



# One By One

Year 14 Issue 2 (Double Issue)

June 30, 2014

“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.”

**Robin Williams**

## Edmonton Gala 2015!!!

A date has been set for our next foray in ‘Gala-ing’: **January 30, 2015** in Edmonton!

We are elated to have the same Gala Team back from last year.

The theme will be:

### Success: Reach for the Stars

We expect to get tickets out in early October.

If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity with Gala preparation and planning and/or want to volunteer as a table captain (sell 10 tickets) please contact Marilyn at: [MarilynS@one-international.com](mailto:MarilynS@one-international.com)

Let’s make Gala 2015 the most successful yet!

## Holi 2014 (the Non-Sectarian Way!)

We have always struggled with the question: “To Holi or not to Holi?” As a non-sectarian organization, we don’t celebrate any religious holidays be them Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist or any other.

However, Holi is just too fun! So.....



We have always celebrated Holi with no reference to religion, just for fun!

The fun event starts with a stern lecture from Tania Didi reminding everyone to play fair. Teachers and students alike tell everyone how they wish to play: 1) not at all (generally teachers who don’t want to be coloured but who enjoy watching!), 2) Tania Didi style with gentle cheek colouring, or 3) all out fun with few rules at all (most volunteers, almost all students and some teachers).

Over the years, there have been some instances of taking things too far, but not this year!



It was a fantastic display of having fun while respecting each and every member of the One! Family.



## Vijay’s Corner

### “Drinking water scarcity

Improper drinking water has been a big problem in Santosh Bhuvan, Nallasopara - East. Local residents, at times, have to depend on bore well water for drinking which is not totally safe for drinking. Clean and safe municipal water is available little far away and that too in a long queue. It is the students, who face the problem of getting water from far

away distance. Boys and girls carry a can on their head and get water for their family two times a day. Due to increasing number of immigrants, water problem has been a big issue. Municipal Corporation has somewhat manage to extend the drinking water pipeline to remote areas, but still many residents are deprived of safe drinking water. Extension of pipeline is not a long term solution to the problem. Residents need to be taught about rain water harvesting and how bore well water should be treated to make it safe for drinking.

Rain water harvesting and Treatment of bore well water will be our organisation's one of the primary topic to be taught to the students, parents, as well as the local residents. We need to make the people realize the importance of water and its uses.”

In addition to what Vijay has written, by the month of May, the wells run dry and the amount of municipal water available is limited (sometimes as little as 20L per family per day). Water is a resource that we take for granted in Canada. *Tania*

## Volunteer Quotes—Colleen

“During the last weeks of my two month stay in Mumbai volunteering with One! International, I was tasked with taking the kids to the American School of Bombay on Tuesday afternoons. These afternoons were dedicated to fun activities coordinated by the students at ASB and a distraction from day to day life in the slums. While I was volunteering in Mumbai, I carried my camera with me every day; one never knows what will happen or what one will see. On the first Tuesday afternoon at ASB, we walked to the end of the street in a big pack to wait for the bus to collect us. We waited and waited. We crossed the street and surveyed for our wheels to show up. While we waited, I



observed my environment. To my left were some parked rickshaws. As I examined the rickshaws closer, I noticed that there were two dogs inside, evidently having a lazy afternoon nap. Perfect photo op, I thought to myself as I slipped my camera out of my bag and inched toward the rickshaw to line up a shot. I didn't get very close, but I got close enough to startle the dogs. Immediately, their jaws started snapping, and slobber flew from their lips as they barked in my direction. My heart hit my throat as I jumped back. Within seconds, the kids I was supposed to be chaperoning shouted, “Didi, no!” and grabbed my arm to protect me. They pulled me back to put distance be-



tween the dogs and me. Slowly my heart rate returned to normal, and I tried to laugh off what had just happened. The kids were genuinely worried about me, and a couple of the girls guided me away from the scene. I was lucky that nothing happened – that the dogs didn't attack, and no one got hurt. Truthfully, I don't think anything would have happened, but those kids were prepared to put themselves between me and the dogs. That's the kind of experience I had in India. As much as I did everything I could to care for and love and teach those kids, they did mountains more for me. “ - Colleen

## May Movies—New Skills, Pride & Awareness

We had a fantastic experience in May trying something new and exciting. Paranoid that the project would be a flop, all of the students and teachers poured their energy and time into getting things just right which ensured just the opposite—an overwhelming success!

