



Hand In Hand USA

One drop can make a difference

A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization for humanitarian aid

WINTER 2022



**Education breeds confidence.
Confidence breeds hope.
Hope breeds peace.**

- Confucius

NEWSLETTER

Heartfelt Greetings

Warmest greetings, Hand In Hand USA friends! It has been a busy and productive few months for us. We have had several very successful fundraisers and much to tell you about life at Balashram, including a heartwarming and inspiring feature story on one of Balashram's most promising students, Sandeep Kumar.

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter!

Sincerely,
The Hand In Hand USA Team

Hariharananda Balashram

Hand In Hand USA ("HIH USA") Treasurer, Bhavani Ravi, and her 16 year old daughter, Kavya Ravi, visited Balashram in July.

Bhavani was able to speak to Balashram administration and faculty and she asked them about what makes these [Balashram] kids stand out. They are remarkable, talented kids, but what is it about them that is different from other kids? And the answer she received was that Balashram students are generous in spirit and unselfishly give to each other when anyone is in need. In speaking with the kids, Bhavani recognized that they feel a strong desire to give back. These kids so deeply appreciate all the opportunities that they have been given, that they, in turn, feel personally compelled to give back to their communities in any and every way they can.

As Balashram is a home to these kids, many of the kids return to Balashram to tutor, assist in classrooms, provide medical care and speak to students of life outside Balashram. They want to give back to the place that gave them everything.

Kavya spent time with the 11th and 12th grade boys and girls where they had an opportunity to ask questions about her life in Chicago and get a glimpse of how similar and different life is for a 16 year old in India compared to the US. She also distributed letters to the students written by HIH USA supporters' children, ranging in age from 5-17. The students were delighted to receive letters from "friends" in the U.S. and promptly wrote back. As much as the children at Balashram's lives differ from those they received letters from, they easily found commonality in books, hobbies and love of music and all the children - in India and in the U.S. - very much enjoyed writing and receiving letters.



Chicago youth volunteer Kavya Ravi spends time with Balashram students in the girls hostel

“Balashram students feel an intense need to give back”

Student Spotlight

Sandeep Kumar



Balashram's graduate student Sandeep Kumar

One of three children, Sandeep Kumar came from the Purba Dhumat Village in the Kendrapara District of Odisha, where his mother was raising them on her own after their father left them. Sandeep's mother who was illiterate, was unable to care for her three children, one of whom had epilepsy and other health issues, so she moved in with her paternal family. Still, it was a struggle, and she, unfortunately, was unable to send any of her children to school until Sandeep entered Balashram in 2008 as a Pre-K student when he was just 4 years old.

Sandeep had a passion for song and dance. He loved being at Balashram and happily participated in as many activities as he could: song, dance, sports and more. He was a thoughtful and attentive child who later organized and lead many of the programs at Balashram.

A brilliant student, with a special interest in math, Sandeep secured placement in the 96th percentile

on his public exams in both Grade 10 and Grade 12. Outscoring many students across the nation, Sandeep is also the HIGHEST scorer in the history of Balashram!

In addition to his academic success, Sandeep participated in tests conducted by The Science Olympiad Foundation and completed Odisha State Bharat Scouts and Guides where he won the Rajya Puraskar State Award in 2009 at just 5 years old. He also completed his Sangeet Bhusan Final in Tabla (Indian percussion instrument).

Upon completion of his studies at Balashram this year,

Sandeep is just one of the many students who are able to overcome so many obstacles and obtain a stellar education at Balashram and make something of themselves.

Sandeep plans to join the National Defense Academy ("NDA"), which is a leading defense institute in India, and he intends to become an officer. He is currently taking an NDA training class for entrance into the NDA.



