



# NEWS for friends of asha

Issue #65 January 2015

Asha is a community health and development society dedicated to improving the lives of slum dwellers in Delhi

*Asha wishes all its supporters a very Happy and Prosperous New Year!*

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## British Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change plays cricket with Asha students



Mr Edward Davey, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change UK, entering Kanak Durga slum colony with Dr Kiran

On 25th August 2014, Mr Edward Davey, UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, visited Asha's community-based centre at Kanak Durga slum colony.

Dr Kiran briefed Mr Davey about the work of Asha and later introduced him to the members of Mahila Mandal (Women's Association) and Bal Mandal (Children's Association), and college students from the slum with whom he had a

wonderful interaction. While addressing the community, Mr Davey said, "It is so good to be here to see the work that Asha has done to help young children and their families the way they have empowered women and children so that they can control their own lives".

The minister took a few minutes to play cricket with Asha students, and there was tremendous excitement and joy all around. He also presented some cricket gear to the students and wished them good luck for future matches.



Mr Davey giving his best wishes to Manish, one of the Asha college students

## Irish Minister Damien English visits Asha

On 15th November 2014, the Irish Minister for Skills, Innovation and Research, Damien English TD, visited Asha's Dr Ambedkar slum colony.

As he was on a trade visit to India to promote education and research opportunities in Ireland for Indian students, the Minister was particularly delighted to hear from Asha students who have completed university studies and internships with prestigious companies and are now either in full-time employment or hoping to be so soon. Highlighting the importance of education, he encouraged

them to pursue their dreams and to be role models for the younger children coming up behind them.

He was welcomed into the homes of two Asha students in order to see their living conditions first hand. And he was impressed by how hard working and talented the Asha students were.

"To understand what Dr Martin has done here, along with yourselves [The Asha Team], in

health, in empowerment and education brings joy to my heart and to see ... that the young people here will have an education and will go on to have a career, maybe all over the world," said Mr English while talking to the Asha team.



Mr English poses for a photograph with the women's group at Dr Ambedkar slum colony

## Australian High Commission hosts cricket match for Asha students

*While thousands of children in India are passionate about playing cricket, there is an immense lack of opportunities to play and train in a structured environment. With no open spaces and family incomes barely enough to fulfill even basic needs, the situation is even worse in the slum areas.*



Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Bernard Philip, presents uniform t-shirts to the Asha students during a practice session organised earlier this month.

Addressing this, the Australian High Commission hosted a T-20 cricket match for Asha's university students on 18th October 2014. Organised to allow the students to receive training and play in a professional environment, the match was also a wonderful opportunity to foster the relationship between the Australian High Commission (AHC) and Asha.

The teams, comprising both High Commission staff and Asha students playing together, were captained by Mr Srikant and Mr Ravi from the Australian High Commission. Srikant's team scored 100 runs in 16 overs while Ravi's team won by 4 wickets. Asha's Founder and Director, Dr Kiran applauded both the teams for their wonderful performance in the match.

This was followed by a lunch reception at the Australian High Commission



Dr Kiran and Ms Genevieve Clune applauding the cricket team after the match

where Ms Genevieve Clune, wife of the Australian Deputy High Commissioner talked warmly about the High Commission's work with Asha and congratulated both the teams on their performance.

Prior to the match, the AHC had also hosted two training sessions giving an opportunity to the Asha boys to train with the High Commission's cricket team. Australian sports and fitness equipment manufacturer Spartan Sports also sponsored the teams' uniforms.

## Australian Envoy for Women and Girls Natasha Despoja applauds Asha Programmes

On 11th October 2014, the Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, Ms Natasha Stott Despoja visited the Dr Ambedkar slum colony. Warmly welcomed by Dr Kiran and the community, Ms Despoja had a hearty interaction with the members of Asha's children's association and women's association, and college students.

On a visit to India to promote Australia's international engagement with and support for gender equality and the empowerment of women, Ms Despoja was highly appreciative of the Asha model. She was extremely happy to see the changed position of girls from the slum communities. Unlike their mothers, they are being given opportunity and encouragement in opting for higher education, and are

accepting internships and jobs at some of the most reputed organisations in Delhi.

