



One By One

Year 17 Issue 2 (Triple Issue)

September 30, 2017

“Be somebody who makes everybody feel like a somebody.”

Unknown

Awesome Auditor

Since One! International’s inception, we have been lucky to have professional services donated to us which is the main reason that we have been able to keep our administration costs so low.

Milena Wildeman performed the One! International audit for 5 years. Thank you, Milena, for the extremely generous donation of your time, energy and expertise.

If you are interested in volunteering your time as an auditor and have knowledge of the Charity Sector (or know someone who might be interested!), please contact Marilyn:

MarilynSpilchen@aol.com

Sobriety, Hope—Change Takes Time

Sometimes, the easiest way to get through a tough situation is to laugh.

We always said you could tell when Rekha the cook was drunk, because the food tasted that much better.

When we were learning similes in English class, Rajeshree (Rekha’s daughter) said: “When mom is drunk, she walks like a baby elephant.”

Rekha started drinking when she ran away with the love her life at 23 years old, abandoning her hus-

band and 3 year old son in village. While she was mentally, emotionally and physically abused by her new alcoholic husband, she herself drank like a fish through all four pregnancies, and verbally and physically abused the children in return.

Miraculously, the children showed little to no signs of fetal alcohol syndrome and have grown to be wonderful kids.



Now, after 27 years of drinking, Rekha has been completely sober for more than a year.

Everyone always said there was no

hope, that she shouldn’t be employed, that the best thing to do would be to take the children away.

We believe there is always hope. That in the environment we are in, there is no other option but to support the children in every way possible; hope they don’t follow the same path; and try to influence the family in whatever positive way we can.

With Rekha, it worked. Rajeshree, who succumbed to the most abuse but despite that has become a wonderful young and strong lady, is most proud of her mom.

Rekha is proud of herself. She doesn’t shy from her past wrongs and instead uses them to influence others.

Global Citizenship

“In May 2017 I was honoured to give a speech to high school students about Global Citizenship. I will share a few quotes from that speech with you.

There is no universally accepted definition of ‘Global Citizenship’, the following are components: 1) Awareness of the world as a global community, 2) Understanding of the culture and challenges faced in other parts of the world, 3) Recognition that local actions and decisions impact the world.

“..[We] live in an increasingly interconnected world... what happens locally, now matters globally, and what happens globally, now matters locally. We truly have become citizens of the world.” (The War Child Canada Youth 2006)

“The more global citizens there are, and the more active and effective they are, the more progress the world will make.” Bill Gates

The premise behind the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is the

concept that all of the world’s major challenges are interrelated and interdependent. For example; poverty can lead to a lack of education; lack of education can affect decisions about climate change; poor decisions can also lead to poor food security and diseases such as Ebola.

Being a good global citizen can be as simple as being a good neighbor, friend, community member, and to help influence world challenges by being supportive to those who are active in trying to make world changes.” **Marilyn**

Vijay's Corner—

SAVE TO SAVE THE WORLD

“Six years after completing my Higher Secondary Education (Grade 12); I was searching for an opportunity to help the under-privileged and needy people around the world.

After struggling for so long, I got the opportunity. December 2008, I joined One! International with one of my friend's help. He was supposed to go for the interview, but he sent me in place of him. I was not prepared and had no idea of the work or the organization. That was my first ever interview.

2nd December 2008, as soon as I entered the Khar school gate, I was warmly welcomed by a sweet smile from Vinita Didi. I was very nervous and very scared. Then, Tania didi came in and spoke so gently with me. She made me very relaxed and comfortable. She handed me a question paper and asked me to answer. She along with Vinita didi and Liz didi selected me for the job. I was very happy that day. I came to One! With the intention of volunteering, but started working as a full time staff.

After completing one year in One!, Tania didi gave me the responsibility of managing the Nallasopara school and build relationship with the families there.

