



MAHARASHTRA FOUNDATION

Social & Economic Justice for All
(NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations)

PO Box 2287, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008-2287

<http://www.maharashtrafoundation.org>

महाराष्ट्र फाउंडेशन

December, 2014

Year of Establishment: 1978

Lead- Founder Member:
(Late) Mr. Yeshwant Kanitkar

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Hello friends,

Wish you Happy Holidays and Happy New Year 2015.

As our Maharashtrian community has adopted this country, we have added new holidays to our list of Holidays that we observe and celebrate. 4th of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays have become natural celebrations in our families, just as we celebrate 15th August and Diwali. I know many families hoisting the American flag on their houses on 4th July and who attend township and school functions just as there are Diwali and 15th August celebrations in schools and townships.

The year has come to an end as the time flies. The year 2014 has been great for Maharashtra Foundation – in terms of outreach, getting new members and getting funds to support the NGOs in India. The fund raising efforts started with Atlanta fund raiser in March. It was the first ever such attempt in that part of the community. Board member Vabhav Sathe put in tremendous efforts to make it successful. Then Dipti Damle and Vaibhavi Akerkar from Cary, North Carolina (friends of Stree Mukti Sanghatana -SMS) approached me. They wanted to do a fund raiser in September 2014 to collect funds for SMS but they had never done such event before. So with our support in terms of seed money for the rent of the Cary Auditorium and with some guidance, they were able to collect over \$10,000 for SMS. And in turn Maharashtra Foundation has acquired more than 75 families from Research Triangle (Raleigh, Chapel Hill and Durham) area in our pool of donors.

The annual fund raising event in New Jersey took place on 8th Nov 2014. It was another successful event and we collected over \$125,000 in support of the many NGOs along with the projects we selected to support in 2015. Another attraction of this event was a panel discussion on “Social Impact Redefined: How next generation is bringing the change”. We went to Boston and Connecticut and held 2 more outreach events. We took a Theatrix Inc. production “Ji Jaisi Aapki Marzi” - a Hindi one-act play depicting women’s issues – to Boston and Connecticut during 6-7 December 2014 week end. It was a Maharashtra Foundation event in Boston; and our collective effort with Sneha Inc and Connecticut Marathi Mandal in Connecticut. Some reviews from the attendees of these functions are included in this issue.

And I must mention 2 new initiatives that Maharashtra Foundation participated in during this year. We participated in a grand reception for India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Madison Square Garden in New York City. It was an event of the year and 80 members from Maharashtra Foundation got an opportunity to listen to him. A true leader-personified, he was energetic and optimistic and painted an encouraging picture for progressive India. We also participated in “GivingTuesday”, a global day dedicated to giving back. On Tuesday, December 2, 2014, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world came together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give. We at Maharashtra Foundation collected \$10,000 from few donors on such a call.

Looking to the arrival of 2015, a couple of events are already lined up. Maharashtra Foundation Literature and Social Service award function will take place at Bal Gandharva auditorium in Pune on 10th January 2015. More details about the award, the recipients and the function are in this issue. The other event is the Youth Wellness Camp which was started in 2011 in partnership with Share and Care Foundation at Jnana Prabodhini Harali. The 5th camp will be held during Jan 12-15, 2015. Dr Sheela Laungani from Long Island New York, Dr. Rane Limaye and Dr. Suresh Talathi from Chicago, and Dr. Shubhangi Thakur from New Jersey will be attending the camp as doctor volunteers. Sunanda Oka, Ashok and Meena Deodhar and I will be volunteers assisting the doctors. The doctors will examine about 350 students of the schools and the Agricultural Vocational college at Jnana Prabodhini during this camp. Discussions have started with Dr. Swarnalata Bhishikar of Jnana Prabodhini-Harali about the format of the future camps and she has some new ideas about the camp to reach out to the nearby villages.

I look forward to your continued support in coming year.

- Shaila Vidwans

Report of Maharashtra Foundation's Fund Raising Event – Nov., 8, 2014

A panel discussion: "Social Impact Redefined: How the Next Generation is Driving Change"

In an effort to focus on social impact work being done by the next generation of American born Indians, this year MF positioned a panel that explored a broad scope of work based internationally as well as in the US, exploring a breadth of activities ranging from direct services for the needy, to efforts aimed at working through institutions to achieve social impact.