Both the Khar and Nallasopara schools were divided into groups (7 in all made up of teachers, client staff and students) to make their

own short films.

Given an empty page of instructions as to what topic to choose and how to go about creating their masterpieces...all groups chose serious topics: Stealing, Girl's Education, Suicide, Good Habits, No Smoking and No Drinking, Proper Mobile Phone Use, and Trust and Believe.

The children were extremely proud of what they had accomplished and

the parents were shocked to see their children on 'the big screen'!



## Grade 10 Study Mayhem...

At the end of January, our Grade 10 study program hit an all-time low with students dropping like flies. Dilshaad & Mallika left for no reason, Rajeshree felt overwhelmed deciding to work instead, Parvin got married & was facing problems.

Vijay and I began to feel a little dismayed and were losing hope that the hours of work in first registering the children and then teaching

them was for not. We pressed on.

March is notoriously filled with holidays but our students were determined to study. We worked through each and every holiday, only taking Sunday to recover. With the National election looming, we worried that the exam dates would be preponed and our worries became reality.

Only 2 days before the first exam, the

schedule came out. Sanjay and Jeetu had only one day to prepare for the science practical and managed to get through 15 experiments in one day. Luck was on our side—the two experiments given were ones they had done!

With that good luck starting us off, as each exam passed the students became more and more confident. They left for each exam with smiles rather than frowns of worry!

## ...And the Grade 10 Results—GRADUATES!

After the exams finished, the students were able to relax through May and June, but with the constant worry of the results in the back of their head.

Finally the results arrived and everyone huddled around the laptop to see what was their fate.

**Reshma** took a two month break in the middle of studies and didn't write her practicals so it was no surprise that she was not able to pass. She is still determined to try again next year.

**Raziya, Kokila and Sushil** all found grade 10 extremely challenging and didn't expect to pass anything. When the results came in that they passed Data Entry, they were elated and had fresh determi-

nation to keep studying. They feel confident that with one year of experience they are now ready!

**Vikas and Ashok** struggled in English medium classes and were thus reluctant to see the results. When they found out they passed 2 subjects (Data Entry and Home Science) they could see that all their hard work paid off and that they could succeed.

**Sanjay** fell ill before the exams and couldn't concentrate. He still managed to pass 2 subjects (Business studies and Data Entry). He knows he will pass easily next chance he gets!



**Sunil** passed both of his remaining subjects (Social Science and Art) to become a Grade 10 graduate! It took him 6 years, but he never gave up and is now determined to try Grade 12.

Confident that **Jeetu** would pass...he did just that! He not only graduated, he passed all 7 subjects including Math and Science which are extremely difficult.

We are extremely proud of all of our Grade 10 students—no matter what the result. The affect their hard-work has had on the students at the One! Schools is incredibly hopeful for the future!

## Mass Hiring—Fresh Energy and Great Talent

After losing quite a few staff members to further studies or pregnancy, it was time in June 2014 for a mass hiring.

Vijay was determined to get things right this time and to only hire those who understood our motive and who were truly dedicated to teaching and making a difference in our children's lives.

We had more than 50 candidates arrive for interviews and approximately 20 return for teaching demonstrations. In the end, we had more than we needed and found it difficult to choose. We hired 6.

