







## FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Over the years our work has not only had an impact on the lives of our members, but also on visitors and volunteers who come see our work.

We are happy to notice an increased involvement by local (Kolkata-based) volunteers. It is becoming more common for people to reach out to us with the intention of celebrating their special days or festivals at one of our homes. Often these visits includes a sponsored meal or a small donation, but more often donations in kind that contribute to the daily running of the homes.

One such group that has supported us with rations and other necessities for the homes, is inspired to build a paid old age home and to add a wing to care for destitute old people in the same premises. A thought so noble can only surface when the value of it is realised! The joy of sharing these special days with our members and students is life-changing for many! We feel that each one who comes in, takes with them a sense of peace and happiness which stays with them, and they return again and again to experience that joy!





A private hospital – run by a renowned charitable organization – refused admission to one of our members in a medical emergency! The reason they claimed, was that she had no identity card that could prove that she was a citizen of this country and also didn't have family. Normally in such a situation, a declaration printed on our letter head works, but sadly she was rejected. These are two examples of our own experiences. As a nation we do have a long way to go, but it is possible.

FOKE is creating a ripple effect which is so very important in today's social scenario of intolerance, injustice and self-centredness. To encourage people to be part of a worthy cause, and in the process, to bring them face to face with the realities of the elderly in our

society is in itself a silent movement. It brings a realisation as to what old age can be like specially if one is deserted, disrespected or disowned for any reason whatsoever! We thank all the individuals and groups, who played important role in the lives of our elderly members and children, with their visits and celebrations. The staff have become their family and kept them safe. Each one of you has made our members feel very special and loved. Thank you for this tremendous contribution! It is invaluable!

May each one of us keep doing our bit, so that this world will be a better place for those who are made to feel that they are a burden to society!

Kindest regards, Sanghita

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS**

Presently 23 family members reside in our 2 homes (9 in Bhalobasha and 14 in Charunibash) we have a total of 20 female members and 3 male members. Between the two homes: 10 associates take care of the members' daily needs; 4 associates are responsible to carry out the outreach programmes which include the Follow-up School and Self Help Group; a further 2 associates work on the maintenance and upkeep of the houses on a part-time basis.

#### **OUR ASSOCIATES**

Rejoining of Sridam Bawlia: The manager of Charunibash home resigned last September but requested to rejoin as his mitigating family matters settled. His request was discussed and approved by the Committee and because we were unable to find a suitable person as his replacement, this was a perfect solution. Sridam rejoined from 3rd September 2018, and everyone in Charunibash is happy as the house once again has a good team leader.

Gobindo Naskar who was recruited on a part time basis last year when Sridam resigned, is continuing as we are aiming to create an organic garden around the house, facilitated by our friend and well-wisher Sujata Nandi through her organisation – SN Greenovation. The organisation pays the extra remuneration to Gobindo directly for the extra day he puts in for developing the organic garden.







**Tuki Mondal** continued till March 2019 on a part time basis and was of great help especially when Bela went for her annual leave in December and Shusila had her cataract operation.

## DONATION IN KIND

This year we received donation in kind from friends (food items, household items, medical appliances, adult diapers etc) approximately worth Rs. 2 lakhs which is greatly appreciated. We encourage friends to donate items we require for the homes in kind which are discussed before they make any purchase. This helps us to save our running cost and in return the donors feel much more useful to handover the required items in person rather than making a monetary donation where their involvement in minimal.

#### MAINTENANCE

We had several maintenance jobs done in both homes. The drainage pipelines of the ladies bathroom and terrace were renovated in Bhalobasha and in Charunibash the ground was dug with rings around, to collect the waste from the house. Some paint work was also done in Charunibash. Repair and maintenance of both homes is continuous and crucial.

#### WORK THERAPY

Since November 2018 our members in Charunibash, specially Maya Adhikary and Shaymoli, started to make newspaper packets. It is a great way to keep them occupied and active. There is team work that takes place which is interesting to witness. Sridam sells these paper packets and as on



31st March 2019, the members have created a fund of Rs. 4964. Kerry also paid Rs. 1500 into this fund for the bead necklaces which the members made and which Kerry took home as gifts for friends and donors of FOKE. The members are very happy to be able to have savings which they can use for anything they wish.

#### MEDICAL VAN

The second hand vehicle was donated by Friends of Calcutta (FOC) primarily for medical purposes. It is used by both organizations and FOC pays for their own running cost through FOKE.

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

We had been contemplating on extending Bhalobasha home for several years. With this in mind, we completed the mutation, which is an updating of title ownership in the municipal records. It is a mandatory process for all legal transactions involving property. Now FOKE is listed as the legal owner in the land revenue department records.

Now that the property is mutated we can begin work to create the extension of Bhalobasha, which will be home to 6 or 7 more elderly members. Also, the toilets in Bhalobasha are in a dire state and will need to be rebuilt. This will be done along with the extension.

We are aware that building more homes is not the solution to the miseries of the destitute elderly but with the present situation, we feel the need to serve those few who are awaiting their turn to find a home. Any contribution towards this building will be much appreciated.

## **WELCOME HOME**

**Shyamoli Biswas** was found at Majherhaat railway station and was admitted to Vidya Sagar State General Hospital by the railway authority on 19th August 2017. The local police station found no relatives and for seven months the hospital made provisions for her safe stay. On the

request of Assistant Superintendent, we welcomed Shyamoli to Bhalobasha on 3rd April 2018 after all the legal formalities were complete. Shaymoli is homeless and says she has no one. Seemingly she lived not far from Madhubati but is very reluctant to talk about it and does not wish to return.



**Jaishree Maity** was rescued from the bus stop at Kalindi, a northern suburb of Kolkata. Jaishree's coming home is definitely in the 'Meant to Be' category.

We had learned of a lady staying at Lake Town bus stop and went to rescue her, but sadly couldn't find her. When driving past the next bus stop we spotted Jaishree who was in a state of complete helplessness and misery; we gathered all her details and within a day on 12th April 2018, with the help of the local auto driver and a rickshaw puller who used to feed Jaishree, we lodged the General Diary at the local Police Station. Jaishree came with us willingly and we admitted her to Dr. Fuad Halim's nursing home where her medical file was prepared and the cleansing process was carried out. Later in December the major operation of the vaginal hysterectomy with pelvic floor repair was carried out under Dr. Halim's supervision. Jaishree is enjoying a much better quality life.