Sandeep and his mother during his early years at Balashram

Balashram Activities & Celebrations

The Param Vir Chakra Award

On July 7th, Sri Yogendra Singh Yadav, now-retired Subedar Major and Honorary Captain PVC visited Balashram to speak to the students and staff of his life as an officer in the Indian Army. Yadav is the recipient of The Param Vir Chakra Award, India's highest military decoration, awarded for displaying grand acts of bravery in the presence of the enemy during wartime.

In 1999, during the Kargil War, Indian troops were held hostage by Pakistani troops. Yadav and his fellow soldiers were pinned down by machine gun fire from an enemy bunker ("Tiger Hill Top") 150 meters away. Yadav bravely crawled up on a steep, snow-covered ledge and charged forward into the enemy bunker through a blaze of automatic fire. Yadav took two bullets to his chest and one bullet in his forearm.

Though bleeding profusely, he continued his charge and in hand-to-hand combat, killed three enemy soldiers.

Inspired by what they were witnessing, the rest of Yadav's platoon charged forward as well and captured the soldiers at Tiger Hill Top. Yadav is a true war hero and he spoke to Balashram students about the Kargil War and the honor he felt being a part of the Indian Army and having received the prestigious Param Vir Chakra Award for his bravery.

The students welcomed him in grand fashion with singing, dancing and ceremony and listened intently to his inspirational message. Sri Yogendra Singh Yadav is an inspiration to us all, especially to the young students of Balashram.



Param Vir Chakra Award Winner Sri Yogendra Singh Yadav

Yadav, now 42, was bestowed this medal when he was only 19 years old, making him the youngest person ever to receive the award.



Rajya Puraskar

On June 18th, two Balashram students were awarded the Rajya Puraskar, a State Award, from Governor Raj Bhavan of Bhubneswar for their outstanding performance in Bharat Scout & Guides.

Indian Independence Day
Indian Independence Day was celebrated in a big way on August 15th, 2022 marking India's 75th year free from British rule.



Volunteer Needs

Hand In Hand USA is a volunteer-run organization and volunteers are vital to the operations of the organization.

Bookkeeper/Donor Database Manager: Experience with Microsoft Suite is required. QuickBooks experience preferred but not required. This position will require data entry of donations and donors, journal entries, reconciliations, month-end closing, quarterly reporting of financials and year end reporting for tax filings. Role will also assume responsibility for monthly and annual donor letters.

Web Developer: Experience in website administration or website maintenance with familiarity in WordPress, PHP, Database and troubleshooting website or server related issues. This role involves managing and maintaining our WordPress website, supervising periodic updates and ensuring the smooth operations of the back-end.

Graphic Designer: Experience with Adobe Creative Suite applications, primarily: InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop. Good understanding of style guides to create artwork consistent with the branding of the organization. Working knowledge of collaborating through the google drive and Canva is a plus.

Fundraising

Patel Fundraising Event

On Saturday, June 25th, HIH USA Board Member, Dr. Ankit Patel and Dr. Meeta Jain Patel, held a fundraiser at their beautiful home in Hinsdale! The theme of the party was Jamaican and guests were treated to live Jamaican-themed music and food. The beautiful evening spent outside raised almost \$20,000! Much thanks to the Patels for opening their home to HIH USA family and friends.



