



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

News & Activities from the children's homes in Bhopal



A Happy and Healthy 2021 to all our readers, donors, patrons, and friends!

Once again, we are delighted to bring you news from our homes. You, our donors, have a right to know how your support helps the children. In that spirit, we would like to take you into the lives of children at the Nitya Seva homes.

New Children at Nitya Seva

Nitya Seva welcomed 16 new arrivals in 2019-2020. We are highlighting, the story of three sisters who came this past December. The sisters, aged 12, 14, and 17 were sent to Nitya Seva by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), the authority dealing with children in need of care and protection. The sisters begged on the streets supplementing the income of an alcoholic, beggar father, and stepmother. They have never been inside a school and they do not read or write. Their home was a one-room shanty. Physical abuse at home was a daily occurrence until the eldest could not take it anymore. One day, two younger sisters in tow, she walked into the local thana (police station) and told the police officer "Hamara baap hame roz bahut maarta hai" (Our father

beats us too much every day.) The CWC stepped in and arranged for the girls to be placed with Nitya Seva.



In the picture above, the sisters appear a little shy in front of the camera, but the fear and bewilderment they had in their eyes when they first came, is no longer present. The disheveled look is gone too; they look neat and nice in their new clothes. (We are withholding their names for the sake of their privacy.)

Each child who comes to Nitya Seva has

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New Children, continued from page 1

a unique history and for some, physical violence in or outside the home, is an integral part of that story. Because poverty and physical violence are so inter-related, bringing these children out of poverty also means that their children and descendants will not have to endure such trauma. Fortunately, children are resilient, and the trauma of physical abuse seems to wane once they are in a secure environment.

Children coming to Nitya Seva often present unique challenges for care. For the sisters, mainstreaming in school, which works very well for younger children, is not an option. An entirely different approach will have to be worked out specifically for them.

New Staff at Nitya Seva

Nitya Seva welcomes two new staff-members. **Ms. Kausar Husain** is the new Project Director overseeing all the homes. She replaces Mr. Satish Moghe who left for another opportunity in line

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Distance tutoring by volunteer tutors is catching on!

In our September 2020 newsletter, we had reported how Covid was impacting the education of children in the homes especially as the evening tutoring program was suspended in its entirety. In September one of our good friends and donors Mr. Raj Nigam approached us with an offer to tutor a few children via Zoom. Raj has been tutoring kids in the Princeton NJ area under the auspices of the Princeton Unitarian Church for more than ten years. Raj is not new to tutoring, but his idea of applying on-line teaching to tutoring is a novel one. He started with three children; each is currently receiving one, individual, tutoring session per week. Raj has committed his services for the entire school year. Aside from some technical glitches initially, this initiative went so well that we found ourselves scouting for other volunteers. We are happy to report that two young high schoolers have agreed to join the effort. They are Tejas

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with his previous work. And **Ms. Vasundhara Naik** who joined as in-charge Chandbad home. She replaces Mr. Sonu Singh who had to leave for personal reasons.

Good luck to Ms. Kausar and Ms. Naik.

Our Graduates!

15 children graduated out of Nitya Seva during 2019-2020.

Congratulations to all as they enter a new phase of life standing on their own two feet!!

Of the 15 graduates, 8 boys and 7 girls, 4 have bachelor's degree in Science or Commerce, 2 are trade school graduates, 2 have received high school certification, 2 have finished 11th grade and 3 have finished 10th grade.

This group of graduates is well on their way to becoming productive members of society. Of the 4 who have a bachelor's degree, 2 found entry-level managerial positions, a 3rd found a well-paid call center position, and the 4th has elected to stay on with Nitya Seva as a dorm mother for the time being. Of the 2 trade school graduates, one has found employment in BHEL, an industrial complex

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Distance tutoring, continued from page 2, column 2

Khare from Hillsborough, NJ and Shagun Khare from Edison, NJ. The first session on December 26th, 2020 got off to a good start.

We caught up with Raj to find more about his experience. Here is what he had to say:

"I have been working with three young men - Bantu, Arjun, and Suraj - for nearly four months now on a weekly basis. Quite a bit of the focus is on their current curriculum - in practically all subjects. But a lot is informal teaching e.g., how to research a topic, how to take notes so they are useful later, and to promote structured thinking (such as, exploring what makes you good at football?) And I have learned to adapt, and so have enjoyed it in ways I did not expect. I have also got to know them personally a bit. They really open-up when we talk and exchange stories about life there in Bhopal and here in New Jersey. It adds to what they are learning. They are motivated and eager to learn; and I am too. I find them uniquely fascinating, and very much look forward to my sessions. It has been a joy. -- Raj Nigam."

I had the privilege of listening on as arrangements were meticulously being made via zoom calls between Raj and the management and goals were being set. The management had made a well thought out and ambitious move to remove two well performing 9th graders from their state board curriculum school to a school with

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Our Graduates, continued from page 3, column 1

and the other in a call center. Of the 3 with High School certificate, 2 found employment manning phone helplines and the 3rd as a quality checker. The 5 who have chosen to stop their schooling after 10th and 11th grades will be training as machine operators with CIPET, a residential vocational school in Bhopal. The special education child is also going to stay on with Nitya Seva as a helper to the dorm mothers.

Recognizing that this moment in their lives can be quite overwhelming, Nitya Seva provides help in many ways to ease the transition. This includes finding housing, providing an initial starter kit of supplies needed in the house, and helping with the rent for the first few months. Most children find themselves well-grounded to bear all costs of living independently within the first few months.

In closing,

A sincere thanks to all our donors, friends, and supporters.

Chhaya Bali, for Nitya Seva USA Board

(Shri Bali, Deepak Khare, Nandish Rudra,
Shrinath Singh and Chandra M. Srivastava)

Distance tutoring, continued from page 3, column 2

higher central board curriculum. The two initially felt like academic misfits and did not want to stay on in the new school. Raj's job is to improve their performance fast, so they do not insist on leaving. Raj likes this challenge!!! I am happy to say that neither Raj nor the children are backing down from the project. The children remain eager for the classes. The 3rd child is appearing for board exams in 2021 and sincerely wishes to improve his grades.

Tejas and Shagun will be working on English language skills with small groups of children from 9th - 11th grades. While Raj is concentrating on hard academics, the hope with Tejas and Shagun is to reach a larger number of children in an informal, non-threatening, and fun way outside of the classroom to improve their English language skills while sparking an interest in reading.

NITYA SEVA VALUES OUR VOLUNTEER TUTORS. PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST.