



2004-2005 Report

Dear Friends of KHEL,

We have lived to see disaster, on a large scale: the Tsunami in Asia, Hurricane Katrina and the recent earthquake in Kashmir. These are devastating occurrences, justifiably drawing our attention and compassion. But there are small occurrences every day which are just as distressing: a hungry child with her face pressed against the window of an expensive restaurant, the family who seeks aid too late to save their son, young women trying to study while they slowly starve. The heartbreak of the everyday can be overwhelming, each instance of suffering seems like a pebble in an unstoppable avalanche, and so we turn our backs, feeling too small and helpless to turn the tide of tragedy.

But we're not helpless. As you read this report, make note of how little it costs to sustain a KHEL program. Each person who contributes to this effort, whether as an employee, volunteer or donor has made a difference. With your help KHEL will continue to offer aid and hope to those in need. The placement of one pebble can avert a rockslide. Change a life and you change the world.

KINDNESS

KHEL is deeply indebted to many donors around the world. To our extended family - the Mohan Rams, Bhajans, Aryas, Ilangovans, Persauds, Haases and Sawhs – thanks for your contributions, tangible and intangible. To Katy Guard and friends; Torey Lee Farmer; Ruth Schmidt and the Italian group, thank you from the kids and staff at KHEL. Mabel Nichols at Coat of Many Colors, Suman Anand, the Babcocks and so many others help to keep us afloat. A special THANK YOU! To the Humes for their generous donation. To our volunteers: Marcia Larson and Pat Hickey at the Meditation Center, Rachel Dykoski for online research, and Mayanne Krech for helping us stay organized. Pat Leyton, Diane McDonald and the owner of The Tea Source in St. Paul have all shown their support by selling our handmade textile products. Thank you for helping KHEL on its road to sustainability. Also deserving of thanks is Mr. Bhalla in Dehradun for his reliably prompt delivery of the dry rations. Thanks you to the KHEL Board in India and our tireless Administrative staff, especially Beni Bhatt, Manager, who turned down a job offer to stay with KHEL!

The teachers were awarded a long awaited and much needed salary increase. They now receive their salaries and bonuses via direct deposit. This cuts down on some of KHEL's paperwork and time spent dealing with administrative issues.

2004 salaries and other compensation: \$14,386. Total bonuses: \$1190.

KHEL has had an employee pension plan for many years. Recently, the Indian Government has made it mandatory to offer such plans, and regulated the requirements.

KHEL's portion of the pension plan contribution in 2004: \$1571.

Although KHEL operates in north India, we were all aware of the devastating effects of the Tsunami farther south. At LDA, a prayer was said for the victims of the Tsunami and a moment of silence was observed. The staff of KHEL India donated a portion of their salaries for Tsunami Disaster Relief. Many kids in the school, who live in slums and often go hungry themselves, started bringing in handfuls of rice, asking us to mail them to the devastated areas. A second-grade boy offered to send his only pair of shoes. When we told them that we could not take their food or belongings, they spent a Saturday walking in the slum asking for money, or (we found out later) begged in the streets to collect whatever they could. They came in with about \$12, almost all in pennies. Their monetary donation to the Tsunami victims was tiny, but they gave so much in compassion.

Thank you to all the donors who contributed to the \$600 KHEL donated for Disaster Relief.

We distributed woolen scarves with the KHEL logo to our 130 high school and college students to keep them warm during the cold winter months.

Cost \$310.



The sewing group is moving toward becoming an organization of its own! In addition to their salaries, they are also earning a small commission on the products they sell. They have opened their own bank account, the first step to setting up as an independent co-operative group. We're very proud of their progress, and will continue to offer advice and support. Their salaries will continue until they are able to match what they are making now.

In addition to salaries, the cost to run the sewing project in 2004: \$120.



Diane McDonald has opened the Himalayan Yoga and Meditation Institute in Chicago and will be carrying the artisan and sewing project items in her store. Please see our products at 109 Slade Street, Palatine, IL 60067, 874-221-5250.

Thanks to Scott Schroeder for helping us offer some beautiful tea cozies for sale. They can be found at The Tea Source in St. Paul, MN.

The Meditation Center continues to carry our products in the bookstore. Shop early for all your holiday gifts!

We are very sad to report the death of one of our long-time donors and dear friend, Scott Tuttle. During his illness, KHEL helped organize a fundraiser for Scott and his family, to help with medical bills. Scott is survived by Shauna, Tarik and Priya, who continue to offer financial aid to a KHEL student. Shauna also helps promote our artisan and sewing projects. We at KHEL would also like to extend our deepest sympathy to Pandit Ananta and his family on his mother's passing.

Kindness Wish List for 2005-2006

We have outgrown our old office in Ammaji's home! We need about \$4000 to set up a new KHEL office in Shiv Puri colony. Specialized sewing, embroidery and finishing machines for Sewing Project: \$1000.