The panel consisted of Aditi Sharangpani, Pediatric Critical Care Medicine, who also participates in disaster relief and other health camps in India and Africa; Manisha Bhinge, Senior Program Manager with BRAC USA, working on projects in Sudan, Tanzania and Bangladesh; Mona Prakash, Attorney and Law Guardian at the State of New Jersey Office of the Public Defender; and Shuma Panse, GBC Health, working on increasing the role of the business sector to improve global health outcomes. Moderating the panel was Maneesha Kelkar, social justice activist and former Executive Director of Manavi, an organization dedicated to ending violence against South Asian women.



Panelists spoke passionately about their motivation to create social change through a variety of approaches. Aditi and Mona discussed ways in which they provide services directly to those affected by lack of health services and legal rights. Manisha and Shuma examined their indirect approach to targeting the institutions that create change for entire populations, through Corporate Social Responsibility and innovative programming on poverty and gender.

The discussion began with the motivation for this work; panelists spoke passionately about the unmet needs of underserved populations.

Mona spoke about representing the rights of abused and neglected children; Aditi discussed the vast paucity of medical services in developing countries. On the institutional level, Shuma spoke about the immense potential of public-private partnerships, while Manisha pointed out the need for advocacy for the ultra poor in Asia and Africa. There was a lively discussion about the impact of this work, as well as the problems encountered.



There was consensus on the enormity of the need for social impact work as well as the potential for this work, including a concern that this work was as yet not well understood by the immigrant Indian community, which continues to focus on the more traditional professional paths. There was a call for action to change the thinking around this work from one of 'charity' to 'social impact'.

The panel discussion ended by opening the discussion to the audience. An enthusiastic conversation followed, with panelists responding to questions from the audience, well past the allotted time. MF hopes to continue this dialogue into the future.

- Maneesha Kelkar (New Jersey)

Maharashtra Foundation's annual fund raiser was held at Grover Middle School, West Windsor, NJ on Saturday, November 8, 2014. The event included Panel Discussion, two part Marathi Drama, Foundation Projects Presentation, Fund Raiser and Dinner.

A topic for panel discussion was "Social Impact Redefined". Four professional, next generation young women with an academic background and career in Social Impact participated in a very lively and enlightening discussion moderated by, a very well experienced in women's issues, Mrs. Maneesha Kelkar. The panelists were, Dr. Aditi Sharangpani, Manisha Bhinge, Mona Prakash, and Shuma Panse. They have worked and are currently working in diverse countries and regions of the world, thus effecting positive global social impact.

A two part Marathi drama "Yaksha Prashna", written by first generation immigrant, Mr. Chandan Gokhale, was extremely well presented by the Atlanta based cast of Ashish



Choudhari, Medha patkar, Chandan Gokhale, Meenal Gadre, Sonal Mirajkar, and Dr. Anand Date. It was directed by Rajesh Joshi.

The play has very powerful dialogs. I felt as if I am watching a drama written by someone famous of yester

years say, like P. L. Deshpande's "Tuze Aahe Tujpashi". Even though it has a sad ending, it conveyed a very powerful message that one must give a helping hand to a needy person, which is very much in synch with what Maharashtra Foundation stands for.

Then the projects selected by Maharashtra Foundation for financial assistance were presented followed by a fund raiser. The donors pledged \$125,000 during the event.

- **Mukund Satawlekar** (New Jersey)

Mr. Anil Deshpande (Orlando, Florida) is a grand sponsor of Maharashtra Foundation's Annual fund raising event held at Grover Middle School, West Windsor, NJ on Saturday, November 8, 2014.

Maharashtra Foundation went to Boston and Connecticut on Dec. 6 and 7, 2014

Maharashtra Foundation (MF) held 2 events during Dec. 6-7, 2014 with purpose of outreach and fund raising. Our Boston partners were Hindi Manch, Dr. Mohan Dali, Jyotsna and Anil Mhatre, Medha and Mahesh Ganmukhi and Shriniwas Jambhekar. And in Connecticut, Sneha Inc. and Connecticut Marathi Mandal sponsored the show. It was a perfect partnership at both places. A theatrix Inc. production "Ji Jaisi Aapki Marzi" – a Hindi one act play was help in these cities. The audience were in awe after the performance. Here are some reviews.