During my nine years experience in One! I had many happy moments and also few sad moments. During my first six years, I observed that One! was looked by each and every member of the family. All the staff, volunteers, parents, students and all of them who stay far away, but still gave their full support to One!. Every-

one enjoyed in all sorts of time, whether it be Classes, Annual Program, Annual Trip, Sports Day, Swim Day, etc. Each and everyone lived happily among themselves and took care of One! like their parent.

One!, a beautiful tree planted by Tania didi has been looked after by all of us. Everyone of us used to provide water (love) to it, feed it natural fertilizer (care), so that it gives shade (happiness) and oxygen (safety) to all of us living under it. Children enjoy on its branches (Khar, NS and Vangaon) and climb on it to enjoy its fruits (knowledge). Parents come to get shade (counselling) when they are in difficulty. No one was worried about themselves, they never bothered about their personal life much and came under One! to be happy and safe. At beginning One! was small, but everyone was happy and felt safe, even though One! had to provide shade for huge number of people. Today One! has grown tall, but is finding difficult to provide shade (happiness) to its children.

I heard many saying that One! is not the same as earlier, it has changed. but the truth is that One! is the same as earlier, WE are the ones who have brought change in ourselves. We have become more concerned about ourselves, our problems, our personal ego and other things. We have been fighting among each other, losing hope in doing good things and becoming more attracted towards social media like whatsapp, facebook, twitter etc. We are busy in mobiles and other technologies. Technology has very

good use if it is used in a right way, but it has been used in a wrong way mostly.

One! has really grown tall and will be growing taller, but we have started to lose hope in doing good things in the right way. We have forgot to water (love) it, feed fertilizer (care) to it. If raise our head and look up at our beautiful tree One!, we will find its leaves drying up and falling. The branches have become weak and if the children climb on it, it may break and the children may fall.

Today the world is going crazy. People don't know what they are going to lose if they continue to behave the same manner. They want everything luxurious and want it quickly. There has been news of increasing terrorism, global warming, sexual harassment, world war and many anti social activities.

We have developed so much with the help of our mind, but are losing the real happiness and inner peace. Each and every one of us around the world needs love and care. Lets forget the past and join together to nurture One!. Lets help One! Grow more taller and broader, so that it can provide shade and oxygen not only to Khar, Nallasopara, Vangaon but all over the World.

Let us begin with one step at a time and start to strengthen the existing One! Tree first and then help it grow to provide shade to many others.

Lets give our coming generation a beautiful and safe place to live in.”

Thank you, Vijay

Graduates Galore

It is has been a great year; seeing the positive results of years and years of hard work—ours as teachers and guides, but more so the students. They have transformed from students who studied. To students who studied to become graduates of Grade 10 and Grade 12. To students who could study for a future profession. What a pleasure it has been to watch this transformation happen.

Students who study full time with us through NIOS (the National Institute of Open Studies):

V i c k y — Graduated from Grade 12 on his first attempt. He is determined to study Computer Science and will enter his BSc IT in June.



This year, he is brushing up on math, English and computer skills first.

Dashrath— Graduated Grade 10 on his second attempt. He will start grade 12 this year. He hopes to one day become a writer of fiction novels.

Sanjay— Only eligible to write 4 Grade 12 subjects this year, he passed 3. He has decided to put his mind into his studies; he does his homework and even works ahead (past volunteers are shocked!). If he can stay focused, he will easily pass his last two subjects and then move on to university.

V a r s h a — Like Sanjay, she was only eligible for 4 subjects but managed to pass all 4! She only has one left to pass, before she moves on to university. Through her work at the village in Vangaon, she is determined to become a professional social worker.



The NIOS students were very angry when their results first came out. They didn't think they should have passed. The exams had questions outside of the course content and they felt the system was wrong; especially after they saw a large number of other students cheating during exams. Vijay Sir, explained that their honesty and hard work was rewarded. They need to work harder and truly feel like they deserve their successes from now on. Take the opportunity and run with it!

Old NIOS students that weren't able to graduate have been positively influenced by the above students and are going to try to write their exams this year after a year or more break: **Ashok, Rajeshree, Mallika and Reshma.**

Other Khar client staff (teacher in training):

After 3 attempts, **Ajay** was able to pass Grade 12. He is now registered at university, entering the first year of his Bachelor of Commerce Degree.