Jaishree had left her husband because of his unfaithfulness and worked as domestic help. There came a time when she was unable to work anymore; as her saved money ran out she was soon on the street from her small rented house in the slum. Her daughter and son-in-law visited her at the bus stop, but only to take the little money she collected from begging. The daughter has made no effort to find her mother; Jaishree is not too keen to see her daughter either. Jaishree's journey illustrates both FOKE's reason for being and the joy that we receive from our work.









Dashumi Murai was rescued by HIVE - India, near NRS Hospital. She was admitted in NRS Hospital but transferred to Bangur State General Hospital, from where we welcomed her home to Bhalobasha on 9th June 2018. From whatever little we could gather from her spoken dialect we understand that she comes from the tea estates where she worked very hard; there were clear signs of abuse and malnourishment when she was rescued. Hopefully we will find some information about her in due time. In the meantime she has come out of the fear and is mingling with others. Her health has improved greatly. Thank you Hive India for giving Dashumi another chance in life.

#### **HOMECOMING**

This photo essay by

Jhinku Banerjee

documents Dashumi's

journey from Bangur

Hospital to FOKE.

The last photo was taken
several months later, with
Dashumi well integrated
in Bhalobasha.











Dipali Mukherjee was referred by the Milan Sangha Club in Dum Dum. She was rescued on 11th October, 2018, with kind support of the staff of Calcutta Rescue and our President; after the General Diary at the local Dum Dum Police Station she was admitted in Dr. Fuad Halim's Nursing Home. On 23rd October Dipali came home to join her new family in Charunibash. For the past 7- 8 years she was on the street which has affected her mentally and physically.

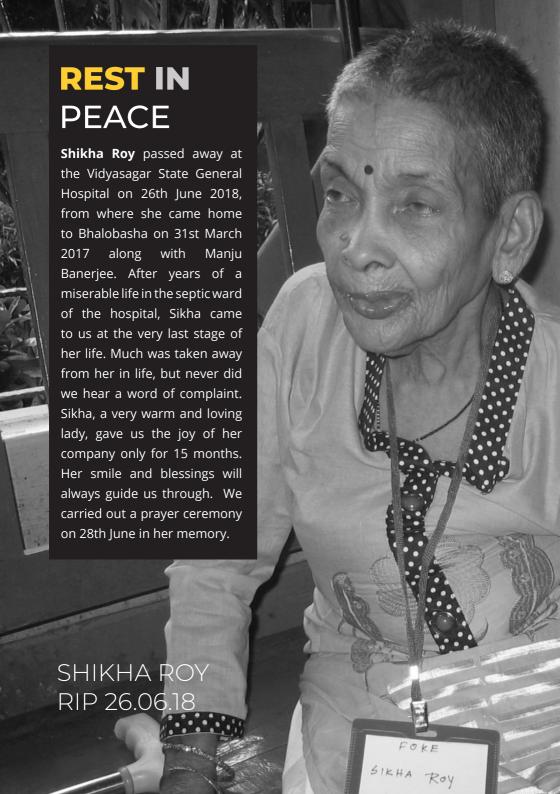
It took us several months till she finally agreed to cut her matted hair and slowly discard her many bangles and 'rudraksha' necklace. We feel she has a good family background; locals say that her house still exists, but her relatives sold the property and have settled abroad! There seems to be a family conflict and Dipali's psychological issues must have been the reason for disowning her. Dipali is a sad case of 'being left alone'. We are glad to give a family to her.



Once again Vidyasagar State General Hospital (VSGH) requested us to provide home support to **Madhuri Mukherjee**. She worked as a cook and lived in a rented house, but when unable to pay the rent due to her ill health and no work, she was asked to vacate the room. She lost the court case and lived in the house of the employer & cooked in return. When she fell sick she was admitted by her

employer who never returned to discharge her. Madhuri's younger son died in the same hospital while the elder son keeps no contact. We visited the locality where she lived and collected all the identity proofs which was kept safely in a shop. The locals were not able to give any information about the elder son and advised us to leave the area soon as the landowner could charge Madhuri to pay the due rent.





## SHAKUNTALA DEVI RIP 29.12.18

It took me more than 3 years to hold her beautiful hand as Shakuntala would instantly hiss whenever I came within 3 feet of her. Occasionally she would strike out to hit me and to my feigned rebuke of 'Ah Maa' she would mumble a tirade of obscenities that brought tears of laughter from Saraswati and utter confusion to Sridam. Nobody would translate the naughty words.

At night she would eventually eat the bhajees I would bring but never ever accept the same from my hand. It perplexed me and it hurt also.

Durga Puja ended the war! Dressed beautifully as always, she was perched high on a plinth to view the last pandal. She needed help to get down. I tentatively held out my hand with great apprehension. She grunted but placed her hand on my shoulder and allowed me to link her back to our fleet of waiting autos.

This photo was taken in the courtyard of Charunibas on our return. That night I again brought bhajees. I bravely sat on her bed and offered her two. She took the bhajees from my hand and lovingly placed one in my mouth. Sridam was standing behind me and it was the only time I ever saw tears roll down his face. His confusion was cleared and he explained to me the most beautiful of Indian customs: a mother will never eat until she has fed her son.

Wherever your spirit has flown Maa may you be enveloped by the love you found within your FOKE family which so enriched us all.

**MICHAEL HOPKINS** 













## **MEDICAL NEWS**

After many tests and treatments **Jaishree** had the vaginal hysterectomy and pelvic floor repair operation on 19th December, 2018. The operation was refused in most government hospitals, but Dr. Fuad Halim once again proved his conviction in gifting Jaishree with a new lease of life! We also thank Caring Heart Foundation – Kolkata, for contributing 80% of the operation cost. Thank you Rajeshwari for connecting this wonderful organisation with FOKE.