Maharashtra Foundation (MF) held an event in Andover, MA on 6th December 2014. The event started with a projection of

a DVD about Maharashtra Foundation's history, philosophy and projects. It was followed by the play. Bostonian were delighted to host the play. Though the weather was rough the cast and the crew drove all the way from New Jersey to perform. Many of us had heard great reviews about this performance. All the actors played their roles with great conviction. All parts of the play flowed seamlessly and the message at the end was powerful. The common thread was how badly women are treated in the society just because they are GIRLS. Women's issues presented in this play are very much real and are present in every society. So as year 2015 approaches, we all have a responsibility to make our girls stronger. Any kind of abuse by a man or a woman towards women is not OK! Women's issues presented in this play are very much real and are present in every society. So as year 2015 approaches, we all have a responsibility to make our girls stronger. Any kind of abuse by a man or a woman towards women is not OK!

Thanks to everyone who made this possible. I Hope to see you all soon in Boston with more delightful shows. Thank you Maharashtra Foundation for bringing the show to Boston !

- **Medha Ganmukhi**

Letters from Connecticut about MF event:

Just wanted to say that we at Sneha enjoyed working with you. I was impressed with your professionalism.... we worked well with the AV department, and started and ended on time. I heard many sentiments similar to this one. The production, direction and acting were superb.

The only reason for no standing ovation was probably that the audience was overwhelmed and emotional! Thank you for giving us an opportunity to work with you all!

It was wonderful to work with the CTMM group as well!

- **Malavika and the 'Sneha' team**

* * *

"Ji Jaisi Aapki Marzi" was a superb play. This is the first time in a long time that I felt I saw a cultural piece that was so good! One of the best! The script by Nadira Babbar is excellent. But equal credit goes to the director and the actors. This production was so special with wonderful nuances such as the one with the use of dupattas.

Again, congratulations to the entire team. They deserved a standing ovation which, unfortunately, did not happen. Please pass on our compliments to them. I really hope they make a video of this and post it so it reaches many. Nadira has tried very successfully to bring into focus several aspects of the issue across the spectrum. Though India is changing, and some sections are progressing, all these problems exist there today and they get exported out along with the population that goes out. There is no denying that. You find them in all different strata of the society. I read and watch a lot about India and I see them all the time. Also, Maharashtra Foundation's informative video about it's work, was very impressive.

Thank you for bringing the play to Connecticut.

- **A Well Wisher**

Report of visit to some NGOs

Nari Samata Manch - Pune

During mid of Dec. 2014, I met Veena Patwardhan (Chairperson), Preeti Karmarkar (Executive Committee member) and Kaustubh Joglekar (Counselor) of Nari Samata Manch in their office in Pune. Maharashtra Foundation (MF) has approved the grant of \$8000 to the organization to support the activities related to training and counseling of adolescent school kids specifically in the area of gender sensitivity. Mrs. Patwardhan gave an overview of the activities of the organization (NSM) which was started over 30 years ago. Initially the primary activities, such as counseling and outreach were dedicated to the core issue of domestic violence. With the concerted efforts of Dr. Satyaranjan Sathe in 2008, Purush Samvaad Kendra was started. The objective of the center (PSK) is to develop a dialog between men and women and to work together against domestic violence and other gender related issues. Mr. Kaustubh Karmarkar, a professional counselor joined the Center and expanded the work by conducting sessions in the schools and Junior colleges for adolescent male students on the subject gender issues. Last year Kaustubh and two trainers conducted 85 training sessions in six schools in Pune city. The proposed grant will be used primarily in three areas:

- The PSK office will be used for counseling men specifically in the area of gender sensitivity issues.
 - Continuation and expansion of training and students in schools with additional trained staff.
 - Training of school counselors in Pune and surrounding area in the field of gender sensitivity and sexual violence.
- Needless to say there is a great need for training the young adolescent male in the schools considering the growing influence of internet and other media. The ignorance, cultural barriers and social stigma associated with such issues make it much harder for an open and meaningful dialog between the students and their parents and teachers. Purush Samvaad Kendra permits such dialogue with trained counselors as evidenced by some of the written questions by students.

I believe that Maharashtra Foundation has selected a fine organization run by dedicated individuals.

Prayas - Pune

Maharashtra Foundation has approved the grant of \$10,000 to "Prayaas" for the year 2015. The grant is earmarked to assist continuation of research conducted by Dr. Smita Joshi. The research is an ongoing effort to explore the probability of incidence of cervical cancer cases in the target group of women who are detected to be HIV positive. The idea is to screening detection and treatment of cervical cancer.

