

Newsletter June 2014 • Edition# 19

Women's Day Celebration—March 8, 2014

To commemorate WOMENS' DAY, a program was held at UTTARAN on March 8, 2014, post meridian, as participants would be busy with their house chores in the morning hours. About 40 students attended the program.

Inauguration songs were rendered by students and teachers of UTTARAN followed by speeches from Ms. Purna Bhattacharya and Mrs. Gopa Chakravartty respectively.

Thereafter USHA Diploma Certificates were presented to those students who completed their course and were successfully merited in the final assessment. During the year 2013 of a total of 16 students 7 were graded in the second division and 9 in the first. It may be mentioned that in 2012, 6 students had received their certificates after successfully completing their course. In 2014, 4 students appeared for their final assessment.

In 2011, 2 students had received an USHA sewing machine each, the cost of which was borne 50% by TCA and the balance 50% to be paid by the student in monthly installments. However it was decided by Mrs. Purna Bhattacharyya and UTTARAN teacher Mrs. Sabita Manna at this gathering, that in view of the dedicated and meritorious efforts shown by these 2 students, the balance of Rs.800 each,

which remained to be paid by the 2 students would be settled by TCA.

The event was followed by a talk given by Mrs. Sukanya Mookherjee on Cancer awareness. Being a victim of breast cancer herself and now cured, she profusely elaborated upon her personal experience, the social stigmas, and the general attitude of neglect and carelessness that is normally encountered under such circumstances. The program was concluded with a question and answer session.

Lunch packets were distributed to all present.

By Tapendranath Kumar



In this issue	
Women's Day Celebration—March 8, 2014 TCF's Core Activity in 2014	1
A Message from the International Board of Directors A big "Thank you" to Jennifer for Helping TCF in Kolkata Donate \$400 for an Eye Camp in Loved One's Name Donation via United Way Campaign	2
Fundraising Events in 2014 TCF Supports Women's Habitat with Their Gilrz Space & S.T.A.R. Programs in 2014	3
Dr Basanti Majumdar conducts Health Camp in January 2014	4
Membership/ Donation form	4

TCF's Core Activity in 2014

- Funding seven medical clinics for villagers;
- Held 22 Eye clinics in several districts;
- Supporting S.T.A.R. & Gilrz Space programs in Toronto;
- Bought laboratory equipments for Assistant Nursing Students in Sarada Mission;
- Running one pre-school, two elementary schools;
- Funding coaching classes for sixty high school students.

Join in TCF's 26th Year Celebration

A Message from the International Board of Directors

With your kind support, The Toronto-Calcutta Foundation (TCF) has been helping the needy people in our society for more than a quarter of a century. 2014 is our 26th year of doing charitable work both in the suburbs of Calcutta and here in Toronto; and we have several new projects to report. As always, our services are targeted towards the section of society that could not afford these necessities otherwise. Our services may be broadly divided in three areas:

On the health front, we conduct weekly health clinics in seven villages south of Calcutta. Our doctors and health associates visit a village each on five fixed days of every week, and check patients and provide medicines. In 2014 we will expand the health service to Jharkhali a remote village inside Sunderbans. During 2013 - 2014 season we conducted 22 eye clinics where more than two thousand patients were checked for vision deficiencies, eye glasses were provided to all. Severe maladies were referred to eye surgeons. We held several health camps targeted to better coach women on family planning and basic health matters.

We operate primary and secondary schools and also fund coaching classes for economically challenged students in the high school so that they can better compete in the qualifying tests to go on to universities. We are upgrading the infrastructure of a school in the Sunderbans and a school in suburban Calcutta to protect students from the elements of nature and to provide drinking water and toilet facilities. During 2014, we awarded four bursaries to students of Bengal Engineering & Science Universities to support their education. In Toronto, we work with our partner Women's Habitat to better train some 15 students to develop their work ethics, self-esteem and leadership qualities. We have also provided funding to 8-10 elementary students who come from low income families living in the Etobicoke community. It provided children with strategies on how to cope with strategies. TCF is happy to report that it will fund these two projects again in 2014.

We operate a vocational school in Calcutta to provide opportunity to women so that they can financially support their families by learning tailoring, sewing and embroidery. During 2014, we partnered with Ramkrishna Sarada Mission in Calcutta and provided funds to set up a laboratory to train students to be Nurse Assistants. We are also funding the education of one such **Sahayika**; and in 2015 intend to increase the number to four. After the one year training at the Mission, these girls will find employment at various city and village health facilities.

We have already committed a substantial amount of funds to upgrade our Naktala administrative office in Calcutta which is in need for repairs. We have fixed two 2014 dates for fund raising in Toronto: a young talent show on August 16th at BCHM on Dhomme Avenue and a gala appreciation dinner on November 14th at the Hilton on Hwy 7. We look forward to seeing you all in both these functions and are grateful for your continued patronage.