"Many countries around the world, including India, are investing in women and girls. Their education is the most important way to develop prosperity and growth in countries around the world - it is the silver bullet for human development," she said, commending the efforts of Asha.

Extending further support to Asha Programmes, Ms

Despoja also presented a grant of Rs 10 lakh towards the education and empowerment of women and girls from slum communities in Delhi.



Dr Kiran presenting Ms Despoja with a copy of the book *A Journey of Hope* as a memento of her visit



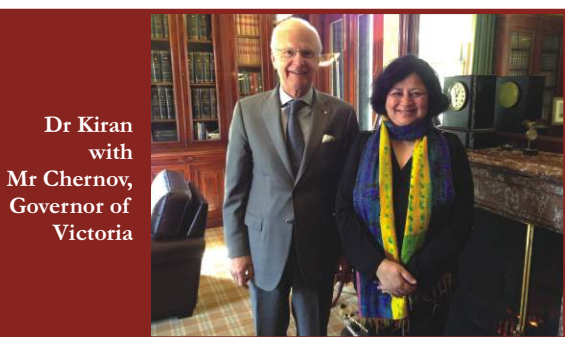
## Dr Kiran's trips to Australia, Northern Ireland and the US

*In the months of September and October, Dr Kiran made highly successful trips to Australia, Northern Ireland and the United States. Each of these visits allowed her to meet Asha supporters, attend fundraising events in aid of Asha, and build up new partnerships. We would like to thank Asha supporters and friends for organising Dr Kiran's trips and for the warmth and hospitality they extended while she was there. Here's a brief summary of her stay in each country.*

In Australia, Dr Kiran had the immense pleasure of meeting with the Australian Foreign Minister Ms Julie Bishop MP at the Australian Parliament. Ms Bishop fondly recalled her visit to Asha last year and paid tribute to the work of the organisation. She promised whatever support she and her ministry could offer in the years to come. To thank Ms Bishop for her support, university students from Asha communities sent her a photograph from the visit inscribed with warm words of gratitude.



Dr Kiran presenting Ms Bishop with the photograph from Asha students



Dr Kiran with Mr Chernov, Governor of Victoria

On 5th September 2014, Governor of Victoria, Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC hosted a lunch reception to honour Dr Kiran at Government House in Melbourne. The Governor very warmly welcomed Dr Kiran and remarked on his pride at the engagement between India and Australia that is brought about by the work of Asha. While addressing the gathering, Dr Kiran spoke about the recent developments in Asha and thanked Mr Chernov for hosting the lunch.

In Northern Ireland, Dr Kiran had the privilege to call on Junior Ministers Jonathan Bell and Jennifer McCann at the Northern Assembly in Stormont. This visit was made to explore the possibility of bringing teams of young people from Northern Ireland to Asha as part of the Assembly Initiative titled "Together: Building a United Community."

She also had the opportunity to meet with many supporter groups and funding organisations including McClay Foundation, Ballymena Academy, Methodist College Belfast, Rainey Endowed School Magherafelt, Wallace High School Lisburn, Royal Armagh School Lisburn and Holywood Parish Church, amongst others.



Left to right: Junior Minister Bell, Dr Kiran, and Junior Minister McCann at Stormont Assembly, Northern Ireland



Dr Kiran addressing the Microsoft employees

While in the US, Dr Kiran visited friends of Asha in Seattle and Orange County.

One of the highlights of her visit was an invitation to address the employees of Microsoft Research, Seattle, and share with them the work of Asha over the past 26 years. **It gives us immense joy to announce that Microsoft Seattle has adopted Asha as one of the charities they support, meaning that each donation that a Microsoft employee makes to Asha will be matched by the organisation.**

Dr Kiran attended numerous meetings and musical evenings at the homes of Asha supporters across Orange County and Seattle. She also spoke at the annual gathering of TiE Seattle, a not-for-profit global network of entrepreneurs and professionals.

## Volunteering Round-up

*In the Autumn of 2014 Asha was privileged to receive many volunteers who spent time across a number of slums. Here is a summary of some of the teams and the wonderful work they undertook:*

**Asha was once again glad to welcome a team of 25 people from Ballymena, Northern Ireland.** From students to builders, from doctors to home makers, the team housed diverse talent. Split into four groups they worked in different slum colonies and engaged in a wide variety of tasks at each place. Inspired by Asha values of gratitude and generosity, members of the children's and women's associations worked hand-in-hand with the team in each area.