**Jini** had a minor stroke, was admitted to VSGH and is recovering well. Later in the year she had a fall and fractured her right wrist and finger which was plastered at a local private hospital.

**Shyamoli** suffers from high blood sugar and receives treatment from Diamond Harbour and Vidyasagar hospital. **Hashikhusi** is receiving follow up treatment in NRS Hospital for the deep vein infection.

Maya Adhikary, Kamala, Tara, Lovely, Ramlati, Dasumi, Binapani and Khudiram all had hospital visits for check-up and follow up treatment.

**Suprobha** and **Madhuri** both had their cataract operations from NRS Hospital. **Sushila** – a caregiver in Bhalobasha–also had her cataract operation taking the facility of the ESI hospital through the medical insurance that FOKE provides as part of the staff benefit.



**Champa** our medical coordinator is also enjoying all the benefit for the medical treatment for herself and her husband.

All our members are on continuous medical supervision, thanks to Champa, who closely monitors this critical area in collaboration with the caregiver in both homes. We have been able to manage quite well despite not having a regular visiting doctor in either of our homes. When needed, it is a regular practise of the staff to visit local hospitals with members.



Kalyani Das, who has been living with us since 2015, was eligible to receive a pension after her husband's death. Her son was contacted who came to visit her several times but sadly died in an accident, leaving the mother shattered. The daughter, who refused to even recognise her mother when we met her for the first time in 2015. was made to take responsibility for obtaining the due pension, with the threat of a legal notice by our legal advisor Setu Das Roy. After much dialogue and back and forth, the daughter finally committed and took necessary action to secure the due pension for her mother. The daughter is living with her in-laws

and declines to look after Kalyani. The pension amount is not sufficient to transfer Kalyani into a paid old age home and she pleads with us not to shift her anywhere else. Kalyani's physical situation doesn't allow much movement so she is paranoid with the thought of being moved elsewhere. Our homes are free hence we are in a dilemma with Kalyani's situation. Her pension amount is solely used on her medical and regular physiotherapy and we decided to continue supporting her. This has given her the peace she deserves. Sadly, we are not able to do anything legally against the daughter who expresses her inability to take any responsibility.

# **OUTREACH**ACTIVITIES

#### NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS

We continue to sponsor medicines and pension to 3 non-resident elderly ladies and daily lunch for 2 elderly male members.

**Kali Ghosh** was supported with his operation a few years back. This year, he needed to replace his old crutch and we were happy to provide for a new one.



#### FOLLOW-UP SCHOOL

Bhalobasha presently has 24 children (14 boys and 10 girls). Children are evaluated on a regular basis to check their progress. Suprobha Mishra, our elderly member, also regularly teaches a few children which keeps her busy.

The students of Bhalobasha attended the annual FOC sports programme, the Rajiv Ganguly Tournament in Loreto Entally. They also visited the community based art project, CPT Chalo Painting Tangai, created by Sunny De Wall artist collective and students of NGO Jungle Crows.











3 parents' meetings were carried out by resource person Minu Mondal who helped the mothers to understand the role of parents in children's life, child abuse, healthy living and taking care of the environment.

In Charunibash, presently we have 44 children (21 boys and 23 girls). 4 parents meetings were held and the last one was conducted by Minu on general health, child safety measures, avoiding unnecessary pressure on children and regularity in schools. Internal evaluations were carried out thrice in the year. All the students passed in their final school exam but 6 children did not do so well. We try to give extra attention and work on a one to one basis. Home visits are done when children are absent for more than a week. In both centres we encourage the children to be involved with the elderly through various activities.

#### **EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP**

Regular school fees are paid for 2 children – Suchismita Das and Tumpa Naskar. Annual fees are paid for Rayan Mondal while we sponsor the private tuition fees of Govindo's two daughters. Excepting Tumpa whose mother works as a maid in 5 homes, the rest are children of our own staff and we provide the educational scholarship as part of good practice.

#### CASE STUDY

Surja Halder is 6 years old, studying in Class I. His father Jadab Halder is a psychiatric patient, unable to work. His mother, Sabita makes brushes and earns about Rs. 80 per day which is not sufficient income for the 4 family members to live off. Surja and his mother are provided with cooked food from Charunibash, every evening which they bring home for dinner. Surja is a quiet child. He is regular and shows interest in studies. Our follow-up centre is a support system for him.



#### **SUMMER CAMP**

Rajeshwari and her friends made the summer vacation special for the students.

The first time we went to Charunibash to work with the children we conducted a drawing competition, yoga and meditation. They were so well received, we planned events for every weekend.

The children are keen to learn hence volunteers really looked forward to the weekends like the children. Many activities like storytelling, children's movies, play dough modelling, football, paper craft etc. were planned in Charunibash. There was lots of fun with ice cream or jhalmuri parties.

The ex-students were reconnected to plan some activities and it was good to see so many young girls coming forward and share their aspirations.

We were able to arrange sponsorships for tailoring classes for 6 girls and photography sessions with Jhinku.

Spoken English and Communication workshop was conducted by Radhika from British Council. Kerry bought a lot of raw materials for making fashion jewellery and also taught them to make a few samples.

Shiva Prasad Barua, a good friend stayed few days and helped with the garden and engaged the children in daily exercises. All these activities made the home a vibrant and happy place and the members loved the hustle and bustle.

**RAJESHWARI S** 

#### SELF HELP GROUP

During this term a total of 36 group meetings of our 3 Self Help Groups (SHG) - Pronoti, Jyoti and Minoti - were held. Each group meets once or twice per month. These meetings help individual members solve their family issues and also gives them an opportunity to discuss and make a decision. The habit of listening to one another in order to come to a decision is a gift that each member has. A tremendous leadership quality

has also evolved where they speak for themselves with the bank manager about any group related issues. None of the members are defaulters as they are very particular in refunding which means that the others have a fair chance to apply for loans too.

The whole idea of the SHG is to combat the nexus of money lenders. We have also experienced that through the process of micro finance one may get an instant loan, but it denies individuals of developing a saving mind which also means no discussion and no decision making.