**Amrish:** Math genius that loves to laugh.

**Ajeet:** He fully understands all that can be taught through exercise.

**Balmukund:** Qualified teacher with a quiet confident demeanour.

**Kruti:** Enthusiastic and determined social worker with great intuition.

**Padmini and Sanju:** Excellent teachers with calm and gentle natures.

Good luck everyone and welcome to the One! Team. We look forward to growing and learning with you.

## Director's Corner—Myka

*Our new Director in Canada:*

"It is such a privilege to have the chance to introduce myself to the One! International family.

Most of my career has been in health care. I started out as a speech therapist, working with people who had head and neck cancer.

I also worked for many years in the biotechnology industry, finally leading up to my current position with the Alberta Cancer Foundation, a philanthropic organization focused on cancer. I hope that my experiences with another mission driven organization will be valuable to One! International.

I am grateful to have the chance to contribute to the important work that One! International is doing and have been so impressed with the passion and commitment of everyone involved (and, it was wonderful to be introduced to Vijay and Chitra earlier this year and learn more about every day successes and challenges)."

Written by Tania unless otherwise mentioned.

### **CONTACT One!**

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## All-Time Favourite —Annual Swim Days

Pictures say a thousand words and that is the best way to tell you about our annual swim days which were held at the end of April & beginning of May 2014. Swimming and slides, oodles of food, cricket and football! What more could anyone ask for?



## Volunteer in India!!!

Are you aware that One! International accepts volunteers to work in India? We welcome people from all over the world of varying skillsets. Basic accommodation is provided. We require a time commitment of two months to work with the children at the schools. There is an exception for health professionals who go for shorter times to work on specific projects. Please see more information on the web page, or contact Marilyn Spilchen:

[MarilynS@one-international.com](mailto:MarilynS@one-international.com)

## Case Study: Kiran & Chandini

Gorgeous little Chandini (2 years old) reminds us of the roots of One! on a daily basis. Chandini is the daughter of Kiran, the 5 year old boy back in 2000 who had been roaming around for 2 weeks straight without a parent or a friend to take care of him; his older brother Santosh and sister Laxmi were living in the hospital after the car accident that crushed Santosh's leg.

Kiran's mother died when he was born and his father was a severely abusive and neglectful alcoholic. Kiran became an addict himself at the age of 12. By 16 he fell in love and managed to pull himself together...a little bit. He stopped drugs and sniffing. He stopped stealing and got a job. But...he kept drinking.

Still in love, Kiran and his wife gave birth to Chandini when he was only 18. Through bouts of sobriety, he managed to feed the family—in fact, when Chandini was a baby she was nicknamed 'Moti' (chubby one). Everyone knew he loved his daughter.

When Chandini turned 1, she started attending the Khar school. Her infectious smile brightened everyone's day. She started speaking at 1 1/2 and was proving that she was a spark that was going to be hard to keep up with.

Her parent's regularly fight and she tells us all about it. We try to protect her and guide her through it. She smiles and plays and reminds us that life must go on. We will try to be the catalyst that improves Chandini's home life, but we already know that she has great potential and will fight to reach it!



## Community/School Presentations

"We are always excited to spread the word about One! International. In Canada, we do presentations such as this photo at community agency fairs, and talk to school assemblies. The school presentations are always exciting, especially the elementary grades. Various videos are shown to the students, along with a tarp demonstration to illustrate the size of the average slum home in Mumbai. The children ask very intelligent questions. They are also able to point out similarities and differences between themselves and the children in India. Awareness is created about their peers on the other side of the world." —Marilyn



## Administrative Volunteers—Marilyn

In the digital age, it is not necessary to be physically present in a location in order to accomplish work for an organization. Many tasks can be accomplished from a distance. In May 2014 a request was sent out for interested people willing to volunteer for One! International. We were delighted with the response; we have assigned duties to 3 people, and have others pending. We now have 9 people assisting with various activities from volunteer feedback to graphic design and social media. We maintain a list of people who have a few hours to donate to helping One!. If you are interested, please contact Marilyn.