

KHEL 2010 Annual Report



Save the date! Mark your calendars for this amazing event!

Children's and Youth Retreat

Dates: December 22-31, 2011, at SRSG, Rishikesh, India

Ages: all ages, families welcome

Website: www.children.ahymsin.org

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Yoga-Youth-and-Childrens-Organisation/101125669517?ref=ts>

Email: vedayouthcensus@gmail.com

Swami Veda invites you to the International Children's and Youth Retreat:

I'm looking forward to my much cherished Children's and Youth Retreat, December 22-31, 2011, at Swami Rama Sadhaka Grama (SRSG) in Rishikesh, India. Our children are the future of this tradition and of the world; please bring them so that they can learn from our advanced yoga teachers and so that they can form bonds with one another that will last a lifetime. This event is organised by Lela Pierce, who tells me that many of my worldwide family have shown a keen interest in participating.

Please visit www.children.ahymsin.org or contact Lela at vedayouthcensus@gmail.com for more information on this unique event! You can join us on Facebook, too, at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Yoga-Youth-and-Childrens-Organisation/101125669517?ref=ts>

Please also give us your Affirmation of Attendance so we can plan accordingly. You and your family are cordially invited to make this pilgrimage and participate in welcoming the next generation of students into our ancient tradition. It will also just be wonderful to hug my children and grandchildren.

With most profound loving sentiment,
Swami Veda Bharati

Introduction



KHEL Charities is a 26 year old non-profit secular organization registered in the US and India, with the majority of service occurring in Dehradun, India. We provide equal opportunity education, support and employment, and we actively promote the ideals of non-

violence, tolerance and respect. KHEL believes that it is through one's own efforts that sustainable success is possible; thus, our primary mission is educating impoverished children at Lakshmi Devi Academy (LDA), our K-8 school in Dehradun. Children at this economic level are often too undernourished to focus for a full school day, so KHEL also provides basic needs to the children of LDA and their families. By educating impoverished children, KHEL gives future generations the necessary tools to improve their lives and break the cycle of poverty and social marginalization. In addition, KHEL supports three leprosy colonies in Dehradun and offers aid to other communities.

KHEL's primary mission is educating children, first at LDA and then continuing through to post graduate work, such as nursing and MBA. In order for KHEL to succeed at its mission, it's necessary for us to help the neediest first. It is extremely difficult to say yes to some people who need aid and no to others as there are so many people who need aid in Dehradun. In order to save ourselves the continued heartbreak of saying no, KHEL's policy is that we give aid to adults in the community who are related to our kids (or work for KHEL/LDA) and therefore an integral part of the support system the children need to stay in school, or they live at a leprosy colony and are too ill to support themselves in any way besides begging.

India continues to record the highest number of new leprosy cases in the world. The most recent Indian statistics from 2008 say there were 2.5 lakh (250,000) new leprosy cases worldwide and India accounted for 137,000 of those (*Times of India*, Feb. 9, 2010). It saddens those of us who work with leprosy patients to see these statistics; because the local government-run leprosy hospitals were closed, we were under the impression that leprosy was slowly being eradicated but this is not the case. In the past, the Indian government educated the public on this infection but recently this has been discontinued. It falls on the shoulders of small community service organisations like KHEL to work with the leprosy colonies, educating them on how leprosy is spread and continuing to support them because the society they live in rejects them. This aid includes educating the children of families with leprosy so that they have a way to overcome the stigma when they're older, and a sustainable way to support their families. With the aid of our dedicated donors, we educate the residents of the colonies we help on the value of healthy and clean surroundings.

KHEL has been very fortunate that even though this year funds were not enough for all our projects, our main services – the school and the leprosy programs – still continue due to some generous donations from anonymous sources.

Kindness



Last year we discontinued our sewing classes. A few former sewing students asked us to find employment for them. KHEL temporarily contracted them to make 400 yoga suits which were sold to Swami Rama Sadhaka Grama (SRSG), Swami Veda's ashram in Rishikesh. Beni, KHEL's General Manager, coordinated with SRSG. Supporting him was Bhagwat, KHEL's Assistant Manager, and Anirudh, Beni's son who will be finishing high school this year. KHEL also sold other items at SRSG, with all proceeds benefiting KHEL.