I met Drs Vinay & Sanjivani Kulkarni, founders in Pune last week. They gave an overview of the major activities of their organization "Prayas". The offices, clinic and the research lab of Prayas are centrally located in Pune. Dr. Vinay Sanjivani Kulkarni started the work in 1986. Over the years as the epidemic evolved in India their efforts concentrated in the area of awareness, intervention, counseling and treatment of patients with HIV infection and sexually

transmitted diseases. One of the major programs undertaken by them is prevention of mother to child prevention (PMTCT) of HIV. Over the years, they have provided support to over 65,000 pregnant women. It is planned to expand their activities to other rural area of Maharashtra. The other activities under "Prayas" health group include but not limited to training, counseling and research. Dr. Vinay and Sanjivani Kulkarni spoke passionately about their work. It is truly commendable that they are leading systematic efforts in the field often ignored and avoided.

Dr. Smita Joshi gave me a tour of the facility which is on the third floor of the same building. It includes her office, examination room and a laboratory for screening HIV. Samples are sent out for additional testing as needed for confirmation. The research is continuation of group of over 1150 HIV infected women. The objective of continuing research work is to detect and treat cervical cancer among HIV infected women in the target group as well as new patients. Dr. Joshi has published widely on the subject in the international medical journals. The entire facility run by Dr. Joshi including her office, test laboratory, record keeping area is immaculate. It is really good that Maharashtra Foundation has chosen to support research activities in the area that will help detect and curtail the incidence of cervical cancer among the infected group of women who are often ignored.

Prince Chitresh Khedkar and Nenescha

Khedker Memorial Hospital,

Anjanvel Project Update

I met with the office bearers of Yusuf Meheralli Centre (YMC) at Bajaj Bhavan in Mumbai on December 11 to discuss the status of the project at Anjanvel. The bulk of the hospital building and four living quarters for the staff is complete. However the hospital is not ready for inauguration and start-up due a number of issues – contractor disputes, regulatory approvals and shortage of funds being chief among them. We also discussed the nature of remaining work, related costs and other budgetary issues. Dr. G. G. Parikh and Gaurang Puthali promised to develop an accurate cost estimate to complete the project. YMC has sent out an appeal for funds to support the project to cover the shortfall in the projected expenditure. Although the progress of the project has been less than satisfactory so far, I was assured that it the hospital will be functional by June 1, 2015.

- **Anand Sharangpani** (Member, MF Board of Directors)

4th Youth Wellness Camp at Jnana Prabodhini, Harali (Jan 12-15, 2015)

Maharashtra Foundation (MF) in partnership with Share and Care Foundation will conduct 4th Youth Wellness Camp on January 12-15, 2014. at Jnana Prabodhini, Harali - a village near Solapur in Maharashtra. Approximately 300 students and children of the school and Anagnwadi located in village of Harali will be examined (medical and dental examination) during these four days. Marathi speaking pediatricians, physicians and dentists will be volunteering four days of their services while enjoying the beautiful surroundings of the village.

NGO's Receiving Funds from Maharashtra Foundation During 2014

Abalashram, Bangalore
 Adarsh Mahila Gruha Udyog, Latur
 Andhashradhha Nirmulan Samiti
 Anandwan – Hemalkasa Project
 Apala Ghar
 Apne Aap Women's Collective
 Aseema Charitable Trust
 Bhagini Nivedita Pratishthan
 The Blind Relief Association
 Cancer prevention - PRAYAS
 Central Society for the Education of the Deaf
 Child Sponsorships
 Community Aid & Sponsorship Program
 Counselors Helping South Asians/Indians
 Devi Ahalya Bai Smarak Samiti
 Devrukh Shikshan Prasarak Mandal DSPM
 District Probation and Aftercare Association - Ratnagiri
 DR ANJALI MORRIS EDUCATION AND HEALTH FOUNDATION
 Dr Dabholkar Award
 Educate for Life Hunar Ghar
 Family Planning Association of India
 Fulora Foundation
 Gram Gaurav Pratishthan
 Halo Medical Foundation
 Helpers of the Handicapped
 Indian Cancer Society, Solapur
 Institute For Women Entrepreneurial Development
 Jagruti Seva Sanstha
 Janavikas Pratishthan
 Jnana Prabodhini Nashik
 Jnana Prabodhini- Solapur Harali
 Jnana Prabodhini, Pune
 KEM Hospital Research Centre
 Khedker Project with YMC
 KHEL project – Uniq Vikas Sanstha
 Kotwal Wadi Trust
 Lata Mangeshkar Medical Foundation
 Lok Bharati
 Lokanayak Jayaprakash Narayan Leprosy Exadication Trust
 Lokmanya Shikshan Prasarak Mandal
 Maharogi Sewa Samiti
 Maharogi Sewa Samiti- Warora

