reviewing the proposals. More updates to come in next editions.

If you would like to volunteer, donate, or learn more about our initiatives, visit sv.ashanet.org, or write to us at sv@ashanet.org. Thank you again for your continued support towards Asha for Education, Silicon Valley chapter.

- Kritika Upreti,
Chapter Coordinator



2021
so far...

19,530



Children Impacted

\$137,301



Disbursed

11



Projects Supported



Our Covid Response: Second Wave

6



Projects

\$19,428



Disbursed

0



Jobs Cut

0



Pay Cut

While the US prepares to reopen, the pandemic is far from over in India. The second wave of Covid-19 saw much larger numbers of cases and deaths across the country. Many Asha supported projects faced unique crises and were in need of quick relief efforts.

[Gramin Vikas Samiti](#), an organization in MP running child helpline centers saw child-marriage incidents rise amid isolation and fear in remote areas. Cases of anxiety suffered by affected children, including those that lost their parents or caregivers posed a tough challenge as well. GVS's relief proposal requested for monetary support for vaccination awareness campaigns, as well as medical kits, oxygen concentrators, Pulse oximeters, etc.

Project [VARUN](#) which is working on uplifting a highly remote district of Chandoli in UP had to respond quickly by providing masks, sanitizers and by spreading awareness as the virus and its variants started arriving at the doorsteps of these highly under-developed areas. Standards of living of the inhabitants of these villages and inaccessibility of hospitals - sometimes an hour's walk away - made the pandemic very challenging.





Our Covid Response: Second Wave

[Samagra Seva](#), an organization in Jamui, Bihar saw villagers suffer acute food shortage as a result of wage loss following the lock-down. Being out of work resulted in a lack of food severe enough to cause deaths due to starvation as well as malnutrition that could start a chain of lifelong disorders and infections. A rapid survey exposed the extent of food shortage and what Samagra Seva needed to put together to offset this shortage.

IMPACT

- GVS has received Rs. 5.6 Lakhs INR, which will be used to improve ambulance pipeline besides providing the pandemic healthcare essentials detailed before. Door to door vaccine awareness program is also ongoing.
- Project VARUN received close to Rs. 1.75 Lakhs with which they estimate a headcount of 2500 beneficiaries who would get access to masks and sanitizers.
- Samagra Seva received Rs. 5.75 Lakhs in total from central fund and Asha SV fund, which is expected to supply 370 families with food kits that can provide sustenance for 15 days.

Besides these projects, [Sankalp ek prayas](#), [JOSH](#) (via Asha fellow Aheli Chowdury) and [Snehalaya](#), have also received Covid relief and more information can be found on the project pages linked above. The pandemic has amplified the pre-existing issues that these organizations are serving to tackle, and provide perspective on how Asha SV can better identify and support its partners.





Team Asha Programs Status



TA Bikers at Scenic Road, Carmel

After [Team Asha Biking Program](#) was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19, we were all eager to relaunch a biking season in 2021. Due of the pandemic related regulations, we couldn't train biking novices (as TA Biking is reputed for). We opened up the registration for alumni only and were joined by a few experienced riders. For target rides, we usually rely on externally organized ones such as Giro Bello but they were currently not available. They were either postponed or cancelled due to the pandemic. So we planned our own in the Monterey-Carmel area. Having completed 10 weeks of training, 34 Team Asha riders started from Seaside, just north of Monterey and covered 63 miles with an elevation of 3300 ft.

We had 72 registrations for Season 1. We are already accepting registrations for Season 2. With restrictions lifting in California, we expect this to be a normal season with fundraising continuing till fall.



TA Runners at the end-of-the-year party, 2019

[Team Asha East Bay Running Program](#) is excited to start its in-person running program this year as most people are vaccinated by now and the county guidelines are starting to allow group runs outdoors. We had our info session in a park in an open setting on May 23rd. We are offering training for 10K, Half marathon and Full Marathon. We are targeting San Francisco half marathon on September 19th, and Two Cities or LA Marathon on November 9th for our full marathon program. 10k race is yet to be decided. Our Coaches will also be offering 4 weeks of virtual strength training and our first run will be on June 19th. We are hoping for a successful season with the goal to raise as much funds as we can for the programs we support in India.

[Team Asha Climbing Program](#) and [Team Asha South Bay Running Program](#) have started recently. More on these programs in the next edition of the Newsletter.



