



Home Address:
Shishur Sevay
17/2/7 Sahapur Main Rd
Kolkata 700038
West Bengal, India

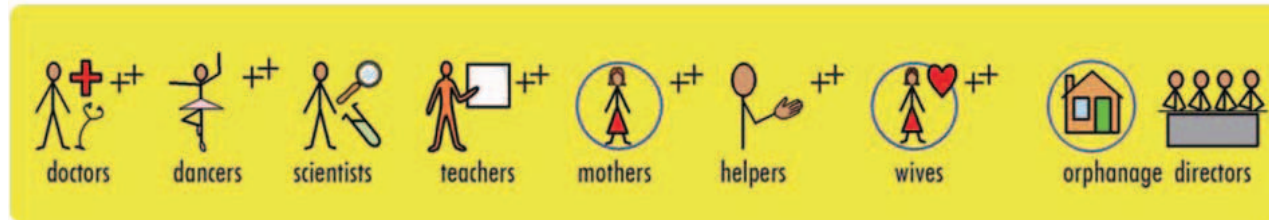
Regd. Office (Mail):
Siddhanth 2E
35 Sahapur Main Rd
Kolkata 700038
West Bengal, India

Phone: 91-033-24981120; Dr. Harrison: 91-9830240182
Website: www.shishursevay.org; Blog: <http://shishursevay.wordpress.com>
Email: Shishur.sevay@gmail.com

Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay is a registered society # S/IL/37263 of 2006-2007;
West Bengal Societies Act XXVI of 1961.

All contributions to Shishur Sevay fall under Income Tax Exemptions under
Section 80(G) of the Income Tax Act.

The Future Of Shishur Sevay



Shishur Sevay has potential for leadership even beyond creation of a model of care for orphan girls. The founders foresaw broad and powerful possibilities to create social change. The Registered Society therefore listed the following in the Memorandum of Association:

- A model of care of orphans as an alternative to institutionalization. Home, food, shelter, primary education, primary health care and vocational training for orphan children.
- A non-formal school to educate orphans and destitute children.
- Services for orphans, abused and destitute children, irrespective of religion, caste or class.
- Educational, financial and other support necessary for orphan children in institutions and in community.
- Meetings, workshops, tours, cultural programs, conference seminars, etc
- Prepare and publish articles, booklets, journals, newsletters, bulletins, posters, web pages etc.
- Conduct research studies and create video documentation to raise public awareness on social, cultural and developmental issues.
- Assist in relief work and aide for the benefit of the victims of natural and man-made disasters.
- Services, homes, education and rehabilitation for destitute and abused women.
- Services, homes and health care for poor and destitute old people.
- Projects for social, economic and cultural development of the disadvantaged.
- Establishing human rights of the individuals, children, the weaker sections and the minority communities of the society.
- Legal aid support and build awareness on human rights of children, women, handicapped, destitute and minority communities.
- Training on social awareness of women, children, aged, handicapped, destitute and other minority communities.
- Collaborate and cooperate with international and national agencies working for the economic and social improvement of children, women, disabled, aged, destitute and other minority communities.



Ways To Donate



From Within India



Shishur Sevay
17/2/7 Sahapur Main Road,
Kolkata, West Bengal 700038, India.

Phone: (033) 2498-1120
Dr. Harrison's #: 9830240182
Email: Shishur.sevay@gmail.com

Issue Cheque on behalf of "Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay"
Return receipt will include information for 80G Tax exemption.

International: Other than the United States of America



Shishur Sevay
17/2/7 Sahapur Main Road,
Kolkata, West Bengal 700038, India.

Phone: (033) 2498-1120
Dr. Harrison's #: 9830240182
Email: Shishur.sevay@gmail.com

For information on how to make a bank transfer, call or email.

From the United States of America

Friends
Of
Shishur
Sevay



Friends of Shishur Sevay
118A Fulton Street # 408
New York, NY 10038, USA

Friends of Shishur Sevay (USA)
Phone: (917)-361-5529
Email:

friendsofshishursevay@gmail.com

Checks can be made out to "Friends of Shishur Sevay"

"Friends of Shishur Sevay" is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service (Tax ID 45-4456929). Donations support Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay in Kolkata

treatment at Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy. Every child was in a program. Shishur Sevay resembled an Academy as much as an orphanage. In addition to children going out to school, classes were held in the Shishur Sevay classroom six days a week from 10 am to 6 pm on school days, and from 8 am to 6 pm on weekends and holidays. In the evening the girls had classical dance three days a week, and classical music two evenings a week. The girls also had responsibilities in the home for laundry, cleaning the kitchen after meals, and cleaning the classroom.

It was the beginning...