Maharshi Vinod Research Foundation
 Maharshi Vinod Siddhashram Seva Mandal
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 Maitri
 Marathi Vidnyan Parishad
 Mata Balak Utkarsh Pratishthan
 Matru Sewa Sangh
 Medical Care Center Trust
 Men Against Violence and Abuse
 Nari Samata Manch
 Niramaya Arogya Dham
 Pahal Jan Sahayog Vikas Sansthan
 Parivartan
 Pathak Vishwastha Nidhi Trust
 Patients Relief Association, Solapur
 Pragat Shikshan Sanstha
 Pratham
 PRAYAS
 Shri Amrutvahini Gram Vikas Sanstha
 RS Akshar Institute
 Sadhana Village
 Sakal India Foundation
 Saraswati Anath Shikshan Ashram (SASA)
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 Vanchit Vikas
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 Vatsalya Trust
 Vidnyan Vahini Project
 Vijay Shikshan Sanstha
 Vivekanand Kendra, Tamil Nadu
 Wildlife Research and Conservation Society
 Yash Sneha Trust – SnehJyoti Blind School
 Yusuf Meherally Centre

List of Maharashtra Foundation Donors during 2014 (as of 12/27/2014)

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List of Maharashtra Foundation Donors during 2014 (as of 12/27/2014)

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Maclachlan Antoinette	Pendse Kamlakar & Aruna	Shikarkhane Niraj & Dipali
Madgavkar Ajay & Anuradha	Pendse Prabhakar	Shinde Manoj & Vaishali
Mahadeshwar Jai & Kedar	Phadke Lata & Madhav	Shinde Salil & Shubhada Wavikar
Mahajan Amit & Meenal	Phadke Laxman Asawari	Shirolkar Shailesh & Pallavi
Mahajani Ravindra & Vrunda	Phaltankar Priyadarshan & Meera	Shringarpure Sachin
Mahendrakar Suhas & Alka	Phatak Ganesh & Medha	Shrotriya Sunil
Manal Huma and Nabeel	Phatak Vikas & Sunita	Sidhaye Archana & Yogendra
Mangalmurti S.K. & Alka	Pitre Shailendra & Vrinda	Sidhaye Madhav & Namrata
Manohar Dipti	Ponkshe Sameer	Singh Sangeeta
Manohar Siddharth	Pore Girish & Shraddha	Sinkar Mahesh and Kajal
Marathe Hemant & Punit	Prabhudesai Sachin	Sogal Sheela & Dr. Ramesh
Marathe Rajendra	Pradhan Ramesh & Shaila	Somvanshi Arvind & Kalavati
Marathe Vasant & Savita	Pradhan Sunil & Anita	Sonalkar Rajan & Sheela
Mate Shreenivas	Pujari Raghav & Shubha	Srinath Sampath & Latha
Mayur Nitin & Sangeeta	Puntambekar Shakher and Shobha	Stein Rob
Medhekar Pushkar & Shalaja	Puranik Subhash & Vasanti	Subhedar Sachin & Ashwini
Mehendale Abhay	Rajadhyaksha Mangesh & Smita	Surana Sagar & Varsha
Mhaskar Girish & Gauri	Rajesh Hitha	Suryawanshi Sunil
Mhaskar Hrushikesh	Ramabhadran Rajani	Tambe Balkrishna & Pradnya
Mhatre Anil & Jyostana	Ramanathan Varsha	Tamhane Aparna & Pushkar
Mirajkar Mrinal & Dilip	Ramaswamy Ravi and Vidya	Tamhankar Satish & Snehal
Mirajkar Tushar	Ranade Vinay & Aruna	Tatake Jayant & Revati
Mokadam Alka	Ranade Vinayak & Meghana	Taurya LLC
Moravekar Sudhir & Vidya	Ranade Neela & Ashok	Tendulkar Vijay & Sudha
Morris Anita	Ranade Nivedita & Nikhil Ganu	Thakar Girish
Mulgaonkar Shamkant & Ujjwala	Ranade Samir & Sheena	Thakur Darpan
Mull Daksha & Bharat	Ranadive Arvind & Sunanda	Thakur Jagdish & Shubhangi
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Nadgir Pushpa	Ranjangaonkar Prachee & Ashish Udas	Ullal Aniruddha & Rupali
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Naik Vibha	Raodeo Pradip	Vartak Vindali
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Nerurkar Dr. Anil & Dr. Meena	Ruikar Sucheta	Vinod Udayan & Sheela
Nerurkar Vimal & Susheela	Sabnis Ashok & Ratna	Wadke Deodatta & Rupa
Nigalye Laxmikant	Sabnis Dr P.D.	Wagh Vikas & Ulka
Nimkar Kiran & Shilpa	Saindane Usha & Manohar	Waingankar Promod & Sonali
P D Foundation Inc.	Salgame Chitra	Zarapkar Samir
Padbidri Prarthana	Salpekar Anil	Zarapkar Sandhya