KHEL cooperates with the Indian government on all aspects of education. Recently there have been changes to government scholarships that are provided to many groups of children, including minorities, tribals, and certain disadvantaged castes. It is really wonderful to see the Indian government working so hard to help the underprivileged receive an education! We fully trust the wonderful people who are volunteering their time to take care of the receipt and distribution of funds – Manju Maurya (LDA's representative), Kamli Bhatt (local government elected official) and Nur Khan Chhama (parent representative). Funds received so far are Rs.130,200 (\$2,870), apply only to students through 5th grade and must be distributed according to Department of Social Welfare guidelines, to which KHEL must present a full accounting. These funds are not used to run LDA or pay teachers, but it certainly helps KHEL that specific students don't need as much support from us as they did in the past. This is a big achievement for KHEL; many thanks to Beni for his very hard work making this happen!! KHEL would also like to thank to Mr. Khajan Das, who was Minister of Social Welfare during KHEL's application process.

Volunteer at KHEL/LDA: Shalini, (the daughter of KHEL's current Director, Stomya Persaud), chose to spend the last quarter of her senior year of high school teaching LDA's 6th graders basic photography techniques. An art competition helped decide which 5 students would take part. Sanjay, Rani, Aasif, Aabha and Dalvinder were given disposable cameras to document aspects of their lives that are important to them. On working with the 6th graders, Shalini commented, "The poverty these kids live in doesn't support self expression and they don't have any way to develop confidence, even though they have amazing grit and commitment. My aim was to expose them to the idea of a positive self image through the camera lens."

The 8th graders prepared personal biographies to share with Shalini. She conducted videotaped interviews with each of them and was deeply moved by their life stories and their determination to gain as much education as possible. Most of the 8th graders won't go

on to higher education and two of them are seriously ill; 'Shashi', a male student, is being kept alive by KHEL with medications and needs to have valves in his heart replaced or he will die before he reaches adulthood (see the complete story in the Health section of this report). 'Anu', a female student whose father was educated at LDA, has kerosene burns covering her legs and desperately needs skin grafts to stop recurring infections from bathing in unclean river water and living in a slum environment. KHEL seeks to protect the privacy and dignity of the children we help and Shalini was concerned about this while videotaping the interviews. We don't use the children's real names but will continue to share their stories. As Shalini pointed out, "If we don't tell their stories for them, who will?"

Manmati Subba, LDA's first Headmistress and most recently its Administrator, found a wonderful opportunity to work for the Indian government in AIDS education. She served LDA for many years and will be missed! We wish her all the best in her future endeavours. Manju Maurya, who has worked for LDA for over 18 years, received a well deserved promotion to Headmistress. Congratulations, Manju! In addition, Manohar, who used to be a full time teacher, now teaches part time due to his recent promotion to Office Supervisor.

Health



'Shashi' needs heart surgery

'Shashi': **total funds needed \$7500.** (Names have been changed to protect the privacy and dignity of aid recipients. KHEL is not responsible for the results of the surgery that is being recommended by qualified doctors at AIIMS in Delhi, India.)

In 2000, Shashi came to study at LDA. Shashi and his family are well known at KHEL; long term malnutrition and slum conditions continue to affect the health of the children and KHEL has repeatedly offered aid. Jaideep, his older brother, was a student at LDA. He contracted a brain infection and KHEL assisted with his medical expenses for several years. Jaideep now works in a barber shop but the brain infection left him with a permanent tremor in his hands; his chances for improving his economic status are slim. Charu, Shashi's 18 year old sister, looks after the family especially her two young brothers, Sabir and Safeer, both students at LDA; their mother, Shasha, has severe health problems and is often incapacitated. Charu was a student at LDA; her parents worked with KHEL to keep her in school after she graduated from LDA, but she failed her 10th grade final exams – the pressures of poverty don't allow for the kind of studying necessary to pass a national exam based on two years of academics. This is a family struggling to make enough money to get through another day, and still dedicated to educating their kids because they know it's the only way out of poverty.

In 2001 Shashi's father, Mahant, a fruit cart vendor, approached KHEL seeking medical help for Shashi. For many months, KHEL paid for Shashi's medications and then for an angiogram. In 2003, his health deteriorated and he needed an angioplasty operation to

survive. KHEL quickly raised Rs.25,000 (about \$565). Now, this charismatic and charming 8th grade boy needs a heart operation. Shashi is so hopeful and optimistic that we can save him; he walks to school every day to be with his friends and study hard so that when he's well he can continue with his studies and eventually help his family have a better life. He turns pale and gasps for breath when he climbs the stairs at school, but he does it anyway. He recently told KHEL he wants to be a doctor when he grows up.

Raising funds is only the first challenge KHEL, Shashi and his family will face on the long road to making him well. Funding this surgery is the one thing that his optimism and courage can't overcome – this, we must do for him. KHEL has raised \$3,000 from one generous donor. Shashi needs a minimum of \$4,500 more to have a chance to grow into a healthy young man with the bright future that he's working so hard to have.