A Timeline of Shishur Sevay:

2000-2005

Research of NGO orphanages and sponsoring of children in schools located in West Bengal
Identified concerns

1. True orphans with no family connections were not seen in these NGOs
2. Lack of quality of education for girls, especially late learners
3. Reinforcement of caste and class limitations of learning and success
4. Government institutionalization of orphan girls, inadequate health, education, and role models of life outside of an institution.

2005

Plan developed to establish a model of non-institutional care of orphaned children

2006

Purchase of 900 sq. ft house, renovations, and addition of classroom. Society registration granted under West Bengal's Societies and Registration Act.

2007

Received license from the Department of Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal, to operate a home for orphaned children.

Welcoming Message from Dr. Michelle Harrison Mother and Founder – Childlife Preserve: Shishur Sevay

An Ordinary Miracle

Once upon a time there was an old little house on a tiny piece of land in Panchabatitala, where New Alipore meets Behala in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, South Asia, Planet Earth, The Milky Way galaxy, in the Universe. Then a miracle happened and it became home to 14 orphan girls, Fourteen girls suffering from various forms of social, nutritional, emotional, and educational deprivation, five of whom suffer from severe physical disabilities.



Dr. Harrison & Mrs. Jasvinder Kaur

The miracle is that this house is now one of laughter, joy, and big dreams for the future. This required enormous determination and plain stubbornness. It required a deep and unshakable belief that children and flowers bloom when they are fed, protected, and loved.

We are meeting the ordinary needs of the children, because they are no different than other kids. There is nothing special, no special treatments or programs. Shishur Sevay is structured around intensive education, not unlike most Indian families. The children have school, then tuition and other cultural programs, which include dance and art lessons. In fact, their needs are pretty simple, but they lack the parental and familial advocates to insure that they have these necessities. The Indian system puts meeting the needs of orphans in general at the bottom of the hierarchy. Just imagine where orphan girls and orphan girls with disabilities stand....

In becoming mother to these children, many forces combined: a sense of destiny, the voices of children calling to me, my Kolkata born daughter, and an awareness of hungry and abandoned children from the earliest times I can remember. My grandmother, herself an immigrant to America, used to take me to the ocean, point out over the water and tell me never to forget the hungry children across the world. In Kolkata I feel close to her spirit and her strength.

We want to show that what we give to our children is no different from what the international community, including India, agree are the rights of children, put simply, what they should have. That is all we are really doing, giving them what is rightfully theirs.

I look at the blossoming of our children with disability, so far beyond our expectations. They are each centers of love, giving and receiving unconditionally. They are the heart of our home. For the big girls, they are like the siblings they lost and we all celebrate each advancement, standing alone, rolling over, drawing a picture, beating a drum to rhythm, trying to talk, talking, and always glowing when they are held and talked to. Our children with disabilities are educated at home. Each morning, they get ready for class, like everyone else and eagerly await their teachers, their education, their bit of normalness of what should be the life of a child. They have a life! In fact their lives are full, with teachers, aunties, didis, and a lot of mother's love.

I am a dreamer and the dream grows. But this dream grows slowly, and it must grow from its foundation. A tree grows by feeding from its roots, not by pulling at its branches. We are growing our saplings in the best soil we can create, with warmth, sun, food, and structure for when they are set off balance by unhealed wounds and inner winds.

Childlife Preserve: Shishur Sevay got its name from my stay at Kaziranga Wildlife Preserve in Assam. It is home to the Indian one horned rhinoceros, wild elephants, and the domesticated elephants who take us for journeys through the tall grasses. In the evening when the domestic elephants came to be bathed in the creek and fed, I played football with an elephant calf as he learned to be comfortable with people.

I found myself thinking about that place often, and wondering, “Why can't there be a place like that for children, a Preserve, where they are not prey?” Thus the name, Childlife Preserve. And then because my life is a fusion of American and Bengali, there had to be a Bengali name so our home would be understood for what it is Shishur Sevay, in the interest/service of children.

In a world globally and locally full of violence and abuse, Shishur Sevay is an oasis, a place of growth, of healing, of love.

Dr. Michelle Harrison



History of Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay

Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay is a place where a child is safe. Orphans disconnected from family and community are protected. The girls at Shishur Sevay have been abandoned by their families and rejected for adoption. For the most part, they were considered too old for meaningful education. The mission of Shishur Sevay is to give them every opportunity to grow into educated and disciplined young women. The mission for the children with disabilities is to give them every opportunity and rehabilitative means possible so they can achieve minimal self sufficiency to communicate with and contribute to the world around them.

Twelve of our fourteen girls came from Sukanya Home, a Government of West Bengal institution for abandoned and lost children. They arrived at Shishur Sevay in February 2007. All came by Order of the Child Welfare Committee as established by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 (Act No. 56 of 2000). This is significant as the Government of West Bengal has a more rigorous screening and inspection system for approval of homes that will care for children who are in government custody as true orphans.