NAME OF SHG	STARTED	TOTAL NO. MEMBERS	SUBSCRIPTION P/P/M	TOTAL TILL MARCH 18	BANK LOAN
Pronoti	May 2008	14	30	78,220	40,000
Jyoti	May 2008	14	30	78,040	40,000
Minoti	Jan 2009	14	30	67,620	
			TOTAL	2,23,880	





#### **FOKE OFFICE**

Our FOKE office continues to be a place where the local street children drop in. They enjoy coming in to draw & play with the cubes and jigsaw puzzles.

When Kerry is here they have extra advantage of healthy treats!



### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING

We were very happy to welcome some of the ex-students to the new youth group in Charunibash. The youth were initially involved but slowly lost interest as we were unable to give them enough time and a concrete plan. Presently we are sponsoring Putul Mukherjee in tailoring and Sangita Bayen has completed her tailoring course.



#### BLANKET DISTRIBUTION

This year's blanket distribution was very special as 150 blankets were received in donation from Khanna Blankets, Burrabazar, from whom we have been purchasing since we started in year 2002. This was a very special gesture as the present owner Mr. Rajesh Khanna wanted to do this in memory of his beloved father, who always gave few blankets free with our purchases, over the years. This time our team consisted of Sean and Lorraine Garvey, Arundhati and Manas, home help of Raju Buxani. Biplab and Sridam from both homes joined us for the first time.

Our members from both homes also distributed blankets to the local needy families.



#### MEDICAL CAMPS

#### **DENTAL CAMP**

Doctors from the R. Ahmed Dental College Hospital organised a dental camp on 29th May, for the villagers as well as the residents of Charunibash. This was part of the 'World No Tobacco Day Campaign' by the Indian Doctors Association West Bengal State Branch. As it was arranged on a short notice the beneficiaries were not as many as we would have liked. 48 outdoor patients, our members and staff were checked and some of them are being taken to the Diamond Harbour hospital for follow ups. On 1st August we had a dental check-up in Bhalobasha for all our members, staff and 10 locals.

#### **MEDICAL CAMP**

On 2nd October a follow-up health checkup was carried out by the doctors of Indian Public Health Association in both homes for the children, members and staff. 36





students and all our members were checked in this camp.

#### **EYE CHECK UP CAMP**

GKB Opticals facilitated an eye check-up camp organised by Sevayan – A Hand for All, under the CSR programme. FOKE supported Sevayan with all the legal formalities as they are yet to receive the registration of their organization.

#### **REACHING OUT**

PURNIMA, about 18, with her child Rekha only 9 months, were fending for themselves. Purnima's elderly mother somehow managed to take care of them by working in people's houses. Purnima and Rekha both had TB and due to their poor condition and being ignorant about the government facilities available they didn't succeed in continuing their treatment. When it was brought to our notice we networked with Hope Foundation Hospital (HFH) and admitted them on 30th October. For more than six weeks HFH cared for them and later supported them under the Mother and Child Care Unit where she was trained in life skills. FOKE's timely intervention and timely, support from HFH helped to change Purnima's life for better.





BARSHA: A young and beautiful girl was spotted and with little dialogue it was clear as to how vulnerable she was! She readily agreed to join us without any question which meant that she could have been picked up by anyone! We immediately co-ordinated with AVIEW – a NGO which has shelter homes for such young mentally ill women, and they agreed to take Barsha. Veda, our committee member, drove her to the home in Jibontala, South 24 Parganas, and within a couple of hours Barsha had a safe place to reside. Barsha has improved and is slowly sharing her story. We are also in the process of finding her family in Jharkhand.



**UMA** (name given): On 31st October, with the help of Calcutta Rescue staff, we were able to rescue a very sick and frail woman from Baguihati after we received the message from a local person. She was totally lost and was not able to speak or say her name. There was not much cooperation from the Police and the Councilor but a few kind hearted locals were determined to help her. Because of good networking we were able to rescue her and admit her to Dr. Fuad Halim's nursing home. On 10th

November she was discharged and taken to AVIEW home where she is settling in very well.

We are very grateful to Calcutta Rescue for providing us with the staff for rescue and they also reimbursed the pathology costs and medicines for Uma and Dipali. Thank you Dr. S. Brahma, founder of AVIEW for providing the residential support to Barsha and Uma. Networking with like-minded organisations is a great way to reach out to more people in need.

Another very frail elderly woman, name unknown was rescued from near the FOKE office area with the help of the Entally Police Station and was admitted to the Missionaries of Charity Home.





#### STUDENT PLACEMENT

For the first time Tania Dey, a student of Journalism and Mass Communication from Vishwa Bharati University did her placement with FOKE, arriving in May 2018. She stayed in Charunibash and Bhalobasha and was permitted to involve herself with all the outreach programmes as well as with the daily in-house activities. As part of her daily activities she did home visits of students and youths; taught the students, conducted literacy classes for the staff, helped in the dental camp and generally spent time with the members.

#### STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

This year the staff appreciation day was slightly different than all the years for two reasons. First, Sushila was felicitated for completing 15 years of dedicated service since 4th February

2004 when she joined in as the personal caregiver in Bhalobasha on a meagre salary and cleaned up any mess without a wrinkle on her face. Over the last 15 years our members







know who to call on when they need someone the most! Sushila came to us from Mother Teresa's Premdaan home where she was a recovered patient. We took her as a caregiver and slowly over the last few years her family which includes the son and daughter reunited with her. Without her selfless contribution towards the members, FOKE would not be where it is today. Thank you Sushila for the immense contribution you have made and still continuing, which enhances the work of FOKE.

Secondly, we had the honour of the presence of Mr. Dilip Mukherjee and Mr. Swapan Mukherjee, whose generosity till date allows us to use

their property in Madhubati as the second home to our elderly members. Both the brothers shared their feelings of appreciation in associating with FOKE and we thanked them for their trust and generosity.

The day was full of fun with activity on team building where each one had to run behind one another with a balloon in between, making sure the balloon doesn't fall.

This was followed by few very interesting games to win prizes! Breakfast, lunch and departing tea was as always much loved by the staff. A token amount was also given to all the staff members in recognition of their selfless efforts.



