



Hand In Hand USA

One drop can make a difference

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

WINTER 2023



**“The best way to find yourself
is to lose yourself
in the giving of others”**

- Ghandi

NEWSLETTER

Warm Greetings

We at Hand In Hand USA (“HIH USA”) hope you are having a wonderful start to the holiday season!

This newsletter highlights recent happenings at Hariharananda Balashram (“Balashram”), HIH USA fundraising events and a special report on one of our most well-renowned and successful health centers. It also features the journey of Balashram student, Gurudev Panda, and his beautiful experience at Balashram.

Sincerely,

The Hand In Hand USA Team

Hariharananda Balashram

Balashram has a new principal, Dr. Binapani Dash. Dr. Dash brings with her 36 years of experience in the field of teaching throughout India, including a role as principal at SVS School, Odisha, another residential school. Although Dr. Dash has only been at Balashram a short while, she has already fallen in love with the school and its students and has fresh, new ideas on ways in which Balashram can even better serve its students.

One of these ideas is consistent, continued educational training for the teachers. Teachers will begin to attend monthly idea-sharing forums, as well as participating in continuing education programs annually.

Students in grades X-XII will start participating in career counseling classes to help them begin to focus on a career path. Balashram will keep in contact with graduates in the event they need continued support and/or guidance, which will then be provided to them.

Plans for students also include field trips to expose them to the world beyond Balashram and to learn life skills. As Balashram is home and school for these children, they lead somewhat sheltered lives in terms of real-world experience. Dr. Dash would like to take them to local markets and merchants and allow the children to engage in purchase transactions using actual money. This may seem like a small thing, but it is something that the students are not currently exposed to at Balashram. The goal is to ensure that once the children graduate, they will have the confidence and skills to live independently and care for themselves.

We wholeheartedly welcome Dr. Dash to Balashram and are thrilled for her to begin implementing her plans for the school, its teachers and the students!



“I am fortunate to have the opportunity to be a part of Balashram family.”

Dr. Binapani Dash

Student Spotlight

Gurudev Panda



Gurudev Panda, currently in the 12th grade, was admitted into Balashram in 2010 when he was just four years old. Gurudev does not like to speak much about his life before Balashram, but it was a difficult one, and he feels loved and nurtured like never before at Balashram.

“By getting love and care from Balashram, I forgot the sad memories of my village. I got much love by the teachers, babas and mas.”

Gurudev is an excellent student. In 7th grade, he was honored as “Student of the Year” because of his top-notch grades in academics as well as his participation and enthusiasm in vocational studies, such as plumbing, electrical house wiring, cooking and tailoring. In the 10th grade, he received special awards from the Sahodaya Board (a Board created by the Central Board of Secondary Education (“CBSE”) to exchange ideas with other CBSE schools striving for excellence in education). Gurudev remains

humble and grateful for all he has achieved and has deep love and respect for his teachers.

“By the blessings of my teachers, Guruji and Gurudev, I am very successful in all works. Their blessings will always remain with me and help me a lot to be successful in my future.”

Gurudev leads a happy life and feels extremely blessed to be at Balashram.

“Balashram teaches us how to be good people in the society and be self independent.”

“Balashram is just like a big tree in which children like me are taking shelter.”

“I offer all my gratitude to Balashram for supporting me and a special thanks to Hand In Hand who supports Balashram for the well being of the needy peoples.”

We wish Gurudev all the best in his last year at Balashram and we thank you, our supporters, for helping secure him with such a happy, healthy upbringing and so many opportunities for a bright future.

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“We rise by lifting others”

Robert Ingersoll

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Balashram Activities & Celebrations

Shakti Rupena Samsthita: Empowering Young Girls

Balashram hosted a one-day program, entitled, “Shakti Rupena Samsthita” on June 24. Nearly 1,000 female students participated in this program, which was open to Balashram students, as well as 63 other schools and 18 colleges. This insightful program focused on female empowerment and touched on topics such as: defined life goals, purity of one’s body and mind, self reliance, fearlessness and holistic learning. There were also segments on practicing yoga and meditation.



Alumni Meet

On June 25, Balashram held its first Alumni Meet. Balashram graduates were welcomed to this celebration with beautiful hand-made student greeting cards and flower bouquets. One by one, former students took center stage to share cherished memories of their Balashram as the current students listened intently. Amongst these students was Bismruti Nyak, a recent graduate who is an English Faculty Member at Marsa Ghai College in Kendrapara.



A Nurturing Excellence: Student Orientation Programs

July 11 through August 16, inspirational sessions were held at Balashram with the focus being students ultimately becoming well-rounded individuals. Some of the topics covered during this month-long program included: How to Lead an Ideal Life, Existence of God, Positive Attitude, Prayer Chanting and General Discussion, Life Goals, Meditation and discussions on how students will one day contribute to the nation.

Indian Independence Day

On August 15, the students celebrated the 77th anniversary of Indian Independence Day. Two distinguished students delivered heartfelt speeches on the freedom fighters who played crucial roles in India’s struggle for independence. This event celebrated not only a historical event, but also a commitment by all the people of India to uphold the values of freedom, unity and progress .



