



NITYA SEVA NEWSLETTER

January 2024

News & Activities from the children`s homes in Bhopal



This issue of the magazine has been long overdue. My apologies for our absence in 2023. I hope to make it up to you in 2024.

I visited the Childrens Homes in Bhopal in December 2023. It is the basis for the first story. I hope you will find it as insightful as the visit was for me. *

The second story is such a validation for efforts of all who work for Nitya Seva. It is also a validation for our donors. It is your donations that have produced success stories such as this!!!

My visit to Childrens Homes run by the Nitya Seva Society Bhopal

This trip which had been in the planning for a very long time finally became a reality. I had a strong desire to understand the running of the homes. So, I shadowed Ms. Asha von der Fink, one of the two founder members and top executive. The other being her husband Claus von der Fink. I want to say upfront for the sake of transparency that Ms. Von der Fink, Asha as she likes to be called, is also my sister. I drove with her every day to the Childrens Home in Pipalner, the largest of the four homes and the. Although I visited the other homes also, the majority of my time was spent in Pipalner. It is my experiences and observations at Pipalner that I want to share with you in this newsletter. **Story continued on page 3.**

So how are they? One year later.....



Back in December 2021 we had done a story called "Newcomers." It was about four brothers who came to live at Nitya seva after tragedy befell their family. The photograph posted produced an outpouring of sympathy at the time. Since you now know that I visited the homes, I am sure many of you are thinking: So how are they?

I am happy to provide the answers!

They have come a long way. All four boys have grown a lot since that picture was taken. They have adjusted well to life at Nitya Seva and are thriving.

Story continued page 2.

Life at Nitya Seva Childrens Homes

A picture is worth a thousand words. For a collage of photos depicting the life of the children in the homes, please turn to page 4.



*The founder members, members of the boards of Nitya Seva Society Bhopal, Nitya Seva USA, and Nitya Seva Germany are all volunteers; none is compensated for their time and effort or reimbursed for any expenses incurred.

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So how are they? One year later STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Prakash 13 yrs.
Studying in Grade IV



Bhola 10 yrs.
Grade II



Pawan 7 yrs.
KG. II



Narendra age 5 yrs.
KG. I

While we don't want to revisit their past, it is worthwhile to remember that they had never been formally schooled. None of them had any reading or writing skills. All four were put in the Nitya Seva Home School for newcomers to bring them up to speed. The pace at which Prakash, the oldest acquired the reading and writing skills was nothing short of phenomenal. He was ready for regular school in no time. Prakash is very confident, though somewhat reserved, and shy. He is a star student who topped in his class during the recent half yearly examinations. After some hesitancy, Bhola has taken the same path as his elder brother. He too is a star student. Like Prakash, he has a shy personality. Pawan is an unstoppable kid on the playground and loves to play with dorm mates his age. He is at the age level for reading and writing. Bodhi now called Narendra, is learning the alphabet. He is a total goof ball. Always smiling and laughing, he tries to engage the adults and kids around him all the time.

These boys have exceeded all expectations! We wish them a bright future.





My visit to Childrens Homes run by the Nitya Seva Society Bhopal STORY CONTINUED

FROM PAGE 1

After introductions to the staff and pleasantries, Asha took me on a tour of Nitya Seva. That tour turned out to be a memorable and deeply gratifying part of my trip. To condense that experience into something that fits these pages cannot do justice to it, but I hope that you will get a good sense.

As I went from the hallway to the dorms and out onto the rooftop, as I sat for my midday meal with them, as I watched them play in the evening, it was as if I was in a utopian world. Healthy, happy, well-adjusted children were all around me. Some were shy and reserved as I greeted them, others were eager to talk. At playtime I witnessed a joyful abandon that you see in children who feel secure, loved, wanted, and feel that they are a part of a family. I observed a group of girls of mixed ages on the open rooftop as they hung their laundry. They were engaging in easy banter with each other as they proceeded with the chore, all the while keeping an eye on the two toddlers with them. Reaching out with an arm to steady them, stroking them gently, straightening their pant legs etc. It was a precious moment of family life in full display before my eyes. Indeed, Nitya Seva is one large family, and the children are a part of it.

It is not all play. Studying is serious business, and it seems that the notion has been imparted well to the children. In every dorm that I went to, I found the children sitting quietly in a group on the floor mat, deeply engrossed in studies. Their dorm mothers sat with them supervising. Such discipline! No child goofing off! Only in one of the boy's dorms did I spot an errant young child or two. It was not a regular school day; the children were having half yearly exams. That worked well for me as I was spared the empty dorms I had expected before I started the tour.

In the next couple of days, I was more involved in observing the actual business of running the homes. The utopia that I saw does not happen by itself; behind the scenes is an immense amount of skill, hard work, and dedication. It requires constant communication and coordination between all staff members and attention to detail. It is like having a household with 200 coming. But at Nitya Seva the hurdles are greater resulting from the appalling social conditions faced by the children before coming to Nitya Seva. Counselling is thus an important part of caring for the children. Fortunately, it is only a handful that present with severe psychological and emotional problems. Also, the fact that some children enter well past their formative period making their education a bigger challenge. None of this deters the administration or the staff at Nitya Seva. They have learnt from experience what works and what doesn't and when to reach out to experts. They are not afraid of trying new things and changing strategy. The spirit to do right by every child is strong from top management to the most junior staff member. If I am asked to point to just one positive attribute of the staff, both administrative and salaried, it would be their dedication and zeal. I was not unfamiliar with the administration of the childrens homes, but direct observation has added another dimension.

I feel blessed that in some small measure, the Nitya Seva USA family can put its support behind an exemplary and unique organization, a smooth-running, stable, operation that carries on this noble but daunting work with a single-minded vision. A sincere vote of thanks from Nitya Seva USA community to all who have made it possible including our donors.

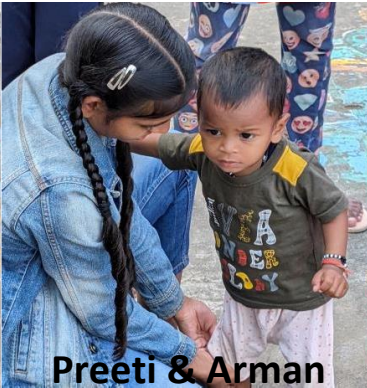




Life at Nitya Seva Childrens Homes, a collage of photos



Trisha & Arman



Preeti & Arman



Friends posing for a photo



Durga



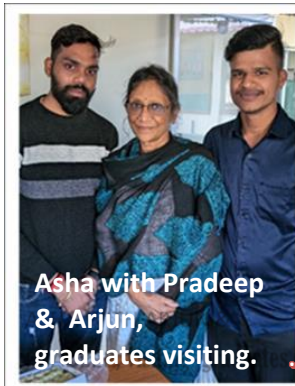
Aarav



Mona



Kanhaiya



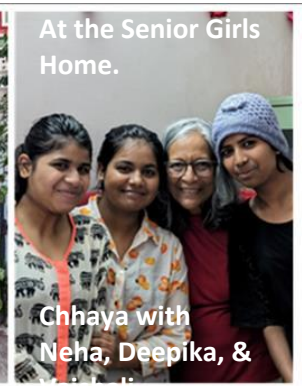
Asha with Pradeep & Arjun, graduates visiting.



Aniket & Rohit



The Senior Boys Home



At the Senior Girls Home.

Chhaya with Neha, Deepika, & ...

