



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal



Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. In this letter we would like to take our donors inside the working of and the management of the three Children's Homes in Bhopal.

There are two aspects to running any charitable institution. The first is the fundraising and the second is the actual administration of the institution. In this edition, we will not talk about our fundraising effort as you, our donors and friends are quite familiar with it. However, it is worth mentioning that fundraising by all three bodies; Nitya Seva Germany, Nitya Seva USA and Nitya Seva society Bhopal is a voluntary effort. No member of these bodies receives any compensation for their services. All three have active boards, follow the rules and regulations of their respective countries and are totally transparent.

On our homes, we refer to them by the locality in Bhopal where they are. Thus, the names Pipalner, Chandbad and Signature Park. Pipalner houses all the girls and boys up to 10 years of age. Chandbad is the boys home housing all boys from eleven to eighteen years of age. And a few boys older than eighteen are in Signature Park.

NEWS OF THE DAY

COVID 19 NOW POSES NEW CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN IN THE HOMES

Schools have reopened in Bhopal with online classes. Nitya Seva is struggling to provide equipment for 203 children to make the online classes happen.

In addition, because of Covid, the evening tutoring had to be suspended. Though, there is a silver lining.

One of our donors has volunteered distance tutoring via Zoom a few children. He has committed to 2- two-hour sessions per week for the entire year for three children.

We wish him success and are hoping that this pioneering effort would lead to an expanded program with the help of our donors. We hope to cover more on Education in future.



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal

Running a Children's home is challenging. In some ways it is like managing a large household. For Nitya Seva it is a household with 203 children. Like any household, the focus is on the family's welfare. In our case the family is 203 children in the Nitya Seva homes. Because of its size, it is also like running a large institution with management and staff with specific roles, responsibilities, and accountability. In Nitya Seva we meld these two to achieve our mission of providing loving and comprehensive care to the children.

Management of the Children's homes in Bhopal

Executive body: While most of the members of the three Nitya Seva bodies are not involved in the day to day management of the homes, some are. They form the Executive body. They are Claus and Asha von der Fink the two founder members and the Secretary & Treasurer of Nitya Seva Society Bhopal Major General (Retd.) Shhyam Srivastav. Shhyam has held this position since 2015. The executive body is responsible for policy making, budgeting and higher decision making. Asha and Claus remain intimately involved with day to day working regardless of whether they are physically in Bhopal or in Germany. Shhyam is physically located in Bhopal. Besides his fiduciary responsibilities he oversees the three homes, interacting frequently with the children and staff and spearheading other projects taken by on by Nitya Seva. He is ably and enthusiastically helped in this endeavor by his wife Nishi. And once again, none of these individuals receive any compensation. They are driven because they care about the suffering of the children in the poorest segment of society. The executive body hires paid staff responsible for day to day running of Nitya Seva.

Salaried staff and Concept of Care at the Children's homes

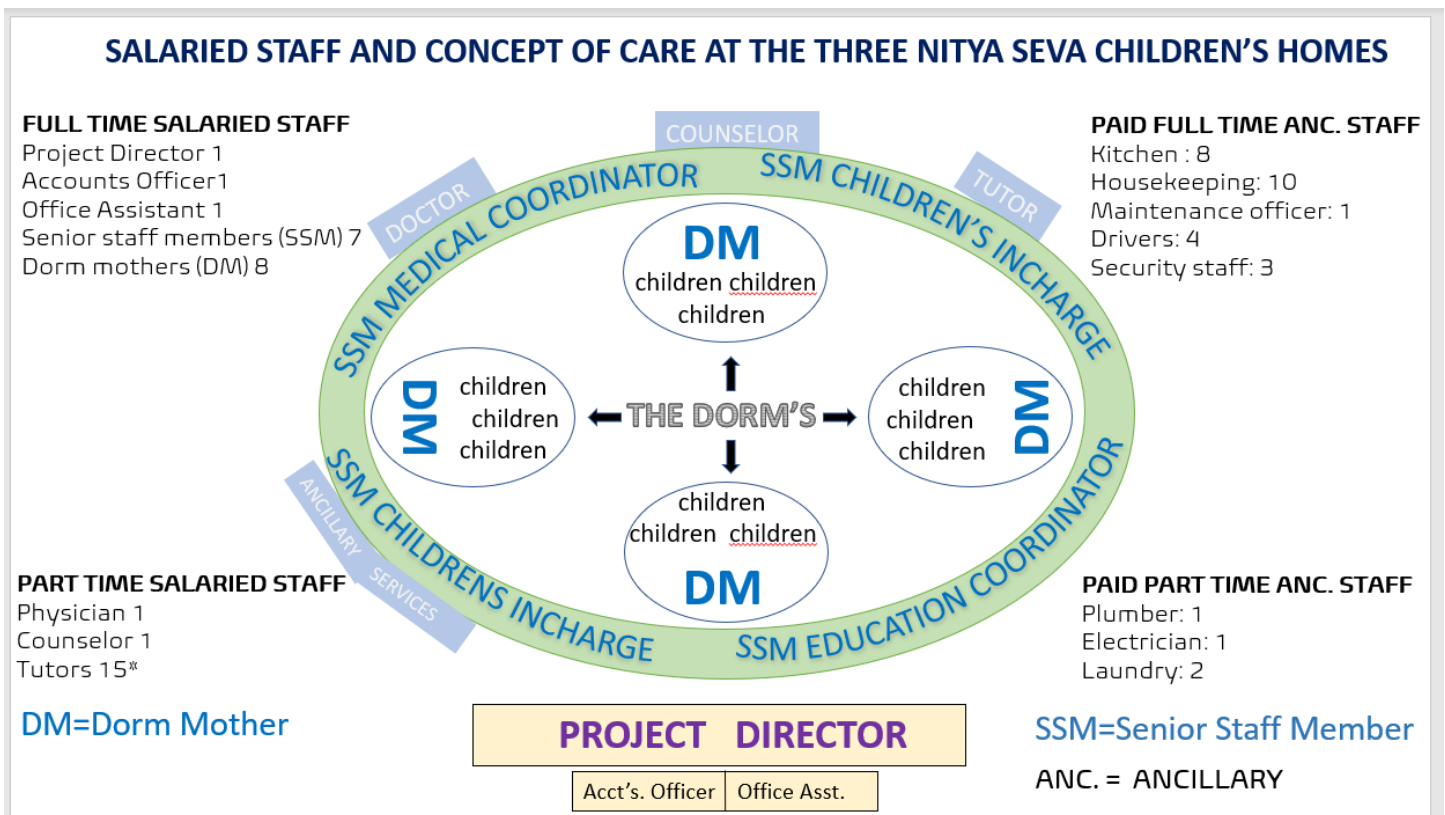
The functional unit of the children's home at a cellular level is the **Dormitory** or simply the **Dorm**. Each dorm houses 12 to 20 children of varying ages chosen so that the dorm configuration resembles siblings in a family. Each unit is supervised



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal

by a **Dorm Mother (DM)** who lives with the children in the dorm and cares for them. Quintessential to the care of the children, the dorm mothers are helped in their work by the **Senior Staff Members (SSMs.)** They form the second layer of care surrounding the children. SSM in charge is the point person a DM would turn to when she needs help of any kind. SSM's from all three locations report to the **Project Director (PD)** who in turn supervises them and is the managerial head of all three homes. The project director reports to the Executive body. The figure below is a diagrammatic representation of our model of care.



A brief description of the duties of the dorm mothers, senior staff members and the project director follows.

Dorm Mothers: The primary responsibility of a dorm mother is the well-being of the children in her dorm in a loving, caring way. Referred to as aunty by the dorm children, she is the mother figure in their lives. She bonds with the children in her



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal

care, and the children with her. She has a 24/7 job. In the family setting simulated by having children ranging in age from 4 to 18, the older children are expected to help the dorm mother in multiple tasks simulating family life. They are also expected to help the younger children. At a practical level, the dorm mother ensures the children get up in the morning and get ready. She bathes and readies the younger ones herself. She shepherds them to the dining room at meal times, ensures that the children eat properly and helps the younger ones in this task. She helps children clear the dishes after meals. She ensures that their lunch boxes for the school are properly prepared. She ensures that they board the school van. She provides after school supervision in the playground and ensures that they attend the tutoring sessions and meet their school assignments. She ensures that children follow the routines set for them. She is responsible for maintaining cleanliness and orderliness in the dorm and engaging the children in this activity and making them responsible. She encourages good behavior and honesty in children meeting their emotional needs and resolving conflicts between the children. She monitors their health. She reaches out to the SSM Children's in charge if a child is having any issues or if they appear to be sick.

Our dorm mothers are women in need of shelter and employment because of their circumstance or domestic situation. They generally have limited education. Some are single mothers. In the case of single mothers, it is Nitya Seva policy to take in the child. It not only provides a job for the mom, a home for her child along with the mother but most importantly education for the child.

