



One By One

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“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A True Leader

When Vikas accepted the role of medical coordinator for Khar school years ago, many of the nurses that worked with him were worried about his professionalism and basic abilities. Step by step, he improved and is now confident at what he does and carries himself with the utmost professionalism.

Tested last month, I don't think that he ever expected to be walking through morgues identifying bodies, overseeing autopsies, signing police statements or travelling to villages for staff families. He never hesitated, he did what was needed.

Vikas lost his best friend last month, but in the face of tragedy, he stood strong and emerged as a true leader.

We're Off To See the Wizard...



...the wonderful Wizard of Oz. After the success of last year's Annual Program it was decided to again stage a joint production this year with 'The Wizard of Oz' performed by students from both Khar and Nallasopara schools. Different students played

different (and sometimes the same!) roles in different scenes enacting the slightly modified story of Dina from



practical and fun goodies such as clothes, sweets, toys and hygiene items to take home.
—Lisbeth



Maharashtra who goes on a grand adventure. As well as the dramatic performances other highlights of the evening included Bollywood style dances, the announcement of annual student and staff awards, a special meal together afterwards and the giving of gift bags full of



Lisbeth & Vijay—Tackling New Ground

In an organization such as ours, we often encounter the same social problems and similar situations over and over again. We develop checklists and protocol for how best to deal with them.

It is most difficult when we are faced with entirely new situations. In the two months that Lisbeth (Liz Didi, Director from Australia) has taken on the leadership role in Mumbai, she and Vijay and the rest of the

staff have been faced with numerous of these situations; mental health of a student and death of a beloved staff member to name just two.

New questions arose and they always seem to be the toughest ones: What can we do? Cultural understanding or accepted practices? Religion and/or science? How much can we give/do? What are our limits?

Vijay Sir and Liz Didi faced

each situation with strength and courage, made difficult decisions and used each situation as a learning and growing opportunity for everyone.

It has been an extremely difficult two months for them with tears and stress and feeling completely overwhelmed, but they have stood tall, faced each challenge head on and should be extremely proud of themselves and the example they have shown to the whole One! Family.



Life Should Be Great Rather Than Long

Siddhesh Raut (1988-2014)

Our beloved family member, Siddhesh, has really made the above quote practically true. Just 26, he taught most of us the importance of life and the way it should be lived. Siddhesh lives in our heart and one who lives in heart is always immortal. Siddhesh, who joined our organisation in September 2011, had left our organisation after six months, due to some issues with some family members of our organisation.

We never expected him to come back, but after six months, he came back strongly and requested us to give him another chance to prove himself. Today, he has not only proved himself but taught most of us the way of living a life. He was one of our staff, who decided to stay with us life time and give as much as help he can. He used to teach marathi and drawing classes. He was also our medical coordinator and had

just started to do social work along with Heena. He was very happy with the reward we gave him, but unfortunately, he left us.

He loved and cared not only the kids, but also our staff and client staff. He used to bring gifts and donations from his friends and relatives and used to share with everyone. His marathi song will always be remembered wholeheartedly.

For me, he was not only my colleague, he was my son, as he used take care of me like a son. He used to get upset and crying with me sometimes and I used to convince him like a father does to his son. He used to bring breakfast for me every morning.

He was so kind, gentle, helpful to all and never told his family problems to anyone, as he believed in keeping others happy and smiling. His death is a big loss not on-



ly for us but also for his family, as he was the only boy child and his parents relied mostly on him.

We hereby promise Siddhesh that we will not let his dreams go down and make sure that his family doesn't feel his absence. We will do our best to keep him and his family happy.

—Vijay



In the Rough Sea of Life—a Hidden Gem

Vinod “Walky Talky” (1984-2014)

Vinod is the spark that started One!, the first street child that I spoke to and befriended. The first person to ever call me mom.

I met him when he was 15 years of age (myself only 21) in 1999. His mother passed away when he was 10 and at 12 he could no longer handle the abuses of his alcoholic father and ran away to live on his own. He vowed never to drink alcohol.

Vinod had a flare for languages and could speak the basics needed to grab tourists attention in more than 10 different tongues. He had the gift of the gab and could easily have been a statesman of any land if born into a different life. Hence his self-proclaimed nickname of Walky Talky.

He was begging when I first met him but meeting him almost daily, we became friends. We went to MacDonaldis and bowling and arcades while he told me about the ‘real’ Mumbai—life on the streets, corruption, mafia, and the side of life that would never have been opened to me without him.