Nallasopara part-time students:

Deepak, Gautam, Sapna, and Shrad-dha all managed to pass their Grade 10 exams. They are now entering Grade 11. They were offered junior client staff positions at the Nallasopara school and have all excitedly accepted the job.

They are proud employees who appreciate being given the responsibility and the opportunity to earn a little money to help their families while they study.

Shrad-dha has been a student in Nallasopara since the school began in 2007 when she was only 6 years old.

Other Nallasopara client staff (teachers in training):

Saurabh and Dheeraj have graduated from Grade 12 and are now in their first year of Bachelor of Commerce degrees through the University of Mumbai.

M a n s i — she easily graduated Grade 12 with marks in the high 70's (first class in India). She is determined to become an accountant (despite the long journey ahead!). She is in her first year of her Bachelor of Commerce degree with specialization (Account and Finance)



Abhishek— he was also easily able to graduate Grade 12 and has entered a specialization degree— Bachelor of Commerce (Finance and Marketing)

Update on Malesh (Paro's Brother)

Every day Malesh misses his little sister, Parvati (Paro), and yearns for her to yell at him and give him



that look: "I know you love me, thank you, now listen to what I am saying!"

For 8 years, Parvati (Paro) was the only family Malesh had. He married and that was wonderful, but Paro was Paro; they were inseparable. In 2015, Malesh's wife became pregnant but the baby was still born.

Through Paro's love and strength, Malesh's wife was able to give birth to a baby boy in July, only 5 months af-

ter Parvati's death. Both mom and baby are healthy.

Malesh has asked me to thank everyone for their kind words and support. It touched his heart and though they brought him to tears, they were tears that gave him strength.



Volunteer Corner—

Honey



When I was told that an 18 year old from Beverly Hills named Honey was coming to volunteer, I have to say that I was a little apprehensive. Honey proved the adage “don’t judge a book by its cover”. She immediately jumped right in, accepted not only India but everyone and every thing in it as a home. She quickly became not just a volunteer, not just an incredibly talented young lady, but a member of the family. The dedication and perseverance she has shown over 6 years has been unparalleled. She is unique in all of the best ways. She has left a long-lasting mark—a mark that will be waiting for her to add to when she returns! Good luck at Law School, though we know that luck is not needed and you will truly excel at all that you will do.

Tania

I like working with Honey because she works very quickly. She makes a list and makes sure it gets done. I miss her when I have problems because she helped me decisively.

Chetna (Staff)

She learns very quickly. Her administrative work was excellent. She was incredibly engaged in all parts of the work despite the difficult environment.

Vijay (Staff)

She taught us well and always taught through games and fun.

Shabnam (Student, 12)

She was very good at helping resolve arguments. She helped with the medical work a lot. Thank you.

Vikas (Staff)

She was so helpful. She was always happy and made me laugh. She always wanted to learn new things and teach them to us.

Sanjay (Student)

She used to come and visit my classes and made me feel good. I miss having her here. She helped me start the hygiene program, and I remember her every day while the children are brushing their teeth.

Rajeshree (Client Staff)

She taught us how to be better employees and gave us the tools we needed. I think of her often and hope that she comes back soon.

Nirmala (Client Staff)

I miss her a lot. Any work that was there, she was always able to help and give the answers. There is a missing space that we feel every day.

Gulshama (Staff)

She always gave support while we were teaching and I miss having her in the school. She treated the children as if they were her own family.

Ashok (Client Staff)

I miss her in meetings being strict in helping us to be better. I remember everything she taught me. I have promised to make two boxes of Braille flashcards and will have them completed before she comes back.

Ajay (Client Staff)

Honey Didi taught me Geography and English. I miss watching her play with the children. She always encouraged us in studies. I miss her smile. I miss our 'good witch'. [named after reading Roald Dahl' "Witches"]

Varsha (Student)

Honey has contributed to One! in so many different ways. From being a founding member of the One! USA Board to helping establish our third school in Vangaon. From numerous volunteer visits to India over the past six years to updating our valued donors regarding their Give-A-Child-A-Chance sponsorships. Honey truly embodies the essence of One!.... that one person can make a difference. In Honey’s case - it’s a very significant difference.