Within the first month, the following became clear:

- The children were in need of immediate medical and dental care as well as immunizations. One child arrived with malaria; another had open sores all over her body. Several required immediate tooth extractions.
- The children had all seen a lot of violence, murder, suicide, and had experienced all forms of abuse. They were at times tearful and fearful. They had no reason to believe that Shishur Sevay would be any different from places they had been before.
- Education in basic skills of language and math were an emergency if they were to eventually move into formal schooling. The girls arrived with NO previous schooling and did not know numbers or alphabets in Bengali; they did not know colors or shapes, and did not recognize the map of India. Though they spoke Bengali, it was a Bengali vernacular of the streets. The children did not understand HOW to study and learn, so these skills and disciplines had to be taught alongside the basic skills. Sitting still was a challenge for them.
- The children were energetic and enthusiastic about learning. This was also clear from the beginning. They actually knew what they had missed and threw themselves into the work.
- A strong and caring relationship between the older girls and the little ones with disabilities became evident very soon. The older children began tending to the children with disabilities, holding them, and talking about their own lost families and siblings. Those relationships have become even stronger and more important over time.
- The children with disabilities were listless and non-communicative when they arrived. Two had little control of their heads and limbs. One would just spin in circles; another would bite anyone or anything within range of her mouth. It was unclear as to what they might eventually be able to do. The initial focus with them was on food and holding. Their diets had been primarily biscuits and milk, as we were told and they arrived small and thin.

May 2007, just three months after their arrival, the older girls had mastered enough to be admitted to Class I at the local government primary school. They had learned the alphabet, numbers, colors,

Article 24:

“State Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.”

Healthcare is a priority. The girls came with a lot health issues, all of which have been addressed. They have been exceptionally healthy since.

All the children have been immunized (DPT, Polio, Hepatitis-B, MMR). Routine check ups are conducted for teeth, eye and skin.

When one of our staff members was diagnosed with TB, all the girls went through preventive procedures on par with those in the developed countries. One child suffers from seizures, was hospitalized and is on medications. Filtered drinking water is supplied to the girls. Toilets are hygienic and washed daily with disinfectant. The children with disability are receiving physiotherapy and have orthotic devices for helping them stand. Article 27:

“State Parties recognize the rights of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”

The standard of living at Shishur Sevay exceeds all parameters of food, sanitation, education, nurturing, health and arts. In essence, Shishur Sevay is challenging Indian social norms of caste and class and wants the girls to not live a life of shame because of where they came from. Rather, Shishur Sevay is helping them develop into confident, competent, and independent young women. Why should orphans be poor? Article 28:

“State Parties recognize the right of the child to education,.....”

All the children are getting education and/or vocational training. In addition to formal schooling, Shishur Sevay has teachers and classes six days a week. A wide variety of multimedia is used, including assistive technologies, educational DVDs and software, like Widgit and so forth. Their formal education began in a West Bengal Board local government school and now they are in an ICSE board school. One of the girls will be completing her education through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). The children with disability have special educators six days a week. One of the special needs child is going to a regular school. Article 31:

“States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest, leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts

Six of the girls are learning dance at Mamata Shankar's famous Udayan Dance Academy. Some of the girls are also getting singing and drawing lessons. The children with disabilities partake in daily activities, music and crafts. Some of them love watching educational DVDs. Shishur Sevay has a small garden and play area.

Twelve girls transferred from Sukanya Home by Order of the Government of West Bengal Child Welfare Committee (CWC). Their ages varied from 18 months to 11 years. The four youngest had profound disabilities.

Children enrolled in school and special rehabilitation programs. 80G certificate of tax exemption rewarded.

2010

FCRA registration under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976 was granted.

