

# SARVASHUBHAMKARA

*“All the joy of this world derives from the wish for another’s joy;  
all the suffering of this world derives from the wish for one’s own joy.”*

[C8th Bodhicharyavatara VIII:129]



## NEWSLETTER 2012

Dear Sarva friends and supporters,



This year, personal circumstances have prevented us from paying our annual visit to India for the first time in nineteen years. This does not, of course, mean that Sarva’s work has slowed in any way and we continue to rely upon your generous, on-going commitment to enable the socially-ostracised people with whom we work to transform their often isolated and difficult lives.

We have always taken great care to ensure that all our projects are able to continue without our physical presence, ensuring that those we support can quickly re-establish and maintain their self-sufficiency, self-respect and independence. Our principal policy ever remains that **we determine the smallest interventions that will ensure the most significant and long-lasting results**. We also keep close contact with our friends ‘on the ground’ to keep constantly up-to-date with the colonies’ needs and the progress of all our projects.

In the second of the three leprosy colonies on which we keep an eye, the rebuilding works, and with them the delivery of water, sewage and power, continue in typically ‘relaxed’ Indian style. Somewhat frustrating, but also an inevitability when undertaking such projects on the Subcontinent. However, the houses are now built, a concrete road is laid and the electricity supply is connected. You will also be pleased to know that all the colony’s water continues to be supplied by the water pump we had installed back in 2006. In addition, the extraordinary vegetable, spice and lentil gardens the residents created for themselves, and which have afforded their entire, ostracised community total self-sufficiency in food, after they asked Sarva to organise the building of a 1,400-foot enclosing wall, are now fast returning to their pre-rebuilding, fertile state.



Our students keep in regular contact through letters, emails and Facebook messages. Every one of Sarva’s qualified students is in work, with some of our nurses now able to help support their younger siblings. To their families, this is nothing less than a miracle.



This summer, Rakesh, Archana and the two Sunitas have completed their Sarva-supported education and all four have been immediately accepted into fulltime employment: Rakesh in Hotel Management, and the three girls as nurses and midwives in private hospitals.

One of the Sunitas wrote this week to tell us she is now specialising in cardiac care at the Bharat Heart Institute,



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whilst the other has written to announce that she has just delivered her first babies!

Sushila, the first of our Sarva nurses/ midwives to qualify, is one such example. Having come from a leprosy colony, she is now flourishing in full-time employment and earning sufficient money to not only support herself, but also to help her mother, who until now has had to survive by begging. Sushila is also providing all-essential 'book-

and-food money' to her younger brother, Anurag, who Sarva is supporting through university.



Sunanda, one of our newest intake of trainee nurses, whose family lives in the slum where two of the leprosy colonies in which we work lie, writes: *"My studies are going well and THANK YOU once again for helping me to carry on my studies. I have passed my p.t.s. exam this month with 84.8% and came first in my class. I'll try to keep the good work like this only. Once again thank you so much for helping me."*

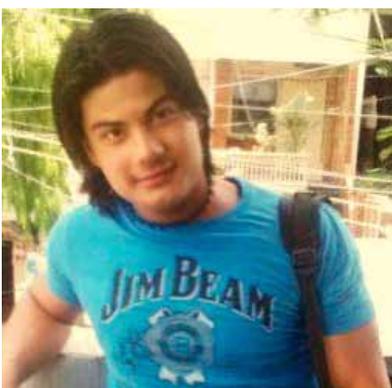


We have also heard that Prabhawati is flourishing in her second year of nursing training. Exposure to college life and being able to mix freely with her peers for the first time in her life has brought marked and positive changes to her personality. In addition, as her confidence and self-worth have grown, she has also begun to take far better care of herself physically.

This month, three more Sarva nurses begin their training. In addition to Usha and Champa, we have our first male nurse, Suresh. He left the hostel for children from leprosy backgrounds with which we work some years ago to return to his colony, where his severely disabled parents required his help. He was only recently brought to our attention by the other boys we are supporting. Upon making enquiries, we discovered that his dream to study nursing was such that he had taken a loan of £700 from the residents of his colony in order to pay for his first



year of medical training, at a return to them of 2%. We were astonished and moved that a leprosy colony, dependant upon begging to survive, was still willing to collectively give up their savings to support one of their own in this way.



We also discovered that Suresh makes the three-hour trip from colony to nursing college daily, has a menial job in a local market to pay his fares, and remains wholly dependant upon food donated to his colony to survive. Thankfully, he lives in an area dominated by Sikhs, by far the most generous of all North India's alms-givers, even to those affected by the socially-devastating stigma of leprosy.

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Once we had investigated the full detail, we made an appeal on our Sarva Facebook page last month and within a matter of days had raised the sufficient funds to secure his second year of medical training. Suresh wrote immediately on receipt of the news: *"It is a big gesture for me ... thank you for showing your faith towards me. I will work hard from this time now to yield good results and to turn your expenditure into investments. I thank you most sincerely."*

Our heartfelt gratitude remains with the five Sarva supporters from the UK, Canada and Australia whose generosity has ensured this one boy's future, and that of his family, will be transformed.



Also this month, Man Bahadur begins his two-year training as a carpenter, a vocation he specifically requested that he might pursue the trade that had been his father's until leprosy destroyed his hands and eyesight. We are placing this gentle, courteous and compassionate lad in a well-regarded college outside his home state to protect his anonymity. His fees are just £11 a month, including his board and lodging – so as you can see, however small your contributions (we often have people apologise) they all add up to change a life!



