



One! International Poverty Relief

One By One

Year 16 Issue 1 (Double Issue)

February 29, 2016

“Worse than not realizing the dreams of your youth would be to have been young and never dreamed at all.”

Jean Genet

Tree of Life

For the 15 year celebration, we created a tree of life—hand-made leaves (made by the children in India) to be hung on a papier-mâché tree made by volunteer Raj.

Miscommunication shortened the time available, worrying One! staff about getting the job accomplished. They busily prepared the leaves for the children to draw and colour thinking that the children would do only two or three a day. Instead, the children were excited for the responsibility & the sense of accomplishment. They worked studiously long after school hours, getting 450 leaves coloured in under 2 days—and they didn't even miss their classes!



15 Year Celebration—Ed Gala 2016

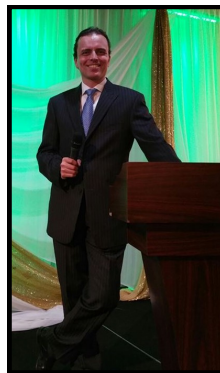
“Rooted in One!”

WOW! It's hard to believe that 15 years have gone by. There is much to celebrate. 15 years has brought incredible progress for the children and families in Mumbai. We celebrated the progress and accomplishments of the last 15 years while remembering the roots of the organization, and looking forward to new things in the coming years.

We were incredibly lucky to have a talented, committed core group of 10 volunteers who started work in August and prepared for the annual celebration. This core group was embellished by approximately 20 more volunteers who make the magic happen. Our emcee, Marc Valentin, came from Toronto for the evening. Before and during dinner Terry Jordan and Friends set the ambience with their wonderful jazz music. Angela from The Henna House decorated hands all evening. Urvi Rai danced a classical dance. Ashley Kumar

danced and then taught about 40 people a Bollywood dance to close out the evening.

Over 300 people attended the Celebration; most are returning attendees who often bring new people to help expand our ever growing “One! International Family”. Financially we had one of our most lucrative evenings raising over \$40,000: people love Tania's Chai recipe; the blank cards were a hit; the silent auction had an incredible variety of items including numbered art work, Oilers hockey tickets, Indian items, books and clothes; leaves signifying what \$5 will buy in Mumbai decorated a tree; Mehndi decorated hands were visible all over the hall. One of the highlights of the evening was the sale of little boxes to have the chance to win a trip to Las Vegas. After expenses, the evening brought in over \$30,000 for the schools.



As always, everyone loved seeing the children over Skype. The children gave us the One! International anthem (Thank You For) to start dinner, and then entertained with a skit from the annual program, ‘Harry Potter Meets Hagrid’.

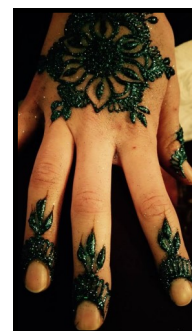


Kathleen and Paragi laid out the financial numbers concisely, the details of how One! International raises its money and spends its money efficiently.

Tania spoke eloquently about the theme of the evening – Rooted in One! – reminding everyone that progress is one step at a time with one person helping one person. Tania thrilled everyone with the news that preliminary work has begun on a third school – a rural school in the village of Vangaon.

Thank you to everyone for making the 15 Years Celebration a very successful evening.

-Marilyn



Vijay's Corner "One! — A Teacher in Itself"

"Life without a good teacher is like a head without a brain. There is a teacher in each and every living & non-living things on earth. Every person's personality is based on the teachings he got from his teacher. A teacher nourishes the person with knowledge and experience. Teacher is not the one who gives academic qualification, but the one who turns the person into a well-cultured and respectful individual.

The best teacher I have ever had in my life is One!. It has changed myself into a responsible, loving, courageous person in life. It taught me to see the world in a different perspective. Although I always believe in humanity, but it is One! that taught me to work for humanity. It taught me to be selfless and work towards the duty with full dedication and commitment. Its lessons are the children, parents,

staff, client staff, volunteers and all other management members in it. All of their actions and work ethics has shaped me into a better person in life. One! Has taught me to stay calm and patience in any kind of difficult situations. At times it has brought my school days as a kid, my college days with my friends.