#### OTHER PROJECTS

### OLD AGE HOME FOR THE DESTITUTE IN BODH GAYA

In the first week of June, we (Kerry, Rajeswari and Sanghita) visited a village near Bodh Gaya, a Buddhist piligramage destiantion. Our intention was to spend time with 3 local NGOs of which one project was an old age home for the destitute, sheltering 12 ladies and 3 men, but with very few resources.

Veda Rugwuetinip, founder of the home is struggling to finance the running costs of the place. The home is built

asbestos roofing and in the midst of a barren land. Even the beds are mud blocks with just a cloth covering the top. There is no electricity. We only hope that it can withstand the monsoon!

The members living in this home share similar stories to our FOKE members. We brought about a month's supply of rations for them, which were very gratefully received.

#### AVIEW HOME: REHABILITATING MENTALLY ILL WOMEN

We have visited A Village for Independent and Enterprising Women (AVIEW) which for the last 10 years rehabilitates mentally ill women. Dr. S. Brahma has kindly provided shelter and treatment to Uma and Barsha whom we rescued. We were happy to support them with rations, cooking vessels, bed sheets shawls and blankets and have introduced our friends who wish to extend their support.



## OUR VOLUNTEERS

#### **ADRIENNE & AARON**

Like last year, Adrienne and her son Aaron spent quality time in both homes. From 15th - 22nd July they organised English lessons for children, and craft with the members in Charunibash. In the evenings they arranged indoor games for members. They also helped the staff with household chores. The last day was funfilled with a special magic show, Khudiram's Birthday and a teary farewell to Adrienne and Aaron. The celebration ended with a lunch of chicken, rice, vegetables for the students, youth, residents and friends. In Bhalobasha there were similar activities and a party for the children and members with snacks, sweets and gifts. Everyone looks forward to their return even before they leave the country which only shows









how much their presence is loved and enjoyed in the homes. Adrienne and

Aaron, thanks for your time, gifts and commitment.

#### SHIVA PRASAD BARUA

Shiva Prasad Barua is an ex senior investigation police officer. Soon after his voluntary retirement, he came to Kolkata, joined Buddhism, and decided to serve mankind. After his first visit to Charunibash he decided to stay few days and helped with cleaning up the land, getting it ready for more vegetation and tried implementing

organic farming. Mr. Barua was great with the children, teaching them physical activities, meditation and anything they enjoyed. He was kind to the members and helped the staff in whatever way possible. He came at a time when we needed a man in the house after Sridam left. Thank you Mr. Barua for all you did for FOKE.





#### RAMA GOTHOSKAR

Only 19 years old, Rama amazed us! Rama has no inhibition, hence the moment she entered Charunibash, she gelled with all the members and staff. She found jobs to do and made herself useful. The 5 days of her stay in Charunibash and later 3 days in Bhalobasha was spread between the members and the children with art/craft, serving lunch, playing indoor games and helping the staff.

When I first got to Madhubati, I was in awe. It was very beautiful. I walked in and the elderly were sitting in the veranda basking in the sun. They were so cute! Before I said anything they just smiled and nodded and two of the grandmothers spontaneously hugged me: the warmest hugs I have received!

I can't speak Bengali (and would make do with some Hindi), but by the last day I was able to understand some. Hashikhusi who can't talk at all, was the most expressive!

The kids were very tiny and cute and eager to learn! We made New Year's Greeting cards together. The elder kids learnt how to make paper stars out of quilling paper and we made a decoration chain out of quilling paper. They were so excited that we hung it up on the veranda immediately!

Over my time there I realized that the old people liked having someone to talk to, or sit in silence with. I learnt that this was









not just an organization to the abandoned elderly, but it was a proper home and they were all each others family. I realized that they did not treat me like an outsider, but like I was part of that family – one of them.

I like how birthdays are celebrated here too – they cut a cake and blow out candles and everyone sings the birthday song and gives out warm hugs. I haven't seen any old person till now celebrate their birthday like this. Not even my own grandparents!

The Bhalobasha home was very different from the one in Madhubati. The old grandmothers were more delicate and frail. But I got to hear about their past too. All the of them are really emotionally strong to be able to go through such trauma and still have a smile on their face, and enjoy the little joys of life. Their strength inspired me.

I had gone there with the purpose to engage myself with the elderly and the kids, and share ideas and whatever amount of knowledge I have, but I came back learning much more from them! It has contributed to my self growth as a person and my perspective of this world, an emotional experience which I know I will never forget in my life.

I look forward to seeing everyone again, because I am definitely coming back!

**RAMA GOTHOSKAR** 



#### **KERRY LUXTON**

A lot of work gets done each time Kerry visits. This time she painted the office too! However the office walls can never be kept clean as the children love putting their hand and foot prints. She also loves going out to the wholesale market for beads, wool and craft items to leave behind enough supplies for the members to knit and make necklaces. This time she also had a good session with the youth.

Thank you Kerry for all your support and hard work, and for always having the best interest of FOKE in mind even when you are back at home, fundraising for us.





#### CHANDREYEE SAHA

Chandreyee, only now in Class XI, can be an example to many youngsters. Her mother Nupur, first came to Bhalobasha with a group called Dishari. Nupur discussed the idea of getting her daughter involved and soon Chandreyee - a young highly spirited girl made her way to help our students in Bhalobasha with mainly English. Chandreyee makes sure that the children learn and understand what she teaches them and evaluates them on a regular basis. She also trains them in singing, dancing and prepares them for cultural programmes. The children are very fond of her. She diligently, takes time out from her schedule in school and other extra-curricular activities. We need more such young people to help make a difference in the lives of those who are not so fortunate.



#### GOPA DAS

Gopa, always willing to help wherever required, created the roof-top garden in Bhalobasha. This activity is much appreciated by FOKE as the staff members are unable to make time for this.

Thanks to Mrs. Kanan Chanda who visits Bhalobasha whenever free to speak to our members on a personal basis and to give them some quality time by just listening to them.

Thank you Mrs Kakoli Mukherjee from 'Chollis theke Ashi' group for assisting our teachers in Bhalobasha in various programmes and preparing the children for performance.

