



# Hand In Hand USA

One drop can make a difference

A non-profit organization for humanitarian aid

WINTER 2025



**NEWSLETTER**

Warm Greetings,

Please enjoy our Winter Newsletter, featuring Balashram student Pantu Munda and recent updates.

Sincerely,

The Hand In Hand USA Team

## Hariharananda Balashram

### Academics

For the 2025–26 academic year, Balashram has a total enrollment of 538 students (277 boys and 261 girls), supported by 36 teaching staff and four non-teaching staff members. Based on students' performance, as well as the school's facilities such as infrastructure, laboratories, and trained teachers, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has extended Balashram's affiliation through March 2030.

To support students performing below grade level, special remedial classes are offered, providing individualized attention, ongoing evaluation, and the use of visual aids including diagrams, charts, and videos. These efforts have consistently helped students progress to the expected academic level.

Throughout the school, children are encouraged to express themselves freely in whatever way they choose, whether through sports, writing, or art, promoting confidence and holistic development.

### IIT-JEE FOUNDATION CLASSES

The Indian Institute of Technology-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) is one of the most competitive entrance examinations for students pursuing professional courses such as engineering. Beginning in August 2025, Mathematics and Science classes for students in Class VI to Class X are held for two hours each week at the school, with one hour devoted to Mathematics and one hour devoted to Science.

This year, two students qualified for the IITs!

### COLLABORATION WITH IIT

In September 2025, Balashram collaborated with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Kharagpur, to form an Academic Advisory Committee comprising distinguished academics. The purpose of this Committee is to prepare selected students for national level competitive exams to secure admission into institutes like IIT. To qualify for these classes, psychological profiling is conducted and the highest ranking students are selected. Online classes are being held for high school students in Chemistry and Math. Classes for Physics and Biology will be available soon.

## COLLABORATION WITH COMMIT TO CHANGE (C2C)

Balashram's collaboration with C2C continues to benefit the female students by providing ongoing studies in English and other subjects. One of the students, a Class XII graduate who secured admission to a B.Sc. Nursing program, has been awarded a scholarship from C2C to pursue her studies. This scholarship covers the majority, if not 100 percent, of her required fees.

## PROJECT CHRYSALIS

Project Chrysalis continues to support students pursuing an education beyond Class X.

FUTURE PLANS			
What's next?	Girls	Boys	Total
Pursuing Sciences for XI-XII	6	5	11
Pursuing Humanities for XI-XII	10	4	14
Joined Industrial Training Center (ITI)	0	3	3

## Balashram Activities & Celebrations

### INVESTITURE CEREMONY

In this formal event, the newly-elected student leaders of Balashram, such as the head boy, head girl, and prefects, were officially entrusted with their responsibilities.



## PLANTATION PROGRAM

High school students conducted a plantation program on the grounds of Balashram. The students were very enthusiastic and did a commendable job under the supervision of the Principal and the teachers.



## BALASHRAM GRADUATES GIVE BACK AFTER MUSADIA HOUSE FIRE

On May 2nd at approximately 2:00 am, a fire broke out in the nearby village of Musadia, only 800 meters from Balashram. The fire engulfed an entire house with a straw roof, although thankfully, no one was hurt. A team of former students from Balashram, along with local residents, arrived at the site at 8:30 am to assess the damage and speak with the affected family. Shortly thereafter, essential items were provided to the victims of the incident. These included raw food supplies as well as clothing, utensils, and some cattle feed. The family gratefully accepted the support, and the students were thankful for the opportunity to help.



# Student Spotlight

## Pantu Munda



**Pantu's** father passed away when he was a very young boy, leaving his mother to struggle to provide for Pantu and his four siblings. She worked contract jobs on civil road construction projects. During the construction of the road to Pattamundai, she noticed Hariharananda Balashram and enrolled Pantu there in 2007.

Initially, Pantu was homesick and would look longingly out the window to see if his mother was coming to take him home. Gradually, with the support of friends, Balashram became a haven for him, and he grew up enjoying subjects like English, Arts, and Sports. Pantu completed Grade XII at Balashram in 2021 and graduated from Kendrapara Autonomous College in 2024 with a B.A. (Honours) in English. He is now pursuing his post-graduate degree in English at Utkal University through distance learning. Wanting to become financially independent and support his family

while continuing his studies, and following the advice of Balashram's Principal and Swamijis, Pantu decided to apply for a job. He took the Postal GDS exams, including CUET (Common University Entrance Test at the Central Level) and CPET (Common Post Graduate Entrance Test at the State Level).

He says,

**“I decided on Postal because it will be a job in hand; I can be financially independent, and I can teach tuition classes too since I've completed my graduation. The salary starts from Rs. 12,000 and will gradually go up to Rs. 29,000, including allowances and perks.”**

Today, Pantu works while also pursuing his higher studies. He lives with his mother in their own home in Bhubaneswar.