Felicitation Ceremony: A Celebration Of Excellence And Achievement

The spirit of achievement and excellence was celebrated on July 15, as Balashram students participated in the Annual Felicitation Ceremony hosted by Sahodaya School Complex Eastern Chapter. This event honored exceptional performances during the 2022-23 academic year, featuring a variety of competitions. Different schools hosted specific events, with Balashram hosting The Inter-School Yoga Competition. Among the winners were 22 Balashram students in categories such as essay writing, drawing competitions, yogasana, relay races, a Hindi debate competition and several sports competitions. The winners were bestowed with recognition and awards presented by the Regional Officer of CBSE, Bhubaneswar. Congratulations to all who participated.



Medical Outreach

The Hariharananda Charitable Health Centre (HCHC) in Jagatpur, Odisha stands as the largest, most esteemed, and well-established among all health centers in Odisha. Its journey began humbly in 1999 as a small day clinic in a garage in Cuttack, Odisha. In 2014, the clinic underwent a transformation, relocating to a three-story structure in the Jagatpur district. Thirteen retired medical professionals from various fields, driven by altruism, offered their services entirely free of charge. Additionally, two other medical professionals accepted modest salaries, while the remaining staff comprised dedicated volunteers.

The Jagatpur Center quickly outshone others, attracting over 800 people within 15 months of its opening. Esteemed political, academic, and medical professionals from Odisha joined the celebration, and as word spread, it was hailed as God's gift to the poorest of the poor. Today, individuals from across India seek healthcare at the Jagatpur Health Center, renowned for its medical services, including a physiotherapy department, dental clinic, pathology department, and specialized surgical treatments for diabetic foot ulcers and burns. The center boasts 43 doctors providing free medical advice and treatments, with an additional 13 staff members attending to 200-300 individuals daily—many of whom would otherwise lack access to healthcare.

Equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic tools and software for documenting medical histories, the center offers radiology services, x-rays, and blood tests, ensuring comprehensive diagnostics. The facility maintains a clean, hygienic environment, with warm and friendly volunteers creating a welcoming atmosphere. Although all HCHC services are free, those who can afford it willingly contribute, enabling the center to continually enhance its offerings. Beyond immediate medical care, the Jagatpur Health Center is taking proactive steps to educate individuals on maintaining their health. Initiatives include training programs and physiotherapeutic yoga sessions aimed at preventive healthcare, recognizing the intrinsic connection between good health and the fight against poverty.

Looking to the future, the vision for Jagatpur involves further expansion and improvement, aspiring to evolve from its impressive day clinic status into a fully-fledged hospital.

Fundraising



Dallas Table Tennis

Dallas hosted a table tennis event on Aug 19. Nearly 100 players participated in the event and \$3,000 was raised.

Atlanta Walk-A-Thon

Atlanta hosted its first walk-a-thon this year on August 19. The walk was held on the beautiful trails of Chattahoochee Pointe Park in Forsyth County, Georgia. Nearly 150 attendees walked in support and approximately \$12,000 was raised.



Dallas Walk-A-Thon

The annual Dallas walkathon was held on October 28 at Ridgepointe Park, The Colony, Texas. Approximately 80 people attended in support and over \$10,000 was raised.



Giving On The Green Golf Fundraiser

Hosted by Amit and Ritu Khanduja, the annual “Giving on the Green” event took place at White Eagle Country Club in Naperville, Illinois on September 16. This year’s event included pickleball and platform tennis as well as 9 holes of golf. After the games, guests and their families and friends enjoyed an Evening Reception in White Eagle’s brand-new, indoor/outdoor event space, “The Retreat House”. The reception included cocktails, food, a live auction and presentations from HIH USA Executive Board members.

Because of your generous donations, we raised funds to support the educational needs for over 200 children.



Golfers enjoyed 9 holes on a Saturday afternoon



Evening reception at the outdoor event space “Retreat House”

Maui Relief Virtual Fundraiser

Thank you to all who donated to our online fundraiser to help Maui recover after the devastating wildfires in August. We were able to donate \$7,000 to The Hawaii Community Foundation in order to assist with on-the-ground relief efforts.

Chicago Walk-A-Thon

On September 10, HIH USA supporters gathered at Mallard Lake Forest Preserve in Hanover Park, Illinois. Thank you to the participants for supporting the cause.



“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give”

Winston Churchill



Hand In Hand USA needs your financial support in order to maintain projects that are already in place and the multiple initiatives that will come in the future. Any contribution proportionate to your means is gratefully welcomed as a gift of love and trust, and makes a great difference to people in need.

Hand In Hand USA is run by volunteer service with 95% of all proceeds and contributions going directly to the projects themselves

Due to inflation and the increased cost of the basic necessities for life, the costs for child sponsorship at Balashram have increased. The new costs are as follows:

Education for One Child: \$360 annually (this cost did not increase)

Education Lifetime Sponsorship: \$4,500

Room & Board for One Child: \$650 annually

Room & Board Lifetime Sponsorship: \$8,000

Education, Room & Board for One Child: \$1,010 annually

This is the first increase Hariharananda Balashram has needed to make in many years. Please consider increasing your support if you are able.

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**



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.