



One By One

Year 15 Issue 1

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“The most important decision you will ever make is what you do with the time that is given to you.”

Anon

26 Jan 2015

26 January is a day where Indians celebrate their country and their rights and their freedoms.

This year we did that, but also celebrated the lives of two dear One! family members—Siddhesh and Vinod—and the achievements of the students of both schools.

After the speeches and flag ceremony, the school was opened up to over 100 parents/relatives/friends/neighbours who were in awe of the exhibition of art, science, and displays from all facets of school life at One! International.

The children were proud, and so to were the teachers who were praised for helping the children by not only teaching, but by giving their hearts and energy.

Republic Day...a true celebration of life!

Director’s Corner—Norman 2015 Gala Success: Reach for the Stars!



“On January 30, 2015, One! International held their 14th Annual Gala at the Mirage Banquet Hall in Edmonton. The theme this year was “Success – Reach for the Stars”. It was successful, memorable, touching, and fun filled. 357 people adorned a well decorated hall with their own spark of character and colour, wearing elegant Indian and Western attire. The gala had all the ingredients of a grand celebration. There was delicious food, hectic silent auction bidding, a wine raffle, and even a toonie wheel, that showed just how far two Canadian dollars go in India. The event generated net revenues of approximately \$28,000 for One! International Poverty Relief.

Throughout the evening, Tania Spilchen, the



founder, spoke from the heart. She shared real-life examples of the work in India, and experiences of the One! children and their families. Tania got emotional when she described how One! started – all because of one persistent street boy, who tugged at her heart strings. She went on to tell us how the boy had progressed, but the story ended sadly, as the boy tragically passed away last year.

Paragi Shah, one of the gala organizers, recently returned from Mumbai, and described her visit to both One! schools. She was truly touched by all that she saw and experienced there.

Hearing the children, the teachers, and volunteers from Mumbai over Skype, is always the highlight of the evening. The audience saw how the organization has progressed, and One! children entertained them with songs from the “Wizard of Oz”.

The evening continued with an

exhibition of Bollywood dancing by two members of AKtion Fitness Ltd. Ashley Kumar, the owner of AKtion Fitness Ltd., came back to wrap up the evening. She taught and challenged a large group of One! supporters to follow her various dance moves, from Kathak to Bollywood. Ashley energized and entertained the audience.



The One! Board of Directors are truly grateful to all the volunteers who helped make the evening a success. We sincerely thank the Gala Committee, the emcee, the silent auction donors, the sound technicians, the entertainers, and all of you who helped the event in various ways. Most importantly, thank you to all who bought tickets to support the event, purchased silent auction items, or made donations. We appreciate your kindness, generosity, and willingness to help the underprivileged members of society. Your presence made a huge difference!”

Written by Tania unless otherwise mentioned.

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Indian & Virtual Volunteers

In India, Lisbeth (Dir., Aus) was instrumental in keeping One! moving forward. There will be a bit of a lull for three months before 3 young Canadian high school volunteers will be spending their summer with our kids.

Virtual and Edmonton area volunteers are starting to fill in the administrative gaps in Canada: Jen is our Social Media wizard; Maureen, Hillary and Lucille are working on the Health Curriculum for India; volunteers are helping Myka with policy development; Sylvia will be our Sumac Data Base guru. We continue recruitment for other areas.

Vijay's Corner— Facebook and Social Media

“Social Media like facebook, twitter, whatsapp, and hike has become so popular in day to day life. Everything in this world has both good and bad uses; so it is clear that the above social media too has good and bad uses. Social media has helped in improving the interaction between people which has brought together ideas of many people.

Today, youth of India has been using social media to the utmost level. But they have been using most of the time in chatting and sharing pictures with friends and colleagues. Many of our past volunteers has been sharing pictures with our client staff and staff. We can't tell in what way anyone will use someone's picture, but it is necessary on our behalf to be careful in doing so. Even the school children have started using social media that has really started to effect their studies. Kids have started arguing with their parents and elders forcing them to get computers, and mobiles. It has caused a lot of fights in our families and added pressure.

Today's children are being over-exposed to information and visuals that they have not been guided to understand. While we don't want to stop growth and technology, change needs to happen at a pace that our culture and new generation of children can relate to without misinterpreting.

As a request from my side, I would ask our past, present and future volunteers to be understanding of the content (pictures, etc.) that they share with members of the One! family.”

- Vijay Balan

Volunteer Corner—Hilary



“One of the most memorable and eye-opening aspects of my experience was teaching and getting to know the Step 9 students, Dashrath and Radha. Despite the hardships in each of their lives, both students were always very eager to learn.

Because Radha is the oldest among her siblings, she often had to care for them at school.

However, she would never let that responsibility keep her from her studies. After comforting her teary-eyed sister Sanjana, Radha would dutifully return to class, without missing a beat.

Dashrath faced his own set of obstacles, particularly in terms of his eyesight. I would often find him squinting at the notes on the board. Nevertheless, he was determined to study and would always obtain the notes one way or another. Once after borrowing Radha's notes, Radha commented, “He has such big eyes and yet they don't even work!” Thankfully, the medical coordinator Vikas is now aware of the problem, and Dashrath will be getting glasses soon!



Radha and Dashrath both take their education very seriously. They would study diligently during class and request homework every night! One assignment was to write five sentences about a career they would like to have. I was moved to hear that both students aspire to become teachers! It was inspiring to see how much they valued and truly appreciated the importance of their education.”

- Hilary (Canada)

THANK YOU HILARY!!! Your hard work, enthusiasm and positive personality will have a long-lasting effect on the children and staff.



Girl Power!

Anjali Katta (18) from Vancouver is proving that ‘one’ really can make a difference and that girl's have power! After recently giving a speech at the UN's conference on girl children, she arranged for Tania to give a speech at her school about the work One! International is doing in India. The school's fundraising event managed to raise over \$3000. She is hoping to make this a yearly event even after she graduates and moves on to college.

Anjali is living the values of One! and we are so lucky to have her as a part of our strong youth team!