Our qualified Hotel Management students are all now in employment. One works in catering at Delhi's international airport; another in the restaurant at Delhi's Habitat Centre. A third is a trainee chef in Rajasthan, from whence he writes: *"I am now in the kitchen 'garde-manger' cold section where we prepare various national and international salads, sandwiches, etc. Actually ours is a multi-cuisine restaurant, so according to the nationality of visiting groups we make different foods. There are plenty of things to learn. All the chefs are very happy with my work and the executive chef has asked me to submit my c.v. after my training. Working hours are tiring and sometimes I feel sleepy, but if you enjoy your work then nothing else really matters. (And as the weather is like fire, thank gods I am working in a.c.!). I must say, I am spending the best time of my life in the best city (Jaipur) and in the best hotel (Trident)."*

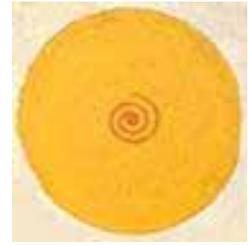


A fourth of our trainees has just secured the position of chef at Delhi's Masala Junction. He writes with excitement about his new job, which has saved him from what he had feared was an inevitable return to the leprosy colony in which four generations of his family have had no choice but to live.

Another of our Hotel Management students – an intelligent, sensitive and hard-working lad, who from the age of four has lived within the confines of the leprosy hostel – is enjoying his six-month placement in a five-star royal palace hotel at Udaipur. For the first time in his life, he is able to mix freely and has found himself popular with his peers, none of whom know his background or the fact his parents live in a leprosy colony. He wishes us to thank all our supporters. **Your generous donations have enabled him to utterly transform his life and prospects.**



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His latest, enthusiastic letter describes his daily training: *“many more things were there to learn: brooming, vacuuming, mopping, bed making (twin, king-size, double, single), room making for VIP, laundry works and their chemicals, linen exchange, glass cleaning, brasso, silvo, chrome gel, sorting of linen (hand towels, face towels, bath towels, bath mat, bath rug, single bed sheets, double bed sheets, blankets, soft feather pillows, hard pillows, service napkins etc.), stain removal, inventory control, linen control, bathroom cleaning, carpet cleaning, buffing (the worst thing), learning stamina to work and stand longer, discipline, sense of Responsibility, improvement in speaking language, personality development, etc., etc. But I am enjoying a lot. My supervisors are also very friendly and new friends are always with me.”*



He and another Sarva student recently returned to pay a brief visit the old hostel in which they were raised. The manager immediately wrote to us to say, *“We were elated to notice appreciable changes in them. They have adjusted well to the new life and have developed into smart, young men and look confident.”*

We are also delighted to report that Sandeep – an ‘untouchable’ lad, whose education we have supported for the past six years – has not only been picked from many thousands and survived the gruelling months of the selection process in the jungles of Assam, but is now undergoing Officer training in the Indian Army. Such a job assures his hard-working, yet impoverished family not only a significant income, but the benefits of government healthcare and a pension. They, like us, are jubilant!



Other exciting news this year is that one of our business-degree students has been chosen from many thousands of applicants for a guaranteed life-long government job as clerk in a State National Bank. We are immensely proud of her and grateful to all our supporters, who have enabled an intelligent and impressive young woman, who of course must continue to keep the fact she and her parents live in a leprosy colony secret, to radically transform her future.



Considering the prejudice and ignorance that all those we work with continue to endure, often on a daily basis, it is perhaps worth mentioning that in February this year Bangladesh finally repealed its repressive and unjust ‘Leper Act’, which has long enabled the forcible exclusion of all people who have ever been affected by leprosy in government-run institutions – and this in spite of the fact that the disease is CURABLE. Considering the way in which the human rights of people affected by the disease are too often grossly violated around the world, this decision is undoubtedly worth celebrating.



In addition, the Indian Government has recently announced that for the first time a Disability Department will be established. A staff of 150 is now being put in place to deal with issues that effect the country’s twenty-million registered disabled, including those left physically damaged by leprosy.

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As ever, we must express our gratitude for your continuing interest and support in our efforts amongst these socially ostracised people. In the past financial year, for example, we have been able to pay scholarships amounting to **£13,315 for the education of twelve students**, from secondary school to university.



We cannot, however, become complacent if we are to ensure every child in the leprosy hostel with which we work with has a future of self-sufficiency and self-respect before it is to be forcibly closed in 2017. In addition, the massive inflation of prices in India over the past few years has increased the fees for a 3½-year nursing degree from £1,800 (2006-07) to £3,631 (2012-13).

May we therefore ask you to consider the following requests?

- 1 That you support us financially, or direct us to people who can.**
- 2 That you forward this newsletter to any friends, acquaintances or colleagues who would find our work of interest.**
- 3 That you be so kind as to help us spread the word in any way you are able.**

Of course as always, we are always ready to give illustrated presentations to any group, school or the like who are willing to listen.

With our sincere and heart-felt gratitude,

David & Bernard

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**SARVASHUBHAMKARA** is a small organisation that works with 'forgotten people'.

**Our mission** The relief of poverty, sickness and distress of those in need and to advance the education for children and young people in India and Nepal, including the award of scholarships and bursaries

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