Lisbeth (Director)

It is too easy to forget how young Honey Blakeman was when she first volunteered for One! International. Taking her youthfulness into account, Honey is a truly exceptional person. Honey’s accomplishments with One! International are many and extraordinary. The two that are most prominent for me are the establishment of One! International USA and the expansion of a school into a village in the Vangaon area.

Her enthusiasm is infectious and her energy boundless. The commitment that Honey has shown to One! International has been and continues to be unwavering. I remain intrigued to find out what will be next!

Gordon (Director)

It has been such a pleasure for me to witness the incredible personal and professional growth Honey has shown since first volunteering in June 2011.

She has embraced all the facets involved in running a charitable organization in a ‘foreign’ land. The road has not been without potholes, but Honey kept moving and learning. She has become an invaluable member of the One! International team.

I am proud of her and her accomplishments. I know she will do as well in the next chapter of her life. I welcome her as an honorary Spilchen family member.

Marilyn (Mom Spilchen)

Violence on the Rise

I often have found myself defending India, and Mumbai more specifically, by saying “I feel safer there than in some parts of North American cities.” Volunteer after volunteer have felt the same way.

Unfortunately, the feeling is slowly receding, though not completely gone. Now, you don’t truly feel safe and secure.

This is echoed by our families.

The tragedies that all three of the areas we work in have been forced to face have been overwhelming in the past six months.

In Khar, a stabbing that led to death.

In Nallasopara, 3 murders in under two months. A wife chopped into pieces, a father who ran with the

wrong crowd and a teenager caught at the wrong place at the wrong time.

We have spent hours, days, weeks, months trying to answer the question why, but is there ever an answer?

Despair. That is the only common feeling that gave the best of a clue.

No work, no security, constant stress, constant unknown.

Forgetting that despite how difficult moments can be, to be grateful for what we do have. To live in the small happy moments.

When a mother was asked in 2006 if she was happy, her answer was: “Why would I be living if I wasn’t happy?”

Simplified to be sure, but poignant all the same. She had a house—though small. She had food—though never totally enough. She had clothes—

though old and torn. She had a husband who loved her—and also drank and abused her. She had four children—who she worried that she couldn’t give enough to and of what they would become. But SHE HAD – and for that, she was grateful.

How do we change this downward spiral? How do we change people’s outlooks and mindsets?

We don’t have any ready answers, but we are determined to support and counsel when tragedies happen. Even more, we are determined to find the ways and the means of preventing the tragedies (as much as possible) from happening in the first place.

It is an interesting time we are living in around the world, our communities are not immune, but we will try to give hope, a few smiles and counter-act the negativity.

Emergency and Major Medical Fund

It is too easy to criticize, and not to write about positives.

Vikas (10) years old was suffering with back pain for 2 years which doctors and parents didn’t worry too much about. When he was finally taken



to Nair hospital (a public hospital in Mumbai), the surgeons were alarmed. Within a month, they had him diagnosed and performed surgery to remove the malignant tumour that had formed next to his spine. He is on a strict diet and can-



not exercise whatsoever, but the doctors predict a full recovery and are hopeful that there will not be a recurrence. The surgery cost Rs. 15,000 (\$300), Rs. 30,000 (\$600) from initial pains to full recovery.

We are grateful for the fantastic care that Vikas received.

We are currently helping a student who has a hole in his heart. The parents are forced to decide whether to operate or not. If they operate he may die, if they don’t he may only live for 5 to 10 years. A choice no parent should have to make.

DENTISTRY!!!

As we know, dental health affects overall health, but is the first thing that is neglected when funds are tight.

Thankfully, Dr. Ajitha Sugnanam (Australia) returned for a second time. With a colleague and a couple of helpers, they worked tirelessly for a full week seeing well over 200 patients—students, parents, staff and client staff.