2011

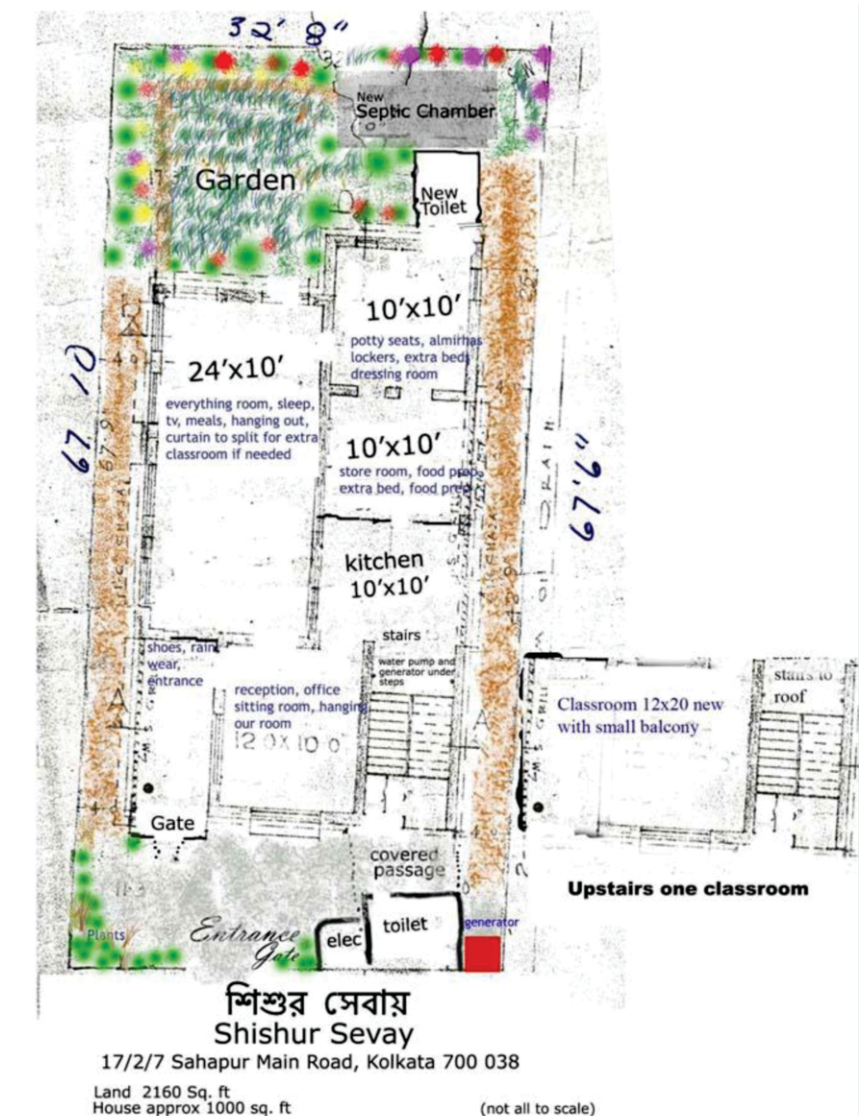
Additional classroom added. Top floor recreation/free space completed

2012

January , admission of two new girls as per government order of the Child Welfare Committee, West Bengal after finding two in a distressed orphanage, The total number of girls went up to 14. In just the short period of time since coming to Shishur Sevay, they have shown major improvement in their basic behavior and social skills.

Start of outreach program to other institutions in need. The first institution was identified through community service performed by the girls of Shishur Sevay. The girls and staff scrubbed, bathed, fed, and relocated children out of a deteriorating home.

Shishur Sevay's sister organization in the US, Friends of Shishur Sevay, was founded on 10th January, 2012 and has received the 501 (c) (3) certification. Friends of Shishur Sevay was formed mainly to provide support in fundraising and to collect donations in the US, on behalf of Shishur Sevay.



**Shishur Sevay
&
The United Nations Convention on the
Rights of the Children**

The International Community has struggled with and debated the “Rights of Children” for more than eighty years. The first “Declaration of the Rights of Children was endorsed by the League of Nations in 1924, and called the World Child Welfare Charter.

The United Nations adopted a more expanded version as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. 20th Nov. 1959. This date has been adopted as the Universal Children's Day.

The 1959 Declaration evolved into the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, often referred to as CRC or UNCRC, which was signed on 20th Nov, 1989 and became effective from 2nd Sept, 1990. Of the 193 countries in the world, only two have NOT ratified the CRC, namely the United States and Somalia. India ratified the Convention on Rights of the Child in December 1992, and is on the 20th year of its signing.

Shishur Sevay, as a model of non-institutional care of orphans, has looked to the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a framework in providing the care for our orphans. We are simply complying with what 191 nations, including India, agreed are the basic entitlements of children, particularly those under the direct protection of the state.

The Articles of the UNCRC and the compliance by Shishur Sevay

Article 2:

“The States Parties shall respect & ensure the rights set forth to each child without discrimination of any kind...”

Shisur Sevay put no restrictions on the girls we would take. When asked to choose among four children with disability, we simply took all four. We try our best to protect the children from all forms of discrimination.

Article 3:

“The state parties shall ensure that the institutions... conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision”

Shisur Sevay is a registered and licensed social organization and home for orphans. The department of Social Welfare conducts regular inspections of the home and the records. Staff are all experienced in their work.

Article 7 :

“The childshall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents”

We address these issues and identify obstacles and notify the government. When we got the girls, the government did not give all the information to the girls, regarding their names, ages, origins etc. They came without birth certificates.

