

TCF CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF GIVING

Nearly 150 community members attended the Toronto-Calcutta Foundation's (TCF) 13th annual gala marking its 30th anniversary. The evening opened with Shirsha Chakraborty singing the national anthem. Performances by comedian Courtney Gilmour and a song by Cyrus and Saskia Singh were followed by flamenco dance. Valerie Scannura, accompanied by guitarist Roger Scannura had the guests shouting ole! and a few enthusiastically joining in to dance!

Professor Dilip Soman spoke of the impact of poverty in his keynote address. He gave examples of how living from day-to-day reduces one's ability to even think of ways out. He lauded TCF's efforts in India and Canada and urged guests to open up their hearts and wallets.

Funds raised at the event crossed \$60,000 and will go to support the many projects TCF funds and manages that address local needs related to health, education and employment skills in Kolkata and Toronto.

TCF organized 33 free eye camps in 2017-2018, where three optometrists provided 4000 eyeglasses and free eye medication. TCF has served over 25,000 patients since inception.

TCF has served over 200,000 patients with five medical doctors and field staff visiting six villages weekly and examining 800 to 1000 patients. TCF also runs a regular health clinic staffed by five doctors on a rotational basis along with two nursing aides at the Dr. R.N. Bhaduri Memorial Health Centre in Naktala.

Close to 100 students get pre-school education and free breakfasts each year, allowing parents (and more importantly women) to go to work. Program also includes monthly health check-ups for students along with school uniforms, books and supplies. Over 5000 students have been assisted.

The Uddipan program conducts after-school coaching classes for high school students from financially challenged families – 40 girls and 40 boys – through grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, helping them enrol in higher education college programs.

Over 300 women now pursue careers in sewing/craftworks after receiving training at two vocational sewing training centres TCF runs and supports for underprivileged women.

TCF has funded a laboratory and provided funding to Ramakrishna Sarada Mission to run one-year programs to train 30 young women in nursing.

Over the years TCF has provided school infrastructure upgrades including classroom extensions, washroom additions, libraries and access to clean drinking water. It has also facilitated in purchasing medical equipment for the Varanasi RKM Hospital (dialysis units, dental chairs, gastro-intestinal video/scopes) and helped modernize facilities at the Spastic Society of Kolkata.

Ongoing projects in Canada include Women's Habitat Shelter with TCF contributing to social and leadership skill training programs for 15/20 students who need help to make a new life for themselves. TCF also sponsors the Toronto Heart Health Fair where health professionals educate local citizens on how to maintain healthy hearts through proper diet, exercise, weight control and other preventive methods.

Published in Desi News in December 2018 Issue. Courtesy of Shagorika and G.A. Easwar