# FESTIVAL AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS OF OUR BELOVED MEMBERS

The homecoming date of the members is celebrated as their birthday, as none are able to recollect or are aware of their date of birth. For all our members we know that a birthday celebration was never ever a part of their growing up. We are glad to give them this special moment.















#### OTHER CELEBRATIONS

Other birthdays were celebrated with the FOKE members in Bhalobasha and Charunibash. We were very happy to celebrate the birthdays of Rayan, followed by Shubham Mondal, Suparna Mondal, Swarnalata Das, Subhomita Mukherjee, daughter of our dear friend Sunny, Atanu Banerjee and Dipsikha Chowdhury. They were all very generous.

Subir and Nibedita Bhattacharya celebrated their marriage anniversary in Charunibash.

Thanks to Sridam's sister for sponsoring the lunch in Charunibash in celebration of her daughters marriage. Arpita, a local young girl and her family in Madhubati, invited all our members and staff of Charunibash to her marriage ceremony. This was such a wonderful gesture.

#### MEMORY DONATION

We were honoured to host and be part in remembering the loved ones of some of our friends.

Mr. Parthapratim Mukherjee remembered his mother; our teacher Soma remembered her father-in-law; Mrs. S. Sen, retired English teacher of Loreto Day School Sealdah, remembered the birthday and first death anniversary of her Late husband in both homes. For the last several years Dr. Ketoki Sharma remembers her father by visiting Bhalobasha with fruits, sweets and lots of love. Priyanka Dey remembered her mother. Arundhati Chaudhary, our Assistant Secretary, served special lunch in both homes in memory of her mother's third death anniversary. Mrs. Ratna Bagchi remembered her mother like Champa Chowdhury (Medical-coall years. ordinator) remembered her mother and later in the year also celebrated with special lunch for both her parents; Shila Mitra celebrated her father-in-laws death anniversary. Mr. Rajesh Khanna remembered his father Mr. Khanna by donating 150 blankets for distribution. A special prayer service was arranged in Bhalobasha for Kalyani's late husband and son.

We have tried our best to provide an ambience for everyone who chose to share the loss of their parents in a very special way. In memory of their loved ones our elderly members were showered with love and gifts! We thank each one of you for thinking differently and being so kind to us! May their souls rest in peace.









#### **FESTIVALS**

On 8th June two of our members - Binapani and Ramlati from Bhalobasha, had the honour to inaugurate a Cultural Programme organised by Behala Asha Cultural Society. Thanks to Raju Gyne for thinking differently and inviting us. It was surely very special for Binapani and Ramlati.

We celebrated the following important

events and festivals in both homes: Saraswati Puja, Holi, World Elderly Day, Independence Day, Republic Day, Teachers' Day, Children's Day, Raksha Bandhan and Diwali.

Bengali New Year was made very special with performance by Abhohikar Band where Sunny Mukherjee, a very dear friend presented a musical evening. The ambience created was magic! Thanks to Abohobikar Musical band, for once again organizing a









similar magical musical evening for the residents and villagers of Madhubati in January to celebrate the New Year. Pujo Parikrama with all the members from each home was on Sasthi and Saptami.

The Annual Christmas Program was also well organised with lunch for all the children as a special treat and cultural programme like every year.

Thanks to Prakash Pachisia and Jeet Bhatjia, for once again donating the fire-works, crackers and lights for Diwali .

Thank you to Punit Agarwal and his friends for special food packets and fresh cooked Dosas in Bhalobasha, for Christmas celebration.

Republic Day was made special with visit and gifts from Mamy Pogo Pants. Children and our members in Bhalobasha loved their gifts. Thank you to all the members of the company for your kind gesture.











# VISITORS, FRIENDS, AND THEIR KIND GESTURES

SUAS with a new group of Irish students visited Charunibash and Bhalobasha on 25th and 26th July in two separate groups. Songs, music and activities made the few hours very entertaining and enjoyable.

Calcutta Calling c/o Fr. Pat Hogan visited Charunibash on 13th October and shared some enjoyable moments with the members and staff. It was their generous support that turned the derelict building of Charunibash into a home

Thanks to Calcutta Classical Guitar Society, we had the classical guitarists visit both the homes. R2T2 is a young duo– Tizoc Romero and Raphael Bereau from France who visited and performed in Charunibash in August.

Raphaella Smits visited Charunibash on 18th December. Raphaella is an internationally celebrated guitarist from Belgium. She kindly volunteered to pay us a visit when she was invited to perform at the Calcutta International Classical Guitar Festival. Raphaella performed beautifully on her 8-string guitar for the children and members a very special and memorable day for all involved!

We are grateful to Aine, Norah, Mariam and Mags from Ireland for their visit and contribution. FOC members and friends visited Bhalobasha and made it very special.

Thank you Margriet Janssen for making time to visit the FOKE homes as we know you are dedicatedly involved in volunteering with the Missionaries of Charity.

Kerry's friends Annie, Sue and Niree from Sidney also visited to experience the work Kerry is involved with.

Our gratitude towards friends who donated to celebrate their special days with the members and to those, who made general donations to support the cause. You have all made a difference.

Thank you Revati, Padma Dinesh, Surantana, Tapan Dasgupta, Jhinuk and Rajib Gupta, Mrs. N. Sarkar, Mrs. S. Sen, Arvind, Soma Choudhury, Swarnalata Das, Dr. Kaushik Pan, Madumita Sanyal, Sraboni & Koushik Biswas, A. K. Ramakrishnan, Radha, Debangshu Mondal and Rajeshwari S.

Each of your donations is much appreciated and valued.







#### VALUED DONATION IN KIND

We received Django, a pet dog, from Radhika all the way from Delhi. We hardly hear him bark but his energy is very high. The children and members enjoy him until he jumps on them!

A good steel Almirah was donated to Charunibash by Mrs Jaya Roy, friend of our committee member Rajeshwari.

On 29th September a group of ladies in reference to Champa, visited Charunibash to perform Kirtan (devotional songs) which was much loved by all and everyone joined in to sing and dance. They came with gifts for children and dry food and fruits.