The Ballymena builders constructing the house of Rajendra Yadav in Saavda slum colony

The **Rainey Endowed School** team of 12 students and three teachers from Magherafelt, Northern Ireland volunteered in Kusumpur Pahadi slum colony for over a week. During this time, the team painted the Asha centre in the slum with vibrant murals and also engaged in English conversation classes with the college and high school students from the community.



Students from Rainey Endowed School painting the Asha centre at Kusumpur Pahadi

**Wallace High School Team** comprising 9 students and 4 teachers, including Principal Deborah O'Hare, visited Asha for the first time this October. They painted the children's resource centre in Mayapuri slum colony with vibrant murals and also engaged in value based discussions with young students.



The Wallace High School team with children's group in Mayapuri

**St Stephen's Church Team** led by Amanda Clegg, worked for a week at Tigri. It was a very enriching experience for the whole team who refurbished the Asha centre there and spent time with youth from the slum. Many people in the team said that spending time in the slums has made them more grateful for things they would otherwise take for granted in life.



St Stephen's team during a craft workshop with the children's group at Tigri slum colony

Also visiting us was a team of 3 teachers from **Clifton-upon-Dunsmore Primary School**, Rugby, UK who worked at Seelampur slum colony. Over the past few years the school has been supporting Asha's Higher Education Programme and has also included Asha in the school's curriculum.

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Asha is looking for **Medical Doctors** who are interested in volunteering in the Delhi slums. The doctors' role will be to help with running outpatient clinics in our slums as well as training our nurses. We are also looking for volunteers who can **teach English & Computers** in creative ways. For more information, please contact us at [info@asha-india.org](mailto:info@asha-india.org).



## Asha Supporters organise Curry Nights across UK



A picture from Asha supporter Ken Colville's curry and quiz night in Scotland

Over the autumn and winter Asha supporters from the UK warmed up with a curry for a great cause, by taking part in the Big British Curry Night. Twelve events

were held spanning all the way from Scotland to South East England and raising close to £4000 in aid of Asha. Guests were treated to an array of different curries and Indian dishes, including some favourite recipes from Asha staff that were supplied to the hosts.

This was the second year of the Big British Curry Night and Friends of Asha, GB were delighted with the growing number of supporters who took part in the event. The concept was simple and successful,

helping to raise awareness of the charity amongst those who may never have heard about it before.

'We had a great evening with lots of talk of Asha. I made all the recipes supplied by the staff in Delhi, my guests loved it and it gave the night even more meaning. Roll on next year!' says Mark Baines who organised the curry night in Bath.

*Some further Big British Curry Nights are going to be held in the New Year. If you would like to join them and take part, please get in touch with our Fundraising and Promotions Coordinator, **Lucy Barbour** at [lucy.barbour@asha-india.org](mailto:lucy.barbour@asha-india.org) to order your event pack and for more information.*

### Rotary Club Donates Healthcare Equipment

On 29th August 2014, the Rotary Club of Delhi Southend donated medical equipment, including blood pressure monitors, stethoscopes, baby weighing scales, vaccine carriers and more, to be used in Asha's health projects. After a highly interactive meeting with the Asha Team, Mrs and Mr Mukesh Lekhi from the Rotary Club also presented Asha with a donation to mark their 30th wedding anniversary.



Asha's Senior Programme Coordinator, Ayesha Seymour receives the generous gift from Mrs and Mr Lekhi

Dr Kiran with Harish Rao and Australian World Orchestra team



### Australian World Orchestra visits Asha

On 29th August, Mr Harish Rao, member of the Board of Directors of Australian Friends of Asha visited Asha along with members of the Australian World Orchestra: Mr Alexander Briger (Artistic Director), Ms Gabrielle Thompson (CEO) and Mr Neil Thompson (Chairman). Inspired to hear about the community's struggles and achievements, the visitors spoke highly of their grit and determination.