A big "Thank you" to Jennifer for helping TCF in Kolkata



Jennifer Northcote with pre-school students at Ghutiari Sarif school

Jennifer Northcote, a lawyer from Toronto, spent a year volunteering for TCF in Kolkata. While in Kolkata, Jennifer had the chance to visit TCF sponsored schools, medical clinics and eye camps. She also met with our local NGO partners, as well as the volunteers and staff in our Kolkata office. Jennifer sums up her year as follows: *"I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to see India and to be involved in the important work TCF does in Kolkata. The people involved with TCF are a wonderful group of motivated, compassionate people. The need in India is so great, but even a small amount of money and effort can make a real difference in someone's life. Volunteering with TCF has been a very illuminating, rewarding experience."*

Donate \$400 for an Eye Camp in the name of your loved one. A banner will be displayed in his/her name.



We are United

People who donate to the United Way can name The Toronto-Calcutta Foundation as a registered charity for their contribution. Please see section 4 "to another registered charitable organization" on page 2 of the UW form. Please name Toronto-Calcutta Foundation when you donate.

Fundraising events in 2014

Talent Show and Dinner

Saturday, August 16, 2014

Bangladesh Canada Cultural Centre

16 Dohme Avenue, Toronto

Please visit TCF Website for more details.

Annual Gala Dinner and Celebration

Friday, November 14, 2014

Hilton Garden Inn, 3201 Hwy 7 West, Vaughan

Silent Auction, Entertainment and Delicious East

Indian Dinner

TCF supports Women's Habitat with their Gilrz Space & S.T.A.R. programs in 2014

This year marks our third year partnering with Toronto-Calcutta Foundation. Their support has allowed us to provide innovative programming for young girls in grades 6-8 in our Girlz Space after-school program and in our summer camps. Last year we were able to send 45 girls to summer camp free of charge. Our summer camp offers Life Skills and Career Exploration sessions which assist the participants in gaining the knowledge and skills to make important decisions in their lives and choose career paths. The support that we receive from TCF allows girls from low income families the opportunity to have some fun in the summer as well as learn valuable leadership skills that they can apply to their lives. TCF's ongoing belief in our programming and their invaluable contributions are greatly appreciated by staff and clients alike.

Striving towards Amazing Results (S.T.A.R.) is very important for low income families living in the Etobicoke community; it provides children ages 9-12 with strategies on how to cope with stress. Children come together in a healing environment and learn to socialize and build techniques to help them communicate and deal with the stress and challenges in their lives.



Getting a tour of Enersource office and learning about the Engineering field

Dr. Basanti Majumdar conducts Health Camp in January 2014

Toronto-Calcutta Association (TCF's Kolkata chapter) organized an event on general health awareness and HIV/AIDS on 17th January 2014 at Ghutiari Sarif village.

Dr. Basanti Majumdar, professor in the School of Nursing and department of Family Medicine at McMaster University, Ontario, was the guest speaker. She was able to meet a hundred and fifty women who came with great curiosity to see her and then share their stories. She appreciated the opportunity and praised the hard work of TCA in mounting the awareness camp. Dr Majumdar said she gained valuable insight from meeting the teenagers and women and learning about their concerns. She would like to see a permanent clinic in the area so she could keep in closer touch with them. She is looking forward to her next visit to Kolkata so that she can learn more and do further work on health awareness. "*Knowledge is for sharing*", she said.

Mr. Tapan Mazumdar, Secretary of the Toronto-Calcutta Foundation warmly thanked Dr. Basanti Majumdar on behalf of board members of TCF and of TCA for generously giving her time for the village women of Ghutiari Sarif and throwing light on HIV/AIDS, and community health.

Dr Majumdar has a particular interest in the social determinants of health and has long been involved in work in developing countries. She has an affiliation with Manipal University in Karnataka. She has had research grants relating to violence against women in India and HIV positive women in the country, including in particular migrant women in slum area of Udupi, Karnataka, South India.

Her international experience in nursing and health education includes the following countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Oman, South Africa, Swaziland, Thailand, UAE, USA, Vietnam and Zambia. TCF is indeed privileged to have a contribution to our community health work from such a distinguished and caring professor.

Dr Majumdar will visit Kolkata in January next year and looks forward to visiting more of our project areas, as we look forward to her valuable contribution.



Eye Camp



Ghutiari Sarif School



BSCA School



Nursing Assistant Students

Membership/Donation form

Your membership in the Toronto-Calcutta Foundation is needed to help alleviate poverty in Calcutta and its surrounding areas. TCF funds, supports and/or manages projects that address local needs related to health, education or income generation. In partnership with local communities. TCF is working towards sustainable development.

MEMBERS: \$ 25

SPONSOR A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT: \$400

SPONSOR AN EYE CAMP: \$400

DONATION (cheque/cash): \$ _____

Membership entitles you to participate at the TCF annual meeting, voting rights and TCF Newsletter.

Please complete and return to:

The Toronto-Calcutta Foundation
2 Leland Avenue, Toronto, ON M8Z 2X5

Tax receipts are provided for membership and all donations \$10 or over.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____

Postal code _____ Tel: _____

Email _____