The children have a right to know their family, even when it is not possible or desirable for the child to reside with them. It is important for them to know their roots, know where they came from; and as they grow these questions and the need for answers become stronger. Over the past few years we have been able to reconnect with the family of some of the children. We have maintained contact where it was possible and even when it has not gone well, it has brought closure for the child involved. Going into the future we plan to trace the families of the other girls as well.

Article 14:

“State Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.....”

The children of Shisur Sevay enjoy the freedom of expressing their views and thought. Daily prayer is held following Hindu customs and integrated with other religious beliefs and thoughts. We celebrate other religions' holidays, teachings and beliefs.

Article 19:

“State Parties shall take all.....measure to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect.....”

Our girls were already subjected to abuse. We provide both preventive and curative support related to physical or mental violence, injury or abuse and neglect. We have guards posted at the gate 24 hours of the day. CCTV has been installed in the building and that has added to the sense of security. CCTV has been particularly helpful in protecting the girls, especially the ones who can't defend themselves. An employee has been fired, based on CCTV footage, for manhandling a child.

Article 23:

“States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.....”

At present, there are 14 children of whom 5 are severely disabled. They suffer from a range of disabilities, some having multiple severe disabilities and some with psychiatric and cognitive impairments. Some show aftereffects of early exposure to violence. Because the needs and abilities of the children vary a lot, we have put together individualized education and/or vocational training tracks for all the children.



Dance

Six of the older girls have joined Mamata Shankar's famed Udayan dance academy. The girls are very excited about it as all of them really enjoy dancing.



With Mamata Shankar outside their dance school



In their new dance uniforms



Three of the older girls are not in outside schools because of some learning disability or behavior problems. They are being given basic English and Math classes at home, together with being trained as assistants to our special educators.

Special educators teach the children with disability six days a week. We have been using Widgit (www.widgit.com), a language using symbols, to help learning and make communicating easier. Not only is it helping children with disabilities communicate, but it has also proven useful in teaching English to the older girls

We have also begun using assistive apps on iPads. One of the girls with autism has found the iPad useful in communicating her wants and needs. We have just begun, and we realize that the potential is immense. We need to further explore this avenue for improving their ability even at basic communication. The first iPad was donated by BaalDan charities. Not only do we use iPads for special needs children but there are many programs that are beneficial for our older girls as well.

The children with seizures have been evaluated and treated at the Institute of Neuroscience, Kolkata. They get anti-seizure medicines regularly. Cardiac and orthopedic evaluations were done for some of the children at Medica Superspecialty Hospital and Apollo Gleneagles Hospital, Kolkata. All the little ones are given vitamin supplements every day.

The children get very nutritious food. They eat fish/egg/chicken four days a week and they get plenty of vegetables and dal. Apart from this they have milk, yogurt and a serving of fruit every day.



Education

We began with a model of teaching a wide variety of subjects, through multimedia, to bring the children up to social awareness in the world – but we shifted back to basic skills. Without literacy the children are totally dependent on electronic information, multimedia, and the superficiality of the media. But once they can read they can take in information and form opinions and philosophies of their own. Bengali was the medium of education for the first few years. For most it is their mother tongue, the language of their thoughts, emotions, and imagination. Recently they made a transition into English medium, as that will enhance their chances of a better future.

Starting April 2012 some of the girls, including a special needs child, started school at Upasana Academy in Maheshtala, Kolkata. It's an ICSE board, English medium school. Some have struggled a bit with the transition to English, but there has been steady progress. We now have word walls all over the house. These were made using Widgeit and the illustrations accompanying the words help in comprehension. Three of the girls are in Class VI, one in Class V, one in Class III and one will be completing her education through the National Institute of Open Schooling. The girl in class III has Cerebral Palsy, but is among the most eager to learn. She is the first special needs child in the school. We have been able to push for inclusion in a regular school. Inclusion should be the norm but most schools do not have the infrastructure or willingness to do it. We send a special educator and a childcare worker with her, a condition agreed upon by the school.

There has been a gradual shift in the attitude of the children, from thinking that they are not capable of learning to wanting to do well in school. This required more scrutiny of teacher attitudes regarding educating orphans.

Meeting the Needs of the Children

A Safe Environment



The girls are safe at Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay – a fundamental reason this home was established. The children need to FEEL safe and BE safe. This is done through constant vigilance

- The following measures are in place to protect our girls:
- Security guards are present 24/7.
- Everyone entering and leaving Shishur Sevay must sign in and out.
- Local police and the government's Child Welfare Committee work with us to protect the girls.
- Child safety protection policies are in place and enforced.
- CCTV has been installed in the building. This has been instrumental in identifying rare abusive behavior. Perpetrators have been fired.