Funds for KHEL USA, to support office expenses, fundraising, etc. \$10,000.

HEALTH

KHEL works closely with Indian government officials on health issues. We offer the LDA grounds and volunteer support for health camps that occur throughout the year. About 340 children received polio vaccinations at a government Pulse Polio camp. In addition, medical camps were held at the School; BCG, DTP, DT and measles vaccinations were administered to our school students and other children in the community.

Cost of health camp support: \$100/year.

KHEL supplies medicines to Indresh and Ram Mandir Leprosy colonies' dispensaries, other leprosy patients and some students. Some of the medical aid is long term and must be continued indefinitely in order to keep the children healthy. We also supply dry goods to four leprosy colonies and individual families in need. Two sisters at LDA recently lost their father; we are providing them with additional food rations on an emergency basis so they can stay in school rather than having to find jobs to provide for their family.

2004 Medical expenses, dry rations and emergency nutritional aid: \$8643.



All students at LDA receive dry goods every quarter. We give enough powdered milk, protein-rich legumes and oatmeal to provide for the children and their families. As many of you may remember, the dry ration system is fairly new for us. It has worked wonderfully! Unlike the old system of providing in-school meals, this also helps students' families. The children often receive other treats and snacks at special celebrations and when guests come to visit.

LDA dry rations cost: \$7000/year.

Although the main construction is now finished at Indresh Leprosy colony, there is still much that needs to be done. We recently built chimneys for cooking smoke in each home's cooking area. A tank for drinking water was also installed and all the homes were whitewashed.

KHEL's cost \$1190.

Every student at LDA received a pair of new shoes, thanks to a special donation from Katy Guard and her friends.

Cost for new shoes \$800.

Health Wish List for 2005-2006

New bathrooms for Indresh Leprosy Colony \$6000



EDUCATION

As described in last year's report, LDA is now a Government-recognized school. While there are countless advantages to this; one of the drawbacks is an increase in time and money for compliance with regulations. The government recently added a monthly test for all students, for which reports are submitted to the Uttaranchal Education Department. There is preparation for quarterly, half-yearly and final exams as well. With well over 200 students at LDA, the teachers and administrative staff have to work extra hard to make sure that all reports are completed and submitted on time. While the monthly testing is challenging, it is necessary preparation for the new state Board exams for 5th grade students. We are very proud of our 5th graders and the teachers who helped them all to pass the finals. Congratulations to 5th graders Upasana and Bhawana, for passing their exams with distinction!
Cost of examinations and prizes: \$250.

An environmental walking tour of the Dehradun and surrounding area was organized for 4th and 5th graders. It was a great opportunity to introduce them to the local ecology and gain some basic environmental knowledge.

One of KHEL's strong points is our hands-on approach within the communities we serve. This allows us to evaluate each case and determine the extent of need for aid, and accommodate any special circumstance. This has proved very necessary in evaluating our scholarship students. A few of our scholarship students seemed to be performing poorly, but after talking with each of them, Ammaji found out that their low finals grades were due to circumstances beyond their control. One girl spent a month in the hospital with severe anemia and was unable to finish her exams. Some students did poorly academically because of their excellence in sports; intensive training and competition schedules kept them out of school. Their educational facilities didn't offer make-up classes. Two other girls were so malnourished that they were unable to function adequately. We have decided to continue to offer KHEL scholarships in these circumstances. We are working with students to solve these problems so they can concentrate on their studies. One of the changes we are making is to organize the election of Peer Leaders who will work with KHEL management. Peer Leaders will help us identify challenges the students may be facing, as well as assist in developing a student's network for both academic and social activities.

Cost in 2004 to support 136 students, (full scholarships for 6th through 12th grade; partially aid for college studies) \$3190.

Ammaji was able to spend some time with the KHEL faculty and conducted a class on communication skills. Ammaji has an extensive background in teaching. The teachers were happy to spend some time with her.

The Raphael Teachers Training Center, an educational facility in Dehradun, requested that the LDA teachers evaluate their trainees. Twenty trainees were evaluated during a three-week practicum, organized by Manmati Subha, the Headmistress at LDA. Our teachers also helped in developing a grading system, which was very much appreciated by Raphael.

Rajiv Chauhan, Administrative Assistant, has embarked on a pre-MBA course.

Cost: \$286.

Beni Bhatt, our long-time Manager is about to start a nine-month course on co-operative group management. He will be paying for the cost of the necessary books.

Cost for the course and expenses: \$400.

Educational Wish List:

Due to a new law, we are now required by the State government to supply textbooks free of charge to the LDA students. Indian textbooks change yearly and must be replaced. Cost of textbooks for 230 children: \$2000/year.