खैके पान बनारसवाला...

Maharashtra Foundation's annual fund raiser took place in November and with that I started to think about the noble causes that MF and many other organizations support and those who give back to the society – those who give money, give time, and some who completely devote themselves to a social cause.

One such person is our very own Dr. Anil Nerurkar and



the organization is Vasundhara Trust. Anil is known to many and has a larger-than-life personality. For those of you who don't know him, Anil practiced as an Ob-Gyn physician in Pennsylvania for more than 30 years and now works part

-time attending to only a Gynecology practice. He spends 6 months out of the year in India, devoted to giving back to community. Earlier this month, I had an opportunity to talk with Anil about a personal project he has developed over the last few years in Maharashtra.

Anil first provided me with a bit of history. In 1996, he was a Founding Member of the Vasundhara Trust in Mumbai. The Trust's first project was small, but innovative. Anil invested in a van and recruited a few science teachers. The 'Science on Wheels' (SOW) project took science teachers from school to school in rural districts, exposing young children to science experiments and lessons. The response was strong, as students felt motivated and eager to learn. After a few years of the project, Anil began thinking beyond 'Science on Wheels' and felt strongly about starting a project in public health.

In 2009, he set up Ob-Gyn camps, staffed with local gynecologists, who screened almost 1000 women for cervical cancer. As these camps continued to flourish, and Anil learned more from the women in community, he recognized that tobacco addiction was a serious problem amongst many of the village's men. He was right – the statistical data is striking. Out of India's population of 1.2 billion people, about 300 million consume tobacco. In Maharashtra, out of a population of 11 crore, 3.5 crore consume tobacco. Left untreated, nearly 1 crore will die from this deadly vice.

To address this problem, Anil started the Tobacco Cessation and Awareness Project. He admitted in his usual boisterous laughter that although he is a physician, he knew nothing about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, so his first project was to educate himself. He met with staff from Mumbai's Tata Hospital, home of the Tata Cancer Institute, to learn more about the issue. In particular, he benefitted from learning about the Institute's tobacco prevention program, as half of the oral cancer patients at Tata suffered from tobacco addiction.

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he knew nothing about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, so his first project was to educate himself. He met with staff from Mumbai's Tata Hospital, home of the Tata Cancer Institute, to learn more about the issue. In particular, he benefitted from learning about the Institute's tobacco prevention program, as half of the oral cancer patients at Tata suffered from tobacco addiction. Soon enough, Anil acquired the skills to detect oral cancer lesions with a Velscope, and after training a few volunteers, Vasundhara Trust was ready to establish oral cancer detection camps in villages, including in Kudal, in the Sindhudurga District of Konkan. Like Science on Wheels, the set up for this project was simple but effective. In a van equipped with portable chairs and other dental paraphernalia, the project was able to reach villagers far and wide for patient examinations.

As Anil explained his project, I thought to myself, surely he must have encountered problems along the way. After all, like most of us, Anil had spent more of his life in the United States than in India. I wondered if impatience and unrealistic expectations would eventually grow frustrating. After all, the obstacles never seemed to end: the Indian system, resistance from local villagers, old-traditional beliefs, local politics, stop-blocks, and so many others. When I asked him how he managed all those hurdles – how he got the community to trust him, an outsider, an American – his answer was one simple word – 'अगं, SOCIALISING!' Anil's social skills, which many of us are well aware of, came in handy and helped him to implement an effective project, by having gained their trust.