Healthcare Services



All the children have been immunized (DPT, Polio, Hepatitis-B, MMR). Routine check ups are conducted for teeth, eye and skin. One child was seriously ill with malaria when she came and had a full course of treatment with no relapse. One child was hospitalized for her seizures. Dr. Ganga Prasad Roy, who is ex-officio member of the Management Committee, attends to the children.

When the girls came, more than five years ago, they were severely malnourished and several of them had skin infections. These have been successfully treated. Because of the nutritious diet, high level of hygiene and sanitation, the girls have been able to remain incredibly healthy, hardly requiring doctor visits, other than general checkups.

Trip to the bookstore:

Hectic schedule at school, lots of homework and an unsafe neighborhood has meant that the girls do not get to go out much. We have been thinking about ways to work around that and thinking up places they would like to go. Ten of the girls went to Crosswords bookstore, to select a book of their choice. They were very excited to browse through the stacks. Quite a few of them picked up educational books while the others picked novels and activity books.



Festivals:

Shishur Sevay celebrates numerous festivals. Some of these include Saraswati puja, Holi, Durga Puja and Christmas among others. This educates the girls on different religions and helps them to connect with their roots. They also partake in community events during these festivals and are routinely invited to weddings and other celebrations.



The Year That Was

This past year was full of exciting changes.

Communications

We have seen a dramatic increase in our communications. With the addition of our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts we have been able to create and further enhance our social network.

Website:

Shishur Sevay has a new website. It took a long time to get the website up and running due the fact that we did not want to compromise our vision of the final product. In the end we are pleased with the website's structure, function and aesthetic appearance. The website utilizes Widgit software which displays symbols along with text. Widgit and text re-sizer are among some of the features of the website that makes it accessible to the visual, hearing and learning impaired. We are looking forward to using this as a dynamic platform to connect with people who want to learn more about us. It will enable us to stay connected with them as well.

www.shishursevay.org



Facebook and Twitter:

Shishur Sevay took the plunge into social media networking last year. We are now on Facebook and Twitter. We also have a YouTube channel. These outlets have been vital in spreading awareness about Shishur Sevay and will continue to be critical for current and future fundraising efforts.



Shishur Sevay (Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay)



@shishursevay



<http://www.youtube.com/user/ShishurSevay>

Our promo video is a short depiction of life here at Shishur Sevay



Shishur Sevay Promo Video
by Maggie Redden · 7 months ago · 347 views
A sneak peek into life at Shishur Sevay!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvHIEhqvcOI

Accessibility

Wheelchair accessibility is not a common concept in Kolkata. Last year the ground floor of Shishur Sevay was made accessible. All the ground floor ledges and steps were ramped. The bathrooms already had handrails in place and were large enough to accommodate wheelchairs. This is a small step (ramp) towards the dream of being in a building which is fully accessible.



Activities and Events

Community Outreach

The children visited and volunteered, helping the children with disabilities at an NGO serving the disabled. While visits began as opportunities for community service, they became trips to provide food, feed and clean the children, and to assess the living conditions. Dr. Harrison and Shishur Sevay staff pressured the management to help hospitalize and relocate some of the multiply disabled children to other homes. After a few trips to the Child Welfare Committees in Kolkata and Baruipur (South 24 Parganas), five children were transferred. Two of them are now part of Shishur Sevay.



Trip to Mandarmani:

In the summer of 2011 all the kids, some of the board, and staff members went on a three day excursion to the beach town of Mandarmani. Everybody had a fantastic time out on the beach, running around playing in the sand and water. Living in the city means that the girls do not often get this type of experience.



Picnic at Duttapukur:

Earlier this year everybody went on a picnic to a farmhouse in Duttapukur, in the North 24 Parganas. With a lot of place to run around, play badminton and football, the girls had a lot of fun. They also tried their hands at pottery and spent a good part of the day having fun in the Jacuzzi. Initially, the girls were hesitant to get into the pool but Dr Harrison got in with the little ones and the big girls quickly followed. They splashed around in the pool for hours and the smiles never left their faces. .



Dance for Life, USA

Sisters Priya and Sreya Mukherjee, founders of Dance for Life USA, organized an evening of dance and music to fundraise for Shishur Sevay and two other organizations. The sisters are Kuchipudi dancers and apart from their own performance, they performed with our girls. Despite having only one evening of practice the girls excelled. Ganga even had her dance debut, with Sreya and Priya carrying her on to the stage for the end of our girls' dance to Vande Mataram. They were all a hit.



Our Supporters

Although Dr. Harrison continues to shoulder half the expenses, giving the girls the level of care that we give would not have been possible without the continuing support, in terms of funding and ideas, from various organizations and individuals. We would especially like to thank Asha for Education (Central New Jersey Chapter), Baal Dan Charities and Children's Hope India for helping to make Shishur Sevay the place it is today.