I have been learning under my teacher for last 7 years and every day I learn new lessons. The most important teaching I got from One! Is no relation is important than our duty and responsibility, and every person's duty starts with himself , then his parents, society and the world. Family comes in society and we can't run away from the duty towards our family to work for the society. We have to respect and take care of our own body, our family while working for the community. It

taught me to the true meaning of social work and has enriched me with all sorts of difficult experiences that is necessary for our present suffering world. It taught me professionalism, management skills that is very much necessary to bring a change in the people's mind. It has taught me the essence of teamwork and things get done easily, if we try to change the mindset of our colleagues regarding work, rather than just going on working individually.

I am so lucky that I have my teacher with me guiding everyday with my duty. I can't say how am I going to pay back my teacher as my education is incomplete without paying my teacher's remuneration and I am eagerly waiting for the chance to complete my education under my teacher One!."

- Vijay

Board Corner—Gordon

3rd School: The Village of Vangaon

The project to start a third school in India is underway. Huge congratulations are owed to Vijay Balan and Honey Blakeman.

Vijay spent a great deal of time looking at a number of areas and found a new village, Vangaon, which seems suited for One! International to conduct classes and social work. This new area has about 25 families and 40 children; the initial project will include about 10-15 of these children and will eventually expand to include more.

Vangaon brings a new dimension to

the work that One! International does in India. The Khar school represents the urban environment of India, Nallasopara a developing one, and Vangaon would be representative of the Indian village life style.

First classes were held on Friday, January 15 and Saturday, January 16. On Friday there were 15 students and by Saturday the number had nearly doubled. Vijay and the client staff taught Hindi classes, drawing classes, and an exercise class outside. The children had the chance to use equipment they had never seen before and to play games they had never played before. Vijay visited with the families afterward and learned more about the village and the type of people who live there.

This project is very exciting. We want to thank all of the supporters of One! International for their belief in what we

are doing and what we can accomplish. We want to extend special thanks to Vijay and Honey and to the client staff that are assisting with the classes.

—Gordon

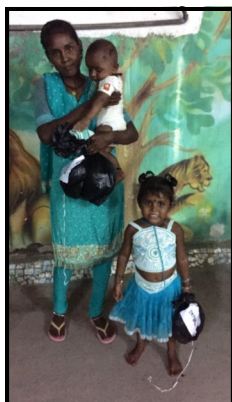


One Tragic Night.....

The following story is not for the faint of heart.

A mother was sleeping with her 3 year-old daughter and her 6-month old son laying next to her. Her husband came home and started fighting. He was high, not drunk. Drunkenness would have been easy—fight, hit, fight some more, but eventually he passes out. A “High” comes from a mixture of paint fumes, glue, paint thinner, petrol or any number of other toxic possibilities. The “High” is unpredictable.

That night was no exception. The fight started over something mundane—she can’t even remember what.



Less than five minutes in he picks up a knife. Swings it around a few times. Then he picks up her son and threatens to slit his throat. When she cries and moves to save her son, her husband stabs her three times in the chest. She buckles. He continues his rage. She manages to scream and crawl toward the door.

The community of slum dwellers is close knit and many inhabitants awake and begin moving toward the injured mom to help her. The husband threatens anyone that comes near. Finally three men were able to talk to him. In 10 minutes, the “high” is gone.

The husband couldn’t believe what was happening. He yelled for help and went with the two men carrying his wife to the

hospital. He cried on the way asking them to save her life.

The police met him at the hospital, apprehended him and then waited—needing to know whether to charge him with attempted murder or homicide.

She was seconds from death, the doctors say. The knife grazed her lung, filling it with blood.

Miraculously, after a week in the hospital and time at home, she has made a full recovery.

Through every tragedy, beauty arises: the way the other families of the community pulled together to take care of the children and not let them feel even a hint of the ugliness and sadness around them.



2 Years!

We have had long-term volunteers before, but nothing like this!

