



Shishur Sevay
To Not Feel Alone in the Universe

LIFE AT SHISHUR SEVAY

Quarterly Activity Report July – September 2021

From the Founder:

The first steps of Succession: Shishur Sevay's Six Year Plan

There are two major mistakes that Founders can make: One is to expand beyond their means (which we didn't do). The other is to believe they will live forever.

Our first necessary change had to be my moving out of the front office/reception room. That was the place to be while building the organization, but it was long past the time for others to take over much of what I was doing.



Working in my new studio office

With my personal funds I built a 150 sq.ft. studio in the back of the house. Now I was off the front line; others were picking up the responsibilities and enjoying their involvement in the daily life of the girls and the staff. In the picture I'm sitting in the studio. It is connected to the big room (see wheelchair) and beyond that is the front office where I used to be.

Next: Where would we find the future leadership? We have a dedicated staff and Board, but no one who would take on the massive responsibility. I looked to "family" as a model, a family legacy that needs to continue. The lockdowns and adaptations needed to get through the COVID-19 pandemic made clear the growing maturity of the older girls. We talked with them and met with enthusiasm mixed with trepidation. We brought two of the girls onto the Board as full voting members. We planned out specifics of their education and training that would increasingly prepare them for the roles ahead.

This plan has also given a sense of long term stability to all the children. No one is waiting to see who takes over when I am gone. From the beginning I've told them this was their home. They are coming to really understand that they are Shishur Sevay.

*Dr. Michelle Harrison
Founder and Secretary*

JULY



• We have become masters of multi-purpose space utilization. One large room with physiotherapy in the foreground and remote online Kalahi class are going on at the same time. (left)

In the classroom, monsoon laundry hangs to dry while class and studying going on. (right)



- Tata Consumer Products donated two laptops and an AC for this year's giving as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). We have been using computers in our inclusive education program for the last ten years. We have used iPads, Tobii eye trackers, augmentive speech devices, PC's and laptops starting with the Window XP. Many of them are very old and not functioning well so the two new ones are appreciated.
- Our financial record keeping is now online and can be done remotely, while our hard copy registers and voucher files remain in the office at Shishur Sevay. We can function more smoothly even if another wave or another round of restrictions is put in place.

AUGUST

- Aankiey Art Academy organized a two-day online art workshop on Godna painting. First the story material was sent. The girls chose their part of the story/motifs and made them before the next session.

Godna means tattooing and this form of painting has it's origin in tattoos done by tribes in the northern and central parts of India. Godna paintings is a rare form of madhubani painting



Godna Painting online workshop on progress

Children's Smart Centre - A New Beginning

- Because of Covid restrictions we had not been able to begin the Children's Smart Centre in April 2020. After waiting so long for the situation to improve and with hopes of a post Durga Puja opening up of schools we started home visits to the prospective students who had enrolled/applied earlier.

Dr. Harrison and Ria Nag, our communications director, had detailed discussions with parents about how best we could help.

Families were unanimous in pointing out that online classes wouldn't work with the nursery age children none with interest.

You can't hand over a smart phone to a three year old child. Our target sector cannot afford smart phones or internet connections. We have been putting together study material and visiting them once a week with new material and checking on progress.



Dr. Harrison giving out the study materials.



Reviewing applications for CSC



Children's Smart Centre providing study kit and study materials



Dr. Harrison teaching the body parts

We are thankful to Equal Health, Australia for helping us to start the program.

We are grateful to Vesuvius India Ltd. for keeping faith in us and keeping this project alive, even when we were not able to begin when we had planned. If things go well, there are indications that schools might open after Durga Puja. We look forward to the possibility of the children being able to be in a real classroom with their peers. Till then we will go to the students.

- Dr. Harrison moved into her new workspace. It is built of steel and concrete board on a concrete slab. Begun last February and slated to be done in one month, lockdowns delayed completion until late August. We then renovated the reception room and moved Administration and Finance into that space. The expense of the construction is borne by Dr. Harrison all by herself. She remains a major donor.



Steel and concrete board structure



Painting on progress



Dr. Harrison in her new office



Grihaprabesh or puja being done on the first day after the completion of work

- Janmashthami, celebrating the birth of lord Krishna was observed. As has now become the norm, the girls and massis themselves prepared for and did all the rituals.
- We hoisted the Indian flag on the Independence Day.
- In a first, the Asha for Education site visit was done online. Asha Cornell did a virtual site visit. They met and spoke to our teachers and students along with the management. The advantage was that we met more members of the Asha Cornell team (site visits are usually done by one or two persons) and more of them met and talked with the staff and students here. Asha for Education, along with Children's Hope India have been two of the longest time supporters of the education program at Shishur Seva.



Sanjana pulling Lord Krishna's swing

- All those who were eligible, got their second shots of the Covid-19 vaccine.
- We moved to in-person almost completely, barring a few karate and dance classes that still happen online.
- Morning assembly everyday ends with blessings. The girls rotate leading the assembly. On this day Bono used Tobii to choose "happiness". (Right)



THE IMPACT

- Shishur Sevay made a crucial decision in the beginning to forego government support because it requires we discharge children after 18 years and set them out in the world on their own. Shishur Sevay's goal has always been to raise the girls to independence and to help them secure their future as we do in any family.
- The development of the new succession plan furthers this objective and demonstrates what can be done because we are doing it. For children a home cannot be a temporary landing place.
- Shishur Sevay is successfully preparing itself for future with a shifting in leadership that will continue to build on our work while considering the principles on which it was founded. Shishur Sevay continues to demonstrate our successful commitment to inclusive education particularly among the poor in our community.

Government of India new rules for FCRA Amendment Act 2020 demanded that we open a new account with SBI, at one particular branch, New Delhi and then get approval from Ministry of Home Affairs, Foreign Division, India. We did it all.

Foreign Contribution

Account Name: Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay
SBI New Delhi Main Branch, 11 Parliament Street,
New Delhi - 110001
FCRA Current Account No: 40108969339
IFSC Code: SBIN0000691
SWIFT Code: SBININBB104

Domestic Contribution

Account Name: Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay
RBL Bank Limited, New Alipore Branch
Account No: 309013832148
IFSC Code: RATN0000280

ONLINE DONATION

[U.S. Donation : friendsofshishursevay.org](https://www.friendsofshishursevay.org)

[Indian Donation : shishursevay.org](https://www.shishursevay.org)

Friends of Shishur Sevay is a 501(c)(3)
not-for-profit organization

All Donations toward Childlife Preserve
Shishur Sevay are tax deductible under 80G