Asha for Education, CNJ Chapter

Asha for Education is a secular, nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing about change in India by focusing on basic education with the belief that education is a critical requisite for socio-economic change.

Asha CNJ has been our supporter since the very beginning. Their support has been crucial for furthering the education of the girls

Their website: <http://www.ashanet.org/>



Baal Dan Charities

Baal Dan's mission is "to help street children, slum children, and orphans in India as directly and efficiently as possible, while investing in ways to provide these children with an education."

Baal Dan Charities' support since 2010 has insured that the girls get nutritious food. Because of their donations the girls have a balanced diet. This in turn has kept the girls strong and healthy.

Baal Dan Charities has supported Shishur Sevay even before we received FCRA by offering administrative and development ideas. They recognized the uniqueness of the organization and have been a huge impetus to the development of our computer program. We are very excited about the iPad that Baal Dan donated last year, as that has become an important communication tool for the children with disabilities and a very useful educational tool for the older girls.

Their website: <http://baaldan.com/index.php>

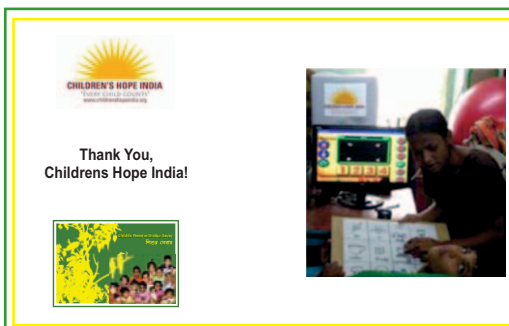


Children's Hope India:

Children's Hope India's mission is "to give impoverished children in India a chance for a brighter future. Clean water, regular medical care, a secure food supply, and access to education-gifts like these can revolutionize a child's life."

We really appreciate the support that we have received from Children's Hope India, since 2010, towards the education of the girls.

Their website: <http://www.childrenshopeindia.org/>



Visitors

Last year we had many wonderful visits from friends, professionals and well wishers. Many times they bring their own knowledge and experience, which helps to continually evolve life at Shishur Sevay.

Professor Prabhat Ranjan visited a few months back, as a friend had told him about Shishur Sevay and particularly Ganga. Dr. Ranjan is working with headgear that uses both facial movement and thought via EEG-like wave recording to move a mouse or type. The headgear was too big for Ganga, but she was interested -- and a bit naughty. This technology could be very useful in the future.



Maggie's family, Mariya and Dr. Patricia Redden visited India this summer and they spent a few days at Shishur Sevay. Four of our girls, who are being home schooled, went to Science City with them. Everyone enjoyed figuring out the exhibits and playing in the park. One of the little girls, who came to Shishur Sevay earlier this year, was a little scared at first, but by the end she was full of excitement. However, she refused to go on any of the rides or see the dinosaurs.



We had a wonderful visit from Rosalind Forber and Wendy Forber-Pratt. Rosalind, with her background in special education, gave valuable suggestions and information on resources we could use for the girls. Her evaluations were very useful in planning new strategies. We also got a crash course in some of the assistive iPad apps, and got started by getting apps like proloquo2go, Taptotalk and others. iPads are becoming an important tool for teaching and communication at Shishur Sevay.



Four US university/college students, who were in Kolkata this summer learning Bengali under the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, spent half a day with the children. It was a day filled with music and fun. A couple of them visited again later.



Some adoptees were visiting Kolkata, through the TIES program, to reconnect with their place of birth. They spent half a day at Shishur Sevey sharing their life stories with the girls.



Volunteers from STRAY, an organization for taking care of and spreading awareness about stray animals, organized a program for the children. The girls are very sensitive towards animals, so a lot of what the volunteers said reinforced what they knew already. They also learned more about taking care of the environment. There was a quiz based on the presentation that the volunteers had put up, followed by a drawing competition. We had some very enthusiastic participation from the children.



Kim Coleman, a lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Curtin University, Perth, Australia visited with eight students of occupational therapy and physiotherapy. It was an exciting and instructive

visit, spread over four days, where they spent time with the children and staff, teaching them the correct way to carry, feed and bathe the children with disabilities. Their assessment of the children's needs will set the framework for the Curtin University students visiting later this year.

One of the dreams of Dr. Harrison was to get experts from all over the world to visit and work with us to make the life of the children better. This was one such occasion, when her dream and efforts came together, in the form of this visit.



New Faces This Year

Kasturi Basu - Joined Shishur Sevay in July 2012. She now resides in Kolkata, teaching physics at St.Xavier's College and in her spare time has become an integral part of our teaching staff. Her focus is on physics and the science, doing a lot of hands-on experiment and real-life application, of the topics covered in the school curriculum. Basu is a PhD candidate from Rutgers University and first got involved with Dr. Harrison and Shishur Sevay through the Central New Jersey Chapter of Asha for Education.