As the local community came to accept Anil, they were very receptive to his ideas and fully cooperated with him. He also recognized that his mission had to include more than just health camps, but also community empowerment. So through Vasundhara Trust, he developed the Aarti Prabhu Award for Best Poet and started holding Rangoli competitions to energize the community. These social activities, Anil says, kept the community interested, involved, and engaged, which made it easier to speak with them about tobacco addiction and its harmful effects.

But after all is said and done, once the cancer is detected and pre cancer lesions identified, the real challenge was the follow up. Anil soon realized that focusing on the prevention of tobacco consumption – before the onset of cancer – would yield more long-lasting results. A new movement took off – 'Tobacco Awareness on Motor-bikes' – in which young men certified to detect pre cancer lesions would travel on motor-bikes to villages. Upon identifying someone with a cancerous lesion, a medical team would be alerted and brought in. To facilitate the project, Vasundhara Trust holds personality development seminars for its young staff, to give them confidence and knowledge to educate community members about the dangers of tobacco use. Anil's goal is not to just advise the community to abstain from tobacco consumption, but to help them fully understand the issue and encourage them to help others around them.

Upon asking Anil how these projects are supported financially – his answer was – 'well, for most part it is

लष्कराच्या भाकऱ्या – to mean money out of his own pocket. But he is also grateful to people who have come forward to lend him a helping hand in ways big and small.

His friends from NJ/PA collected money on his 70th birthday towards these projects. He specifically mentioned his friend Dev Wadke who has donated a motor-bike for the project. He is thankful for their generosity.



When I asked Anil why he feels so strongly about doing what he does – surely he could have enjoyed his retirement here is the U.S. playing golf – he answered that he wanted to give back to the society and really wanted to make a

meaningful contribution to his home land which has given him so much. He further added that this desire was there all along while he practiced medicine here in the U.S. So when the right opportunity came along at the right time, there was no thinking twice about doing it.

As for future plans, Anil hopes to open another clinic in North Sindhudurga. Although his focus is currently in Maharashtra, he hopes to bring his efforts to Gujarat, which has the highest rate of tobacco consumption. If any of our readers want to get involved in this initiative with Anil or take on such a project in their retirement years, Anil is welcoming you wholeheartedly to join him. There is plenty of work to be done in India – the key is to commit to a cause and jump in. Those who are interested can contact Anil at Anilnerurkar@yahoo.com ,

or call him at 215-280-1213 (U.S. cell)

or 011-91-9833827200 (India cell).

As we got close to the end of our talk, Anil reminded me of a poem by Vinda Karandikar:

‘देणाऱ्याने देत जावे,
घेणाऱ्याने घेत जावे;
घेता घेता एक दिवस,
देणाऱ्याचे हात घ्यावेत’ ...

- **Shakun Panse** (New Jersey)

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If you have not done so far, please sign up for email delivery of future issues of the Maharashtra Foundation's (MF) newsletter. Go Green and help MF in implementing cost effective, quick communication tools and technology of today. Please send your email to: secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org Your email address will only be used by MF for its communication with you only, and will not be given to anyone else.

Maharashtra Foundation's Literature and Social Service Awards

Social change through literature is a rich Marathi tradition from the days of Sant Tukaram to Phule, Agarkar, Lokhiwadi to the recent intellectuals like Kumar Ketkar. Form may vary from Abhang and Ovi to editorials, poems and essay, but the theme is the same- social reform, social justice and women's empowerment. Not surprisingly, these are the guiding principles of the Maharashtra Foundation's (MF) mission.

As Mahatma Gandhi once said, Maharashtra is the very center of progressive social work. It is an uphill battle to change entrenched social norms in an old society like India. Those who sacrifice everything to achieve positive social change deserve our support and encouragement. Guided by these facts and a determination to highlight and honor the brave social workers and literary giants who shine a light on the plight of the underprivileged, MF literature and social work awards scheme was started 20 years ago. With the leadership and contribution by our past President Mr. Sunil Deshmukh, a well thought out structure was put in place including written criteria for the awards, local recommendation committees in India and the final selection committees in the U.S. that include past and present Presidents of MF and renowned literary figures like Dilip Chitre and Vidyut Aklujkar and a leading activist in Indian community Maneesha Kelkar. Given the methodical approach and transparent functioning, the MF literature and social work award scheme quickly gained respect and admiration in Maharashtra. Grand ceremony for presenting the awards with high profile chief guest and keynote speakers further enhanced the prestige and acceptance of the scheme. Maharashtra Times and Loksatta wrote editorials praising the MF Awards.