Senior Staff Members: In contrast to the dorm mothers, the senior staff members have a minimum of a bachelor's degree under their belt. They bring a variety of skill sets to the care of the children and undergo intensive training while on the job. They



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal

have a greater degree of responsibility and accountability. They have a supervisory role but are also expected to involve themselves directly when there is a need. Some of the SSM have specific responsibilities e.g. ensuring that the educational and medical needs of the children are met. In Chandbad and Signature park two of our SSM's have additional managerial roles akin to the project director who is not always physically present in these two locations. And each SSM may wear more than one hat, with primary responsibility in more than one area. They are social workers, psychologists and administrators all rolled into one. They also have the important job of documenting and maintaining each child's file and performing site visits when a new child arrives. SSM's include:

SSM Children's in Charge: Each supervises 2 to 5 dorm mothers. They are responsible for training new dorm mothers and provide them with ongoing guidance. They are accountable for the well-being of the children, interacting with them not just through the dorm mothers but directly as well. They process the request from the dorm mothers for supplies, be it clothes or hair clips. They are expected to resolve any issues raised by the dorm mother. They are expected to attend to any emotional and behavioral issues that arise and in conflict resolution between children.

SSM Medical Coordinator: Is present when the doctor visits, arranges follow ups and takes care of emergencies. He/She is responsible for in-house sick children and for procuring and administering medications. He/She is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the care of hospitalized children. He/She is responsible for maintaining a medical file on each child and putting together the Annual Medical Report. Usually the medical coordinator would also have other duties.

SSM Education Coordinator: Is responsible for everything related to the children's education. All our children attend neighborhood schools from nursery through 12th grade. The boys at Signature Park and some of our girls in Pipalner are



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal

attending College but the majority are in school. The Education Coordinator facilitates every aspect of school education and after school tutoring as well as cultural events in the home. He/She procures all school supplies and arranges for school uniforms and attends parent teacher meets. He/She helps put the older children in vocational streams, helps with university and job placements. He/She maintains an education file on each child and is responsible for monitoring their progress. He/She is responsible for the Annual Education Report.

Project Director (PD): As head of the three Children's home, he is responsible for implementation of policy rules and regulation as set by the executive body, for the well-being of the children and management of the staff under him. This includes not only the SSM and DMs but also the ancillary staff. He is expected to know the children and interact with them. Both the children and the staff may also reach him directly. He ensures that the kitchen runs smoothly, and the infrastructure is well maintained. He ensures compliance with governmental rules and regulations and is the main interlocutor with the government as well as the other agencies. He is physically based in Pipalner Children's home but visits the other two homes periodically. Project director is aided in his work by an Office Assistant and an Accounts Officer responsible for book-keeping.

Part time staff: Besides the regular staff described above, there are professionals who come periodically. They include the doctor, a counsellor, and tutors. The **doctor** comes twice a week and ensures that every child has a physical twice a year. He ensures that the immunization status of each child is up to date and deals with all minor and chronic illnesses in the homes. The **counsellor** comes once a week. Her services are available to the children who continue to have emotional or behavioral problems despite first line interventions by the staff. The **tutors** come in the evening. Before Covid 19, there were fifteen tutors coming to the children's homes. Unfortunately, because of Covid this program has been suspended.



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal

Ancillary Staff: Not directly involved in child-care, they play important roles, nonetheless. Most important is the **kitchen staff** of 8 who ensure that 203 children are fed three square meals a day and snacks in between. Then there are the **drivers** who man the vans taking children back and forth from school, **the caretaker**, the **housekeeping staff**, and **security staff**. A list of employees is included in the figure above.

Of the total yearly expense in recent years, 22 to 25% is on salaries. For more details of the annual expenses please visit our website www.nityaseva.org or www.nityaseva.eu, Nitya Seva Germany's website. You will find expense reports from previous years and a wealth of information about the mission of Nitya Seva and the children's homes.

We hope that this newsletter gives you some sense of the huge undertaking Nitya Seva has with its three Children's Homes. And it would not be possible without your support. We would love to hear from you. Your comments, critique, and suggestions would be welcome.

And in closing, a sincere thanks to you, our donors, well-wishers, and friends of Nitya Seva. Annual fund drive will commence during the holidays. PLEASE Keep us in your thoughts.

Chhaya Bali,

for

Nitya Seva USA Board

(Shri Bali, Deepak Khare, Nandish Rudra, Shrinath Singh, Chandra Mohan Srivastava)