Sudipendu Dutta - A Kolkata native, Sudip joined Shishur Sevay in May 2012. His role at Shishur Sevay has evolved and he has become one of our strongest teachers, working with all age groups, with a focus on Bengali. Prior to joining Shishur, Sudip worked as a customer representative at Rula Group and has corporate social responsibility experience as a retainer for TATA Consultancy Services, Dutta is an active member of the Advocacy Group of Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy (IICP, Ankur), which raises awareness, through programs, the rights of disabled individuals. An independent person living with Cerebral Palsy in Kolkata, Dutta is a prime example to our girls of overcoming obstacles.

Maggie Redden - Paralympian and former Penn State University alumna and athletic department staff Redden joined Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay in January 2012 as the Director of Communications. A Polio survivor and an adoptee from India, she has signed on as an intern for a year, to assist in the communications and fundraising effort at Shishur Sevay. In her time here she has gone beyond her initial job description to include teaching, helping with daily activities around the house and mentoring the girls. She has become 'didi' (elder sister) and friend to them. Seeking new mountains to climb, Redden decided to leave New Jersey, her home since age two. Among her accomplishments are competing in track as a member of Team USA at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, being a Miss New Jersey contestant, and playing the harp at Carnegie Hall as a member of Eily O'Grady Harp Orchestra.

Purba Rudra - After completing her PhD in geography from Rutgers University, Rudra joined Shishur Sevay in November 2011 as the Academic Director. A Dhanbad, India native, she currently resides in Kolkata. Dr. Rudra is the main teacher for the girls in class V and VI and spends a large chunk of the day tutoring all subjects. When she is not teaching, she helps with administrative work and grant writing. Rudra learned of Shishur Sevay through volunteering with Asha for Education (CNJ) where she first met Dr. Harrison in 2007 and her Mphil from Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2004. A woman of many talents, Rudra has completed two marathons and is currently learning to play the tabla.

Interested to join Shishur Sevay

Interns and volunteers always bring new ideas and fresh approaches to the work we are doing. Shishur Sevay provides an opportunity to actively participate in a cutting edge model of inclusive living and education for girls, some of whom have multiple disabilities. As an intern would have the opportunity to learn how to run an NGO/orphanage. The intern would learn about every aspect from laundry and hiring to laws, regulations, finance, registrations, and record-keeping. For more information call or email.

To get a sense of life at Shishur Sevay, for an intern, read Maggie Redden's blog: maggieredden.tumblr.com

Our Team



The Leadership Team: They are an integral part of the girl's lives and are on the scene at Shishur Sevay everyday.

From L to R:
Mrs. Jasvinder Kaur (Vice President),
Dr. Michelle Harrison (Founder and Secretary),
Mrs. Seema Gupta (Joint Secretary)

An effective governing body is essential for any organization to run smoothly. Some of board members are an important part of daily life at Shishur Sevay. Below are the current board members of Shishur Sevay.

Hon. Judge (Retd) S. S. Ganguly (President), Mrs. Jasvinder Kaur (Vice President), Mr. Jyotirmay Das (Treasurer), Dr. Michelle Harrison (Founder & Secretary), Mrs. Seema Gupta (Joint Secretary), Mrs. Shanti Devi (Member), Mr. Pratul Saha (Member). Ms. Cecilia Harrison, and Mr. Andrei Volik

The Teachers and Staff

A big thank you to our staff who make Shishur Sevay the place that it is!

Srirupa Biswas - Accompanies Ganga to school everyday as her special educator. she joined Shishur Sevay in 2010..

Anindita Dutta - Is an integral part of the teaching staff for our younger group of girls, five of whom are special needs children. She Joined Shishur Sevay in 2010. Both Anindita and Srirupa help some of the older girls with arts and crafts.

Maitrayee Panja - Is our senior special educator, who has been with us for two years. She is working on expanding our assistant technology program.

Kaberi Pal - Is an assistant teacher who helps with physiotherapy and daily activities for our special needs children.

Chaitali Begam - She has been a part of Shishur Sevay since the beginning. She taught the older girl when they were in a Bengali medium school. Currently, she works with the special needs children and helps with accounting and finances.

Harpreet (Preeti) Kaur - She is a current college student and 'didi' to the older girls. She tutors all subjects with a focus on Hindi. She is the daughter of Jasvinder Kaur, our Vice President.

Bijoy Das - Is our Operations Manager. He takes care of the purchase of supplies, upkeep of the home and property, and is our official chauffeur. All the kids refer to him as MaMa (uncle).

See our "New Faces" section for Kasturi Basu, Sudipendu Dutta, Maggie Redden, and Purba Rudra.