Literary giants like Vijay Tendulkar, Narayan Surve and Pu La Deshpande, intellectual giants like Ya Di Phadake and Me Pu Rege were recipients of the Lifetime Achievement award. On the social Service front, Great Gandhian Thakurdas Bang, women's empowerment advocate Pushpatai Bhawe and G. G. Parikh were honored with the Lifetime Achievement award. The award ceremony is held every year at the Bal Gandharva auditorium in Pune on the second Saturday of January. It is covered on all Marathi TV channels and major newspapers. It is widely anticipated and appreciated in Maharashtra. This has successfully helped build the MF brand in Maharashtra such that NRI charity has become synonymous with Maharashtra Foundation. The object of the awards scheme is not just to recognize the catalysts and leaders of social change, but to also channel the change itself in new and needed directions. Good examples are the special awards for work on communal harmony, for men working against violence on women and the recent recognition of social activist working on the human rights of the LGBT community in Maharashtra. MF social service and literature awards are thus a great source of energy, encouragement and support for all those who strive for a positive social change.

- **Sunil Deshmukh** (Florida)



महाराष्ट्र फाऊंडेशन (अमेरिका) यांचे साहित्य व समाजकार्य पुरस्कार : २०१४



हार्दिक निमंत्रण

सप्रेम नमस्कार,

अमेरिकेत स्थायिक झालेल्या मराठी माणसांनी स्थापन केलेल्या महाराष्ट्र फाऊंडेशनच्या वतीने, १९९४ पासून साहित्य क्षेत्रातील, तर १९९६ पासून सामाजिक क्षेत्रातील व्यक्तींना त्यांच्या उल्लेखनीय व अनुकरणीय योगदानाबद्दल पुरस्कार देऊन गौरविले जाते.

साहित्य व समाजकार्य या दोन क्षेत्रांतील मिळून, २०१४ च्या

एकूण १० पुरस्कारांचे वितरण केले जाणार आहे. या समारंभाला प्रमुख अतिथी म्हणून, आंतरराष्ट्रीय ख्याती असलेल्या 'प्रथम' या शैक्षणिक क्षेत्रातील नामवंत संस्थेचे संस्थापक **माधव चव्हाण** आणि **स्टिव्ह मिल्स** (नोबेल पारितोषिक विजेते अँल् गोअर यांच्या पर्यावरणविषयक प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमाचे संचालक) उपस्थित राहणार आहेत.

या समारंभाला अगत्यपूर्वक यावे ही विनंती.

आपले नम्र

विनोद शिरसाठ (समन्वयक, महाराष्ट्र फाऊंडेशन पुरस्कार)	हेमंत नाईकनवरे (विश्वस्त सचिव, साधना ट्रस्ट)	शैला विद्वांस अध्यक्ष, महाराष्ट्र फाऊंडेशन (अमेरिका)	सुनील देशमुख पुरस्कार प्रवर्तक, महाराष्ट्र फाऊंडेशन (अमेरिका)
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पुरस्कार वितरण समारंभ : शनिवार, १० जानेवारी २०१५ रोजी, सायंकाळी : ५ वाजता । स्थळ : बालगंधर्व रंगमंदिर, पुणे
दोन प्रमुख पाहुणे आणि तीन पुरस्कारप्राप्त व्यक्तींची (पुष्पा भावे, श्याम मनोहर व निखिल वागळे) भाषणे यावेळी होतील.

दुपारी २ ते ४ या वेळेत, उर्वरित सात पुरस्कारप्राप्त व्यक्तींची मनोगते व्यक्त करणारा कार्यक्रम बालगंधर्व रंगमंदिर येथेच होईल.

समारंभाच्या वेळी सभागृहात प्रवेश करताना सर्व उपस्थितांना साधना साप्ताहिकाचा **पुरस्कार विशेषांक** भेट देण्यात येईल.

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Project- Purush Samwad Kendra



'Men Against Violence & Abuse'
- MAVA, (Mumbai), India
Project- Gender Sensitization



'Shree Amrutvahini
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'Prayas', (Pune), India
Project: Cervical
Cancer Prevention



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