### Rio Tinto donates for Diwali

Rio Tinto (India) employees once again decided to forego their Diwali gifts this year and instead donated the money towards Asha's Higher Education Programme. In the past three years, the Australian mining giant has provided internships to over 15 students from the slums, who had never before stepped into a professional environment. Rio Tinto employees are now also seeking to get involved in Asha's mentorship programme in the new year.



Asha Programme Officers, Shubhra Sharma and Anurag Paul receive the cheque from Rio Tinto

The Asha family would like to convey its deepest condolences to the family of James Gray who passed away on 22nd October 2014. In September 2011, along with two friends from school, he spent time volunteering in an Asha community at Kalkaji slum colony. The Asha team and the community in Kalkaji remember him with much fondness and organised a memorial service for him. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who donated to Asha in the memory of James; your kindness is truly overwhelming. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

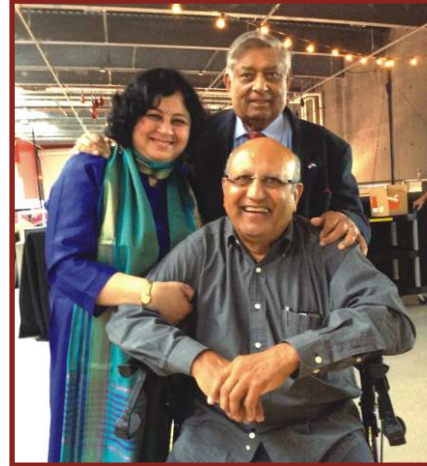
# Friends of Asha

If you want to contribute to the lives of poor slum dwellers in Delhi, then you can become a Friend of Asha. Join the Asha family, which exists to help the downtrodden and oppressed to live a life of dignity and hope. Friends of Asha make a huge contribution to our activities through donations, fundraising events, volunteering and raising awareness of our work.

On 8th November 2014, supporters in California held the **14th annual Asha Fundraiser at the beautiful Hall Winery in Napa Valley**. Organised with a view to spread awareness and raise funds for the work of Asha, the event was attended by long-time supporters of Asha along with many new friends.

Asha would like to extend its sincere thanks to Lana Stanley, Jim and Sandy Jones, Kailash and Gisela Chaudhary, Rohit Patel, Craig and Kathryn Hall and Congressman Mike Thompson and Mrs Janet Thompson for their time and efforts in organising this event. We would also like to thank all the supporters, attendees and donors who made the day a huge success.

*There are all sorts of things you could do to get involved with Asha. If you organise a fundraiser, please send us details and photos, and you may be in this space next time!*



Dr Kiran with amazing supporters, Kailash Chaudhary and Rohit Patel at the event

## Supporters from the US Can Make Tax Deductible Donations to Asha

Friends of Asha, USA can collect funds for Asha from the USA.

**To make a Tax Deductible Donation**, please make your check payable to "**ASHA (USA)**" and mail to:  
Louanne Hempton, ASHA (USA), 96 Sweetwater Ave #6, Bedford, MA 01730, USA  
Email: [lhempston@hotmail.com](mailto:lhempston@hotmail.com) | (EIN #010557632)

## You can also send your contribution directly to Asha

**To donate online**, please visit our website at [www.asha-india.org/getinvolved/donate](http://www.asha-india.org/getinvolved/donate)

**To donate by cheque**, fill in the form below with your complete details, make a cheque payable to "**Asha Community Health and Development Society**" and mail to: The Administrator, Asha Society, Ekta Vihar, RK Puram Sector 6, New Delhi 110022, INDIA

Please note that due to very high bank charges, Asha is no longer able to process foreign checks for values less than \$100. To ensure that your donation can have the greatest impact, we encourage you to donate online or send your cheque of less than \$100 to Friends of Asha, USA (see above)

### Yes, I want to become a 'Friend of Asha'

My contribution of \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

I would like to become a Hope Giver and contribute \_\_\_\_\_ every month. My first contribution is enclosed. Please send me a standing order form.

I particularly want to contribute towards \_\_\_\_\_

Please keep me informed about Asha's activities. My email is \_\_\_\_\_

Full name & title \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

## How we will put your money to work

\$60 will cover one college preparation workshop for 30 children

\$95 will provide a student with new clothes for university

\$130 will buy books for one child for one year

\$425 will pay the university tuition fees for one child for one year

\$950 will cover all university expenses for one child for one year

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