Soumili our friend came with saris as gifts for the members and had a great day of music with all in Charunibash. Some of the members played the harmonium with ease

This year, we were glad to welcome Kerry's son Charlie and his friend Emily for the first time in both our homes. We thank them for the gifts of recycled laptops, iPhones and Macbooks for FOKE and different other charities.

We thank Vincent Jones for his contribution which Michael Hopkins used to purchase the room heaters for both the homes.

Rotary International District 9675 from Sydney transported nearly 30 hand woven woolen blankets from 'Wrap with Love' which we have received with great appreciation. We plan to share these beautiful warm blankets with others who will value them and with those who need them most.

Raju Gyne and his friends with 'Dhansiri' and 'Daanpitey' groups came



in with gifts of stationary and toiletries for the children and members at Puja. Dishari, a local women's group, hired a cook and organised a very lavish lunch for their own group of 40 as well as for the members and staff in Bhlaobasha. Gifts of sarees and night dresses were made to the members.

Mahalaya, the onset of Durga Pujo was made very special by this group. 'Chollis theke Ashi' group didn't forget us this year and donated food rations for Bhalobasha. Batlala Joyrampur Puja Committee gifted the children school bags, pencil boxes and slippers. Basundhara Flat Owners Association donated Rs.10,000 as part of their CSR activity, toward the purchase of 2 Fowler beds for the home. Bangali Vaidya Samaj organised a lavish lunch and donated a month's ration in Charunibash celebrating Bijoya Dashami. It was such a joy!

The Institute of International Teachers
Training and 'Unish Kuri Magazine'
from ABP Group sponsored household
items, lunches and personal gifts for
the members as part of their CSR
activity during Christmas.

Thank you Nitin Abhisek, Dr. Koushik Pan, Sanghita Karmakar who visited individually and contributed. We thank Suprokash from AVIEW for visiting and advising us on the mental wellbeing of our members.

We are grateful to Mrs. Deepa Dholakia for donating wheel chairs, walkers and several other medical appliances belonging to her late father-in-law Mr. Madhusudan Dholakia.

Thank you Punit and Mukti Agarwal for supplying more than 50 litres of phenyl and for sponsoring snacks again this year also for Christmas and New Year celebration.

We thank Melbandhan Trust for the kind gift of blankets and goodies to the students of the follow up school and fruits, sweets for the members at our annual event in Bhalobasha.

Thank you Mr & Mrs Pradeep Arora, Ruma and her organisation Sevayan-Hand for All and Ms. Delfina Boila for donating us the annual requirement of household items for both homes.

Sunny Mukherjee keeps donating a bag of rice every time he visits the home. Thanks Sunny! Nilanjan Biswas we thank you for printing some of the FOKE documents without charging us.

We thank everyone who personally donated newspapers to our homes, for our members to make paper bags. Our banker, Canara Bank-Sealdah Branchalso donated their newspapers. These helped the members to create their own little fund.







# VISIT TO SYDNEY

### **AUSTRALIA**

I was cordially invited by Kerry and Ron Luxton to experience the wonderful wedding celebration of their daughter Georgie with Hugh Baillie. Their home was so welcoming and both were extremely kind to provide me all the comfort and cares during my stay in their beautiful home.

I made the trip also with the intention to present myself in person and to thank all those who have supported our cause through Kerry and others. Kerry arranged for me to meet and speak to friends who support her fundraising activities at her place. This was very effective as it was a personal interaction.

I was invited to the gathering for the Melbourne Cup (famous annual horse racing competition held in Melbourne) at Deni's a very good friend of Kerry's who had organized food and drinks for more than 20 guests. The horse racing was watched on a





big television and the winning money and charity sweeps from this event was donated to FOKE. A few generous ladies made personal donations too.

I thank Geraldine Cullen for inviting me to Waverley College where I spoke to the students of Class V and they made a donation from their class collection. Later, I had the opportunity to share our story with some senior students too. Thanks to Steve Ghattas and Gabby Smith for accommodating me within their busy school schedule. Waverley College, over the past many years has been supporting FOKE and it was a great opportunity for me to thank them for their kindness.

Michael Symons and the members of his group 'Cobra and Mongoose' were very kind to invite me. We have received support from them for several years and it was so good to see old friends and thank them personally.

I was happy to meet Helen Bird – Personal Assitant to the Director Wayne Tinsey, from Edmund Rice Education Australia, who promised to keep us in their itinerary in September 2019 when they visit Kolkata. Sadly I missed meeting Wayne, but he assured to stay connected and promised to visit the homes.

Kerry arranged a meeting with the ladies of the "Wrap with Love" group who donate the beautiful woollen blankets to our members. We also met the ladies of the 'Avondale Golf Club' to speak about FOKE.

The 3 weeks were quite full and after so many years I am glad I allowed myself to make it happen. Thank you Kerry and Ron for sponsoring the trip which was worth making!

In appreciation, Sanghita.



#### **FRIENDS** FOREVER!

Thank you Sean Garvey and his family for continuous support over the years. 'Calcutta Calling' c/o Fr. Pat Hogan, kindly made their annual donation to FOKE. Michael Symons and his group 'Cobra and Mongoose' made their donation to FOKE as always.

Kerry Luxton and her family continue to support FOKE lovingly. Pobalscoil Neasain School Dublin, with Adrienne's encouragement supports both follow up schools. Geraldine Cullen keeps encouraging the students of Waverley College to support us. Gai Brydon was very kind to donate this year though she was not able to visit Kolkata.

Thanks to Maura Allen, David and Helen, Friends of Calcutta, Belvedere College, Liam Ashe, Fr. Sean Sexton for always encouraging us and making substantial contribution.

Thank you Mr Dilip Mukherjee and Mr.

Swapan Mukherjee for your blessing and your trust.

Gaver Chatterjee, from Concern India Foundation (CIF) visited both homes and expressed interest to support FOKE. We are grateful to Pampa Bhattacharya our ex-committee member for connecting CIF once again with FOKE. We have received support from CIF in the past and we are hopeful to be supported in the future.

Raju Buxani and Swarnalata Das never once forgot FOKE and keep making their donations. Rajesh Shah supplied us with medicines throughout the year. Rajesh Arora, Dr. Avijit Dam, Dr. Fuad Halim and his team readily provides support.