We have three new high school graduates researching their career options, two in fashion design and one in Beauty culture (hair, henna designs, etc). The financial commitment for KHEL for further education will be substantial, but it is a big accomplishment for our students to persevere this far. We do our best to encourage high school graduates to pursue professional careers. To support these three young women, KHEL needs: \$1300.

Congratulations to Sarita Shekhar for achieving first division in her final exams. KHEL has given her a \$75 grant to start a 3-year nursing course in Haryana. The full cost of her nursing: \$800/year.

Cost to support 5 college students: \$1800.

Salary for a fulltime English language teacher for LDA students and staff: \$1300.

Repair of boundary wall around LDA property: \$5000.

Update books and convert storage room into proper library facility: \$5400



LAUGHTER



India's Republic Day, Independence Day and many other holidays were celebrated with the residents of Ram Mandir and Indresh Leprosy Colonies and sweets were distributed.

Cost: \$150.

The 5th graders took part in an Art Competition organized by The Search Project. All the children had a wonderful time, and we saw some very creative work.

A Cricket tournament was held at LDA in which 6 teams from surrounding schools took part. While LDA was the clear winner, the participation of all the schools made the day a great success! We at KHEL welcome the opportunity to host such events. It is great for the children to interact with students of other schools and helps us stay connected to the larger community. Since we provide the space for many of the kids to get their vaccinations, it's nice for them to visit us without having to get a shot!

The LDA students and staff celebrated many other occasions, often accompanied by guests from across the globe. The children especially enjoy the sweets that guests often bring for them! On India's Independence Day, Ammaji, along with Sharda and Jyoti Bhajan of Canada (Ammaji's sister and niece) visited with the children and distributed special rations to them. Also present was the local Council President and members of the village councils. For Uttaranchal Day, Pandit Ananta and his guests from Minnesota visited with the children. Sudesh Agarwal, a local supporter of KHEL, enjoyed the craft exhibition displayed by the children. Our friends from Italy, Mr. Chatterjee and other local guests attended a winter holiday cultural program before school was adjourned for winter break. Other visitors were Dr. Ann Glazier and some of the students of Sadhaka Grama in Rishikesh; Ingo and his group from Germany, members of the Dehradun municipal council, Mrs. Murti Devi, Mr. Sunil Jaiswal Sajwan and Mr. and Mrs. RS Agarwal, who kindly offered prize money for the children. Many thanks to everyone who visited the children of Lakshmi Devi Academy! Children's Day was celebrated with a sports competition. Small prizes such as pencil boxes, water bottles and lunch boxes were distributed to the children. Republic Day was celebrated with a cultural program performed by the children. Teachers Day was arranged by the students; they put on a show and provided tea and treats for their teachers.

The cost in 2004 for entertaining visitors at LDA, organizing celebrations, providing prizes and treats: \$1357.

Our congratulations to Shabana, one of our teachers, on her marriage. Shabana is an LDA graduate who returned to work for KHEL and help her community as an LDA teacher. We are sorry to lose her but wish her joy, peace and happiness in her new life.



Ammaji will be celebrating her 70th birthday on Christmas Day, 2005. Her life has been one of service to her family and community. Growing up in Georgetown, Guyana, with a family of educators and spiritual leaders, it came naturally to her to take on a leadership role with the young people of her area. She was the first woman in her community to leave Guyana (then British Guiana) to attend an internationally accredited university. After obtaining her degree, she returned to Guyana and married Usharbudh Arya. Ammaji taught Ancient History at a local University, continued her leadership role in the community and raised two daughters.

After the young family moved from the tropics to Minnesota, Ammaji had two more children and became a 'mother' to many people of the yoga and meditation community. She helped run The Meditation Center, coordinated many a weekend retreat and took care of more people than can be named, all while raising her family. It's virtually impossible to measure the influence she has had on the lives of the people she's touched. Many people who grew up in North East Minneapolis remember the Indian lady at the corner house who always had a seeming endless supply of exotic snacks for neighborhood kids. Ammaji has always maintained an 'open house' policy, and will feed whoever happens to be around at dinner time.



The Arya family moved to India in 1981. As she helped her family adjust to the change and settle into their new environment, she was shocked by the extreme poverty that surrounded them. Instead of despairing at the magnitude of suffering, or turning her back, she reached out in compassion. She gave one cup of milk to one hungry child.

That one act of kindness was a seed, and from it grew KHEL, small and scraggly at first but always reaching for the sun. Twenty-four years of Ammaji's nurturing and KHEL has thrived, blossomed, and spread countless seeds of its own.

Ammaji has dedicated her life to the service of others. She has never asked anything for herself, nor would she dream of doing so. At the risk of getting in trouble with our mom, we would like to appeal to our generous extended family of donors to contribute to a retirement fund for Ammaji: KHEL's founder, mother to many, turner of tides.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever does."
Margaret Mead

Thanks to all of you who help us avert disaster, everyday.

In Service,
Stomya Arya Persaud
Saumya Arya Haas

