



# 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

June, 2014

**Year of Establishment: 1978**  
**Lead- Founder Member:**  
**(Late) Mr. Yashwant Kanitkar**

**Tax Exemption ID**  
Under IRS Section  
501 (c)(3) 22-2213611  
**United Way NY, NJ, CT**  
Agency Code 011675

**Board Of Directors:**  
**President:** Shaila Vidwans  
Tel: (609)-336-7239  
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**Vice President:** Shirish Gupte  
[vicepresident@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:vicepresident@maharashtrafoundation.org)  
**Secretary:** Sushama Patil  
[secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org)  
**Treasurer:** Avinash Patil  
Tel: 978-635-9857  
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**Board Members:**  
Ankush Karnik  
Vinata Kulkarni  
Anand Sharangpani  
Vaibhav Sathe

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Hello friends,

Our entire country faced a very severe winter this year and so we all are looking to enjoy the summer. People have vacation plans and some families are getting ready to welcome relatives and friends from India. Another year has passed by for Maharashtra