Hope Foundation Hospital, Calcutta Rescue, Hive India, Vidyasagar State General Hospital extends their support in time of need. GKB Optical for the last few years supported the eye check up camps. We are also grateful for receiving the medicines from Hope Hospital and Calcutta Rescue for their referred members living with us. Thank you to Dr. Brahma and Suprokash of AVIEW for providing shelter and treatment to all the young girls we rescued, and for visiting our homes and giving our members psychiatric treatment.

Thank you Caring Heart Foundation India for paying hospital bills for Jaishree and Jini.

The committee members and the staff made the journey of FOKE possible. Michael Hopkins has solidly stood by us as always. Veda designed the Annual Report and Jhinku Banerjee took some of the beautiful photos used in it. Veda also arranged many musical programmes in both the homes. Rajeswari helped networking with different NGOs and Arundhati introduced friends to FOKE. Sahadeb Some has been a constant support right through the year.

Thank you Kerry, Sandra Karhn and Shruti Rao for editing the Annual Report. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to printing costs.

We may have missed some names but please know that your contribution was truly valued! We hope to continue with the same simplicity and with your love, trust and good wishes.







#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NAMES	DESCRIPTION
Mr. Sahadeb Some	President
Ms. Sanghita Mondal	Secretary
Ms. Arundhati Chaudhury	Assistant Secretary
Mrs. Shukla Rebeiro	Treasurer
Rajeshwari S	Member
Veda Aggarwal	Member
Jhinku Banerjee	Member

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NAMES	COUNTRY
Mrs. Maura Allen	Ireland
Mrs. Kerry Luxton	Australia
Mr. Michael Hopkins	Ireland
Dr. Fuad Halim	India
Dr. Avijit Dam	India
Advocate Setu Das Roy	India

## FOKE LEGAL DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT	REFERENCE	VALIDITY	
Society Registration Act XVI 1962 West Bengal	Registration No. SO133406 dated 8th December 2005	One Time	
Section 12 A of the IT Act 1961	DIT(E)/S-219/8E/ 276/09- 10	One Time	
Tax Account (TAN) No.	CALF01092A	One Time	
Permanent Account No. (PAN)	AAAAF0865H	One Time	
Under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 1976 (FCRA)	Registration No. 147120947	To be renewed in 5 years w.e.f 07.03.2017	
Section 80G(5)(VI) of the IIT Act 1961	DIT(E)8E/276 /09-10	One Time	
DARPAN Unique ID	WB/2017/0171110	One Time	

## **OUR BANK DETAILS**

#### FCRA ACCOUNT

For donations from outside India

BANK NAME	CANARA BANK			
Branch Name & Address	Sealdah Branch, P. B. No. 10820, 14 & 15 APC Road, Kolkata-700009, West Bengal, India Branch code : 000396			
Account No	0396101025998			
Name of Account (Cheque to be made in the name of)	FRIENDS OF KOLKATAS ELDERLY			
9 digit number (MICR number)	700015024			
Current / Savings Account	Savings			
Swift Code / Remittance Instructions	CNRBINBBCFD			
IFSC CODE	CNRB0000396 (used for RTGS,IMPS and NEFT transactions)			

#### LOCAL ACCOUNT

For donations from within India

BANK NAME	PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK		
Branch Name & Address	Dharmotalla Branch, Sunidhi Building, 120 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata – 700 013. Branch Code: 052800		
Account No	0528000100106434		
Name of Account (Cheque to be made in the name of)	FRIENDS OF KOLKATAS ELDERLY		
9 digit number (MICR number)	700024013		
Current / Savings Account	Savings		
IFSC Code	PUNB0052800		

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Date: 01/07/2019

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			10.00	(CALCUTTA CALLING)			
		SAL TEL	8.00	r.o.c		11111	1000
				Driver Charges	1 1 2 2	41680.00	
		51		Fixel Farking Charges	1 5 1	56141.00 426.00	
				Servicing & Repair		20293.00	1000
			1 -	Servicing & Repair Car Insurance		8785.00	
				Proffic Cases P.O.K.B		100.00	127395.0
3/ 50 50				Driver Charges	1 8 1	29900.00	
				Pixel		35256.00	
			1	Parking Charges Servicing & Resolv		2090.00	1000
			3777	Servicing & Repair Car Insurance		6255.00	TEL TELESCOPE
				The Sic Cones		200.00 8000.00	91843.0
		1		By Outstanding Audit Fees By Outstanding EPFO		8909.00 4804.00	
	1	1 15		By Outstanding ISPO By Outstanding ISBC		954.00	12458.00
				Poxed Assets	13948.00	954.00 27279.00	41227.0
		****		By, Closing Balance Coather-hand	1605.99	43.94	
				Cash-in-hand Punjab Mational Bank A/C No. 0528000100106434	30599.70	40.94	100 m
		Kara and a	S Cont	A/C No. 0528000100106434			
	6 6 7	Lance L	5 - 5 - 5	Canera Bunk A/C No. 0395101005998		2899780.20	2432350.10
			Contract Contract				
Total	522410.59			Total	523410.59	4453892,44 or NONORANJAN S	4977303.03

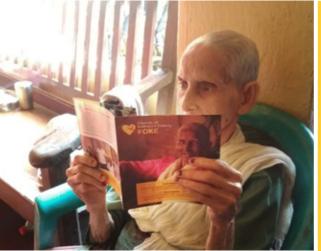
Place: Kolketa Date: 01/07/2019 Sherishanjan Som (Proprietor)













# Friends of Kolkata's Elderly: FOKE

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

c/o Studio Plaza, 74 C, SN Banerjee Road, Kolkata 700014

#### **BHALOBASHA**

61 Bakrahat Road, Sreebardhanpalli, Thakurpukur, Kolkata 700104

#### **CHARUNIBASH**

Vill. Madhubati (on Usthi-Dostipur Road), P.O. Dostipur, South 24 Paraganas 743504

#### www.foke.in

+91 988 333 9004 | fokeindia@yahoo.in