Leprosy Colonies: There are more than 100 leprosy patients living at the three leprosy colonies that KHEL supports. In addition to dry food rations and medical aid, KHEL helps with medical costs and education of their children, who do not live with their parents for health reasons. Because the families must live apart, KHEL assists with the emotional needs of the residents by providing funds, sweets and fruits for festivals and holidays and by socialising with the residents. In a society where living in an extended family is the norm, being ostracised by society and also separated from their children is a heartbreaking situation for the leprosy colony residents. The KHEL staff also advises on the benefits of living in a clean environment and other health related issues.

Working with an international funding agency, Indresh Colony has started a candle making business. No profits have been realised yet, but KHEL will continue to offer marketing advice and support. In the Dehradun area, KHEL friends and families are making an effort to buy candles from the Indresh residents. If you are in the Dehradun/Rishikesh area, please contact Beni. (Indian cell phone is 358101839 and email is benibhatt@gmail.com) to buy candles; help support this sustainable business venture!

Raguveer, a long time KHEL employee, was suffering from stomach pains. An ultrasound showed no serious problems and eventually he was diagnosed with an infection, which will hopefully clear up with a course of antibiotics. Before he was able to take the medications, his health became worse and he was admitted to the hospital for 5 days. He is feeling better now but KHEL continues to monitor his health.

Sometimes all KHEL can do is offer support to a family going through a painful time. Mrs. K., the mother of three LDA students, lost her husband to AIDS two years ago. She was recently diagnosed with AIDS and is receiving treatment. Although we continue to help her three children with their education, KHEL has no funds to be of further assistance to her and she is completely dependent on her family – her parents are leprosy patients who live at Indresh Colony and can barely support themselves. With more AIDS education, Mrs. K's family might have had a completely different future.

LDA students and other neighbourhood kids had their annual health check-up at LDA, conducted by government officials and nurses. This health check is critical to catching diseases such as tuberculosis and leprosy in the early stages, and also to vaccinate young

children against polio and other illnesses. Although some cases of TB and other illnesses were diagnosed, we are happy to report that all LDA students are in good health!

The Medical Fund was implemented by the LDA faculty and staff a few years ago, who continue to manage it on their own. Each staff member deposits a small amount every month. This year, one staff member used the funds. KHEL was not able to match funds this year. Since the purpose of funds such as this one is to help the staff become self sufficient we are seeing a positive result of this endeavour in that staff members are not needing to ask KHEL for aid for health related reasons.

We are sad to report that KHEL's former Manager, Mr. S. Chatterjee, had one leg amputated due to an infection. KHEL's present General Manager, Beni Bhatt, stayed with Mr. Chatterjee and his son in Mumbai, to help with post surgery recovery. Mr. Chatterjee has returned home and is recovering. KHEL provided some funds to help defray the cost of medical equipment. Others also have contributed toward Mr. Chatterjee's medical costs.

Mr. S., a very active member of Indresh Colony, died of heart failure. This is a big loss for Indresh since Mr. S. was not as handicapped as many of the residents and they now have no one who can run errands and do other work outside of the Colony. We are very sorry for their loss.

Overall, KHEL has provided about \$16,000 in medical aid to LDA students, their families and leprosy colony residents.

Education



Mr. Ahluwalia, a KHEL Board member, invited LDA's faculty to take part in a writing competition. Many large schools in Dehradun took part and it was an opportunity for our teachers to be exposed to many different kinds of teachers. Manju, Manohar, Asha and Lokender had a great time and will receive certificates of participation.

LDA has been adding a grade each year and this year finally added an 8th grade to complete the Junior High School! The ardent and hard work by Beni and LDA's staff to fulfil the government requirements will eventually lead to the necessary official approval. LDA will be hiring a new science teacher for the incoming 8th graders, and in addition needs a fully furnished science lab. Any donations toward lab equipment would be greatly appreciated!

KHEL subsidizes the education of many students after they leave LDA. There are three nurses in training, one pharmacist and one post graduate student doing her Masters in Hindi Literature. We also support 148 high school and college students.

Sarita, our nursing graduate who is now employed in a Dehradun hospital just paid off the rest of her KHEL loan of Rs7000 (\$180)!! We're really proud of her hard work, and happy that we can now use her returned loan to help another student. Congratulations, Sarita!

We now have 260 students at LDA. It has been a real advantage having middle school students as the younger students look up to these older ones, who tend to set good examples both in studies and on the playing field.

Laughter



The best time to see children enjoy themselves and laugh in abandon is at recess! On Saturdays, the students participate in art, drama, sports, yoga, chanting and a variety of Indian games. The teachers arrange the games so that all the children get to participate, have fun and show their skills.