In March of 2000, Vinod randomly tried begging from me again. After looking at him like he had ten

heads, I offered to meet his ‘baby’ brother rather than falling for the begging scam that he himself had taught me about. I can still see the smile that came across his face, the one that was excited that someone cared.

He proudly showed me his ‘house’—a tarp tied against a wall—and then we travelled to where his brothers and sister were living. When we arrived, we found out that his 7 year old brother Santosh was run over by a truck. Santosh and his sister Laxmi were the next children to grab my heart and not let go.

Through Vinod and my experiences with them, One! was born.

Vinod was rough around the edges to say the least. He fluttered from moments of brilliance to causing way too much trouble and being almost dangerous. He worked at the school for a number of years and became literate, he was the best PreStep teacher we ever had. In 2007 he gave up his job because he could make more money through tourists.

In 2006, he was the happiest he had ever been. He fell in love and married the girl of his dreams. Un-



fortunately, it turned out to be the beginning of the end. She carried their first child to term but it was still-born. Their second child, a son, lived for only 3 days in PICU before dying.

Vinod lost his spark and began giving up. He turned to the one thing that he vowed never to touch. Alcohol ruined him in only 6 short years.

Though our relationship changed as the alcohol started controlling him, he never treated me with anything less than the utmost of respect, appreciation and love.

Rest now, my hidden gem, you have given me so much and will always be remembered.

Written by Tania unless otherwise mentioned.

CONTACT One!

Canada

112 Garland Crescent, Sherwood
Park, Alberta, Canada, T8A 2R2

Phone: (780) 467-6254

India:

Phone: (91) 98205-17805

Twitter:

@TaniaDidi

Facebook:

/OneTaniaDidi

Blog:

OneInternationalInformati
on.blogspot.com

EMAIL: info@one-international.com

www.one-international.com

Adventure in Hyderabad

It was with great excitement that 92 children, staff and client staff boarded the train to Hyderabad in southern India for the Annual Trip in mid November. Some of the highlights of the five day trip included seeing lions, cheetahs and many other animals at the Hyderabad zoo, seeing a beautiful show of stars at the Planetarium, visiting the imposing Golconda Fort and enjoying a delicious meal of the famous local biryani. The trip was well organized by our senior staff and the children were well behaved most of the time – over excitement couldn't be helped at times! As always, the trip was a fantastic reward for students with good attendance and behaviour throughout the year and was a great opportunity for students from our two schools to spend more time together. As well as enjoying time away from home and seeing another part of India it was also a great chance for the children to learn more about team work, respect, discipline and responsibility through lots of fun and educational activities and excursions. —Lisbeth



Volunteer Corner—Tennis



In December we were extremely lucky to have the Phaterpekar family (Hem, Julie, Tejas, Neel and Kiran) visit from Vancouver and provide tennis coaching for many of our Nallasopara students most of whom had never played tennis before. With badminton being popular in India some children



had natural hand eye coordination and racket skills although a lot of the boys played tennis as if they were playing cricket. The family also helped out in some of the other classes that were going on, generously donated some tennis equipment and Kiran wowed us all with his magic tricks. Twelve of the older students from our Khar



school travelled to Nallasopara for a 'tennis camp' during this time and they loved seeing our other school, staying overnight there for two nights, studying in the Nallasopara classes and, of course, playing tennis.

—Lisbeth

Board Corner—Gordon

"We are very happy to announce that One! International Poverty Relief, USA is registered with the IRS in the United States and can provide U.S. tax receipts.

On the initiative of Honey Blakeman, and with tremendous support from Vijay Balan, the directors of the Canadian and U.S. charities have started to investigate a possible third school. Vijay has started to look for potential locations. One! International USA is working on fundraising with a focus of supporting the new school. Honey will be leading this project with support from the senior staff in India, the directors in the United States and the directors in Canada."



Gala 2015

We are getting excited - 2 weeks to go. Gala 2015—Success - Reach for the Stars. Sales are great. Entertainment is planned. We have fantastic silent auction items. We have a phenomenal Gala Committee: Kathleen, Paragi, Nirmala, Jocelyn, Sonia, Peter, Tania and Marilyn. We are anticipating another successful gathering of the "One! International family" in Edmonton. —Marilyn

Tania was interviewed on Breakfast TV.
<http://www.btedmonton.ca/videos/3973799567001/>