When she first volunteered in 2015, we were able to purchase a lot of the needed equipment. This time, our cost was minimal despite the team performing thousands of dollars worth of dental services. She was able to do basic check-ups, cleanings, cavities and extractions. Mom, Nirmala, had



7 needed extractions! Though she complained from the pain, now she is very thankful of the work that Dr. Ajitha did.

For most of our students (and staff!), it was their first time seeing a dentist—second if they were here the first time Dr. Ajitha volunteered her time and expertise.

THANK YOU FROM EVERYONE!

Written by Tania unless otherwise mentioned.

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Volunteer Melanie!

Melanie (Canada, 3 months) jumped in right from day one and was determined to give help in whatever way she could. She was instrumental in making the dental camp run smoothly. She came every day with her calm demeanour, a huge smile and a lot of love to give. Thank you!



Donor Tales

We wish there was time and space and the perfect words to thank everyone individually for their donations. We truly believe that donations of all sizes are important and special in their own way. We hope that we have aptly appreciated everyone for their donations. Two donor tales:

In 2004, Marilyn and Tania Spilchen were travelling from Delhi to Amritsar. The journey was eight hours. We were travelling in a compartment with other 'foreigners'. Introductions were made and, after some time, the conversation turned to One! International. After about two hours of interaction (with one American man in particular), everyone went to sleep only to arrive in Amritsar early in the morning. Pleasant good-byes were bid and nothing more was thought of the conversation until the lovely man from the train started making a monthly donation...and he has done so ever since! A two hour conversation, that somehow led to belief in One! International. The donor has now donated over \$10,000 through the years. The words "Thank you" never seem enough, but all the same, thank you for believing in One! International and being determined to help us make a difference.

Since July 2017, we have been getting an anonymous monthly donation on Canada Helps. Due to the anonymity of the donation, we are unable to reach out in any way. Hopefully this message reaches you -Thank you! Let it be a thank you to everyone that donates anonymously, we respect your privacy.

One! International thrives because of individual donations and the loyalty of our donors. Through all your efforts, we are able to be the catalyst for change in the lives of hundreds of children and their parents. Thank you!

Celebration 2018—

One! Putting the Pieces Together

Celebration (Gala) 2018 has been booked for **Friday February 2, 2018**. We hope to see the One! family there!

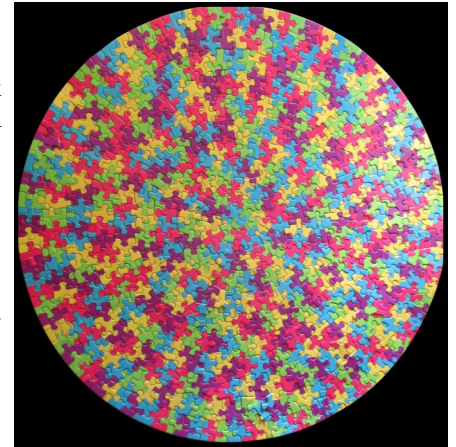
If anyone is interested in helping to plan for the event, or has Silent Auction items to donate please contact Marilyn at:

MarilynSpilchen@aol.com

Theme: One! Putting the Pieces Together

The idea came from a Springbok jigsaw puzzle with its individual pieces not having any meaning and seeming random, but together a meaning is created.

One! International feels like that—education, hygiene, medical, social work, counselling, etc. Each facet of the work coming together and truly making a difference.



Essel World!

Due to demonetization at the end of 2016—money could not be accessed for the annual trip forcing its cancellation.

This made 2017 even more exciting! Still wanting to reward students for their good attendance, behavior and hard work in classes, we took the students to the "Disneyland" of Mumbai—Esselworld.

Fun was had by all, 6 hours of running from ride to ride!



Director Norman

We have great gratitude for Norman for the years he gave to One! International as a Board Member. His financial background greatly added to the board discussions and he has left tools with us that we will continue to develop and use in his absence.

Norman may be resigning as a board member, but he remains a believer and advocate of One! International. He will always be part of our family.