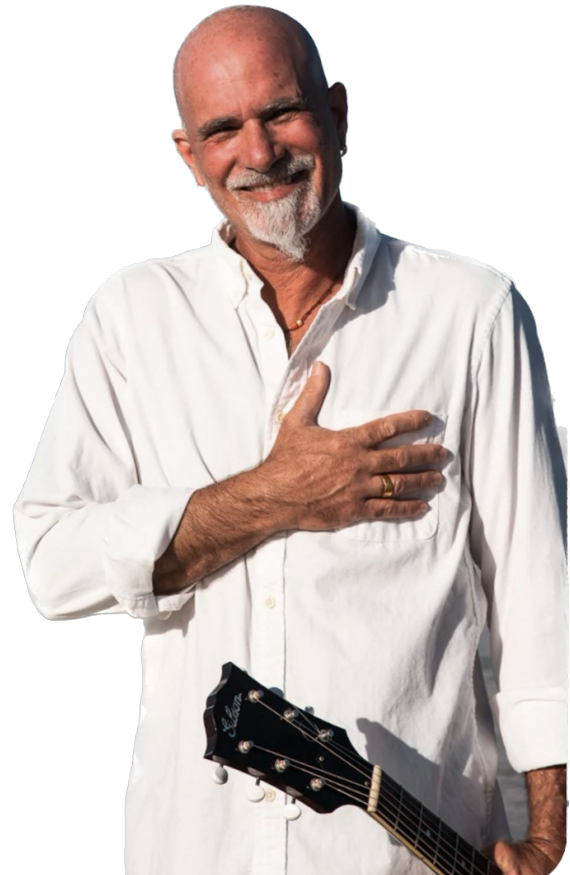
Dr. Meeta Jain Patel and Dr. Ankit Patel

Joy Concert

HIH USA collaborated with HIH Europe to present "Joy Concerts, Love & Peace for the World" on July 30th. This charity concert was virtual and featured the beautiful music of Amir Paiss, an Israeli-Australian musician, poet and artist who facilitates connection through music. The event was live-streamed from Costa Rica and enjoyed by viewers from all over the US, Europe, India and South America.



Friends enjoying the evening



Amir Paiss, singer and musician

Giving On The Green Golf Fundraiser

Amit and Ritu Khanduja hosted their “Annual Giving on the Green” private golf event on September 4th. Golfers met at White Eagle Golf Course at 11:00 am for lunch and a game of golf on one of White Eagle’s elite courses, originally designed by Arnold Palmer Design Group. Immediately following the game, golfers and guests headed back to White Eagle’s stunning indoor ballroom for an evening of cocktails, food, live music and auction items to bid on. There were also brief presentations on HIH USA and what you, as supporters, can do to help. Because of your generosity, we were able to raise funds to support the educational needs of over 340 children for an entire year!

Many thanks to our generous sponsors, to our Youth Volunteers for all their dedication and hard work and, of course, to the Khandujas for hosting this phenomenal event.



Evening reception and presentation in the ballroom



Trophy winners of the golf event



Naperville Walk

HIH USA supporters met at the picturesque Herrick Woods in Naperville on Saturday, September 10th to “Walk a Mile, Educate a Child”. It was a beautiful sunny day and many showed up to walk in support.

Dallas Walkathon

On Saturday, November 12th, Dallas held their 13th annual walkathon. Going through the beautiful trails of Lewisville Lake, participants enjoyed the views and kids had access to the park for rides and games.



Donations can be made in the following ways

- **On our website :**
handinhandusa.org/donate
- **You may TEXT “ONE DROP” to 44321 to donate**
- **Please scan the code below to make a donation**



As always, thank you to our supporters. Balashram is able to do so much to help the young, poor children of India by providing them with a quality education in a nurturing, healthy and loving environment. Balashram is home to hundreds of children who otherwise have no home. As Balashram is fully-funded by donations, without you, none of this would be possible. We appreciate your support in the form of donations, attendance at our events, sponsorship and helping us to raise awareness of Hand In Hand USA and what we do. You are making a difference.

Thank you,
The Hand In Hand USA Team

Getting Involved

If you are interested in organizing an event to raise awareness or funds to support the charitable activities of Hand In Hand USA, please allow us to help you get started! Please contact: handinhand@handinhandusa.org.

Gift Matching Program

We take this opportunity to remind all our patrons that Motorola Inc., General Electric, Bank of America, AMD Foundation, JP Morgan, Chase, Microsoft, Yahoo, VMWare, Wells Fargo and Verizon are matching dollar-to-dollar donations made to our organization. We encourage all our patrons to check with their respective employers/organizations and let us know what, if any, paperwork is required to add Hand In Hand USA to gift-matching programs. Please contact treasurer@handinhandusa.org with any questions.

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