Beni arranged for the staff and faculty to enjoy a day at SRSG. Everyone was happy to meet with Swami Veda, especially the new LDA faculty members who hadn't had a chance to visit SRSG before. It was a memorable trip and an opportunity for everyone to learn some yoga! Swami Veda gave his blessings to all. Thanks to everyone at SRSG who made this visit possible!

Ree, a yoga teacher from Australia, found out about KHEL online. A visit to LDA was arranged during which the children gave a yoga demonstration. Ree wished to make a donation and on Beni's suggestion, joined two of the teachers for a trip into the market to purchase a storage cupboard for the new science lab. She has also agreed to help fund the salary for a new science teacher for one year.

LDA students love to go on field trips! We try to make these outings fun as well as educational. The older students spent an afternoon at the Forest Research Institute (FRI), and learned about its history as a Government University and research station.

Other field trips included attending an Art Exhibit at Grameen Bank and a picnic for senior students, teachers and Ammaji at Dak Pathar Park. The Yamuna River at this point has a large dam and there is a historical marker where, thousands of years ago, the messengers of King Ashoka carved his edicts into a large rock. Ammaji, faculty and staff had lunch

together, as they do every year when Ammaji is in India. Flowers were presented to Ammaji, Beni and Manju as thanks for all their hard work that keeps KHEL and LDA running smoothly.

With the help of Mr. Madhav Kamat of EAPL, Bangalore, KHEL distributed shoes and socks to all 261 students of LDA!



LDA hosted a Scout Camp for 5th-7th grade students. Scout Camp is a day camp where middle school students have a day together to practice how to help to someone in case of emergencies such as dog bites, snake bites, and bone fracture. The kids also learn basic rope tying techniques and other first aid. This is a fun day for the students, giving them time to socialize with each other as well as learn some important safety skills.

USA/Other



Children of MissionHaiti

KHEL has been providing administrative support to [Headwaters/Delta Interfaith](#), a new organization started by Saumya Arya Haas, Ammaji's daughter and a long time KHEL volunteer. The earthquake in Haiti brought HDI into partnership with organizations on the ground during the disaster; while these dedicated people were helping victims of this tragedy, HDI provided social media, networking and fundraising support. HDI also works closely with the [New Orleans Healing Center](#) to revitalize the city based on holistic sustainability and social equity. In addition to providing an inter-faith space and mediation to improve community relations, the NOHC will open in 2011 to bring a much needed [cooperative grocery store](#), fee-subsidized [yoga studio](#) and other services to an underserved area of the city. In August, HDI joined [Hindu American Seva Charities](#) and many other organizations in offering [free Yoga across the country](#). In addition, HDI works with the [White House Council on Faith-based and Neighbourhood Partnerships](#) to help inform at-risk communities about available services and support.

Saumya has also joined the team at The Huffington Post Religion Blog. You can keep up with her posts [here](#).

During the past year, Stomya, KHEL's Director, has been struggling with a chronic illness and was not able to spend as much time working with KHEL as she would have liked. Although she continues to have health problems, she has resumed many of her essential administrative duties.

KHEL makes small contributions to KHEL friends who are working hard to further the causes of health or education. This year, KHEL assisted Marjorie with a cancer awareness marathon, and Chad and Rachel with the MS Walk. KHEL also assisted Mission Haiti, run by long time KHEL friend Jean Madson, to raise funds for the earthquake devastated town of Leogane in Haiti. A few years ago, KHEL began assisting a group of teenage volunteers who go to Texas in the summer to work with disadvantaged children. Opportunity Camp (OpCamp) gives impoverished children a chance to spend a few weeks in a healthy environment. In the words of the Camp Director, Jackie, 'This group of students would renew the confidence of any doubter of the character of today's youth. They poured out their lives and love into the children that they came to serve and it was awesome to see!'

Via an online competition, KHEL was selected for pro bono consultation with a MN based marketing company, Effectuate, Inc., which is advising on a website upgrade and social networking. Effectuate gives valuable suggestions and continues to offer free consulting. Effectuate was instrumental in finding a professional web designer to work pro bono for KHEL on our new website, which is currently in production.

Thanks to all our donors, volunteers and other helpers who continue to contribute, including LDA and KHEL staff, Swami Veda for his guidance, Beni Bhatt for his management skills and all those who help KHEL to help those in need. We couldn't do it without you!

In Service,

Lalita Arya, Founder
Stomya Persaud, Director
Saumya Haas, Volunteer
Beni Bhatt, General Manager