TA Programs Status



TA Swimmers at Donner Open Water Swim in July 2019

[Team Asha SV Triathlon Program](#) has started this year's training on 15th April and limited it to alumni only. Keeping in mind the Covid guidelines (during the beginning of the year), we decided to conduct the training virtually. Target races include "Sprint/Olympic Triathlon in Tri Santa Cruz" on 8th August, "IM 70.3 Santa Cruz" on 12th September and "IM California" on 24th October. The training plan includes a long workout during the weekends (depending on the target event) and shorter workouts during the week to build the stamina. The minimum fundraising limit has been set based on the target event and we are looking forward to raise funds in order to help support the chapter programs.

You can register for the Team Asha programs [here](#). Please stay tuned and watch out for TA programs communication in the future editions of the Newsletter.

Asha Spring Run



Athletes after completing the Spring Run

Another successful season of Asha Spring Run was completed in April, 2021. We would like to thank everyone who participated in the event by running, walking, biking, and swimming. Here is our stellar summary in spite of an entirely virtual event:

- Number of participants: 335
- Total miles ran/walked/hiked: 26,100 miles
- Total miles biked: 3,647 miles
- Total yards swam: 70,400 yards

With the generosity of our sponsors and corporates that matched some of our volunteers hours, we were able to raise more than \$13,000! A big shout out to our sponsors: DigitalOnUs (@digitalonus), Visoochi Realty (@Visoochi1), Madras cafe (<http://www.madrascafe.us/>), and Sports Basement (@sportsbasement).

Thank you again participants, sponsors, and volunteers for your contributions and all the help!



Volunteer Spotlight



Vishal joined Asha SV as a new volunteer

Vishal was introduced to Asha as soon as he arrived in the US back in 1998 by fellow grad school seniors who were hosting him. The mission of Asha resonated with Vishal so much that he volunteered with Asha Madison (WI) throughout his grad school. Like many fortunate Indian students who received a good education, Vishal was bothered by the lack of the same opportunities for millions of others. His goal is to impact the lives of these kids in any way possible so as to help them in the direction of a transformative change in their future.

Recently, Vishal has been part of the projects team at Asha Silicon Valley. He has also taken up a personal passion project - a fundraiser for a library in one of Asha SV's projects supporting 200 kids.

In his own words, "My fellow volunteers are awesome people to hang out with. I made friends 20 years ago while volunteering for Asha and I am still in touch with many of them. In addition, Asha is a very grassroots driven organization where everyone's opinion matters - which makes one feel very welcome."

Success Story



Hansraj joined Amazon India as shift-in-charge

Hansraj comes from the village of Pratabgharh in U.P. He was working with his parents since he was six. He used to work on horse carts to transport bricks, for 10-12 hours every day. In 2003, he came to Apna Skool at Kalra brick kilns in Kanpur. He found about Apna Skool from other brick kiln children studying there. Initially, he used to visit the center irregularly, mainly due to the temptation of the food but became a regular student and joined the hostel in 2006 after interaction with the founders. His parents were initially reluctant to send him but later agreed after several discussions. He completed his 10th and 12th while studying at Apna Ghar (the hostel program). He then started preparing for Polytechnic exam at Apna Kendra with the help of IIT Kanpur students and got selected in U.P. Polytechnic. He got admission in Rajkiya Polytechnic College Sarasvati, Gorakhpur in Diploma in Computer Science and Engineering and scored 70%. He has joined Amazon India in Indore and is working as shift-in-charge.



Projects Showcase: VARUN

Voluntary Action for Rural Upliftment and Networking - VARUN, has identified isolated rural areas with extreme backwardness in the districts of Chandauli and Sonbhadra in Eastern Uttar Pradesh as well as one center across the border in Bihar, and runs informal schools in those villages to ensure children are not devoid of access to education. The 10 centers that VARUN is currently running in the villages of - Nauvanar, Baluhiya, Bhitari, Piranchuva, Nandana, Dhobahi, Shahpur, Bhaganda, Jhariyawan, and Aurawantand, are in remote pockets of our country that the rest of the country does not know exists in 2021. Each of these villages is either bordering or inside forest areas and is quite a distance away from privileges that we usually take for granted - roads, water, electricity, hospitals, etc. These villages were naxal bastions about 15 years ago, but the CRPF presence has ensured peace in the region today. Click [here](#) to learn more about project VARUN.

18

YEARS OF SUPPORT

\$213,026

TOTAL FUNDS DISBURSED



Site visit report

Progress report

"Be the change you want to see in the world."

MAHATMA GANDHI