When asked about his core beliefs, Pantu replied, “I do all work sincerely—this I learnt from Balashram. Whatever I become, first I will be a good person. I will not worry about money; whatever I have, I will be happy with my family and do good for all.”

Pantu aspires to become a good English teacher one day. “I can't ever repay what my school did... I will become a good citizen, and the aura of a person is such that you know he is a good person... If anyone asks, we can say we are a 'Balashram product.' Seeing us, they will know we are from Balashram.”

Wishing Pantu Munda the very best!

# Healthcare



## COLLABORATION WITH EYES ON AFRICA

In collaboration with Eyes on Africa, approximately 200 pairs of glasses were distributed during a health camp led by volunteer Dr. Anitha Kankar in a village in Andhra Pradesh. An optometrist assisted with eye examinations, and everyone was very grateful for the eyeglasses.

Some recipients said now they can read the names of their medicines clearly. One said they will be able to clean the rice better now as they can see the rocks (people clean rice before cooking as there are rocks in the cheaper rice they get).

Seeing the smiles on their faces was priceless.

## LV PRASAD EYE INSTITUTE - VISION SCREENING

Eye examinations were done for the nursery children by a team from LV Prasad Eye Institute for 120 students. Out of 120 students, 50 students were identified who required further treatment and free eye glasses were given out to those who needed them.



- ▶ HCHC Jagatpur continues to be the most visited and technologically advanced of our five clinics, with doctors seeing over 100 patients per day.
- ▶ Free mobile general health camps, specialized health camps, and dental health camps continue to be offered in urban slums as well as remote rural areas.

## Fundraising

- ▶ Dedicated to our Community of North Carolina (DOC NC), a non-profit organization led by school children, raises funds for various charities. In June of this year, HIH USA was chosen as their charity, and they donated \$5,000 to our organization.
- ▶ The Atlanta Walk took place in August and was led by youth volunteers, including Troop 205 Boy Scouts, Bharatakala dance students, and students from nearby communities. The event featured motivational speeches about the Balashram students, food, and games. It had a large turnout and raised over \$15,000!
- ▶ Both Chicago and Dallas each held successful walkathons this fall as well.

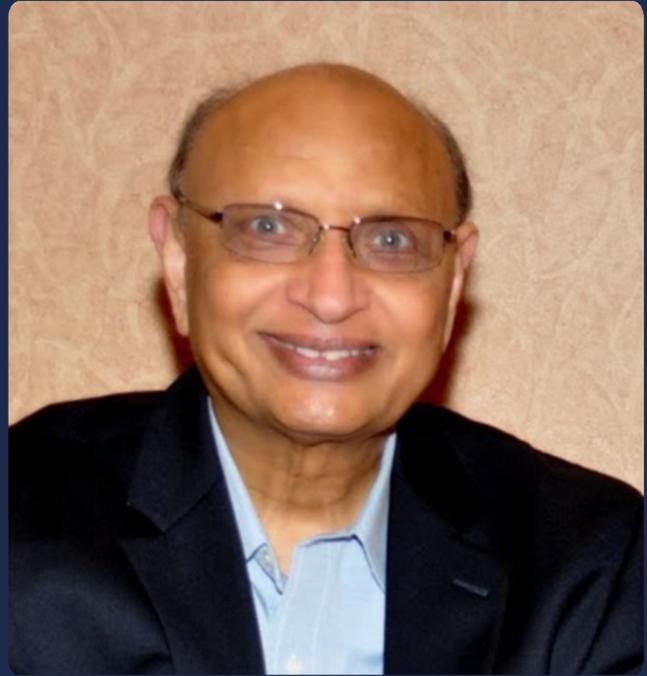
## Upcoming Fundraiser



## IN LOVING MEMORY OF MAHENDRA AMBALAL SHAH

Hand In Hand USA mourns the passing of our dear friend and dedicated Board Member for over 25 years, Mahendra Ambalal Shah, on September 9, 2025. Mahendra Baba was devoted to meditation and lived each day with joy, gratitude and a deep commitment to service.

May his noble soul rest in peace, and may his legacy of love and service continue to inspire us all.



We graciously thank you for your generous and continued support. Your donations enable us to continue with projects that are already in place as well as the multiple initiatives that arise each year.

Any contribution 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.

**Education for One Child: \$360 annually**  
**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**

**Donations can be made in the following ways:**

- [handinhandusa.org/donate](https://handinhandusa.org/donate)
- Please scan the code below to make a donation



### 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: [fundraising@handinhandusa.org](mailto:fundraising@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](mailto:treasurer@handinhandusa.org) with any questions.

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