Honey (23, director of One! USA) has decided not to go straight into Law School after completing her Bachelors Degree with an incredible 3.9 average. Instead she has committed to spending two years in Mumbai with the children she has grown to love; her One! Family.

She will not only volunteer in the capacity that she has in the past

(helping with management, teaching, creating curriculums, project planning, Give-a-Child-a-Chance coordinator, or anything else we throw at her!), she will play an instrumental role in our third location—the village of Vangaon. As a foreigner, the project isn’t ready for her to be on the ground in Vangaon, but she is constantly doing the behind the scenes administration and asking the right questions of Vijay and keeping the project going in the right direction.



Honey has clearly taken One! International on as her own and we cannot thank her enough for the commitment and energy that she has given. A truly remarkable young woman.

Top 30 Under 30

The Alberta Council for Global Cooperation sponsors a Top 30 Under 30 Magazine project each year to celebrate the young people who are making changes around the world. Our volunteer Brianne Klingspon was nominated and subsequently selected as one of the finalists. A special celebration of the winners was held on Tuesday, February 9,

2016. In Brianne’s words: “With more education and awareness of women’s health issues, we will not only make growing up easier for many young girls, but also give them more control over their lives.”

- Marilyn



Brianne is one of many young volunteers who have given their time and energy to the children of One! International in India. As young as 15 years of age, we thank all of you for being incredibly generous role models—encouraging everyone of all ages.

Written by Tania unless otherwise mentioned.

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Fabulous Football!!!

We randomly met Ashwin Sir on the grounds of our Winter Sports Day and he volunteered to coach our students football. Though getting up at 8am has proven to be very difficult, it is well worth it. Ashwin Sir is talented, caring & fun-loving!



Mountainous Mahabaleshwar

This year, we travelled to Mahabaleshwar with 70 of our students and 30 staff members. Mahabaleshwar is 230 kilometers northeast from Mumbai, roughly 5 hours away by car. However, traveling took more than twice as long for our buses, which had to continuously stop for carsick kids, occasional break downs, and also had to slow to a snail's pace around the narrow, winding, uphill roads. We spent three days in Mahabaleshwar, exploring the scenic beauty of the area, learning about the local industry of strawberry farming and production, and visiting different historic sites. We were well accommodated at the hotel; a favorite feature amongst the students were the wash-rooms in each of the rooms with a running shower and western toilet. On the trip, our students learned a lot of valuable skills about teamwork, responsibility, cooking, cleaning, and sharing. Students and teachers had an incredible time on our adventure, and always found a way to smile and laugh no matter what.



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- Honey

Annual Program— “The Magic of Harry Potter”

Students had a great time learning and performing a condensed, musical version of *Harry Potter* this past November. Our students overcame the huge challenge of memorizing and acting out their lines, in both Hindi and English, with great success. During their performance, the students' families and friends were completely engaged with the play, at certain dramatic points the room would fall silent and you could hear people in the audience gasp and cheer. The songs and dances were equally successful, everyone in the room stood up in their seats to chant and clap along with the performance. We are so proud of the students and staff for their weeks of dedication and their hard work in bringing this wonderful story to life. - Honey



Unfair Underage Marriage

Parents marrying their children off under the legal age (18 for girls and 21 for boys) has always been a problem for One! International's children—especially for our girl children. When we started in 2001, girls were getting engaged as early as 10 and married at 12 or 13. Over the years we have seen that age steadily raise to 15 or 16. We were over the moon excited when long-time cook and one of One's first moms, Rekha, didn't let Rajeshree (who had fallen in love) get married until she was 18! We thought we had turned a corner.



When rumours started that Kanchan (mother of 5 of One's initial 8 children) was thinking of marrying off Kajol (13 at the time), all staff and volunteers were in shock. Our social workers started work relentlessly to stop the marriage. From May 2015 until January 2016, daily discussions & arguments ensued. Rekha was fighting for Kajol, along with all client staff, staff, volunteers & even students.

Nothing worked, it seemed money was more important to Kanchan than her own daughter. At the end of January, Kajol (who turned 14 on December 28, 2015) got married for a dowry of Rs. 1,30,000 (\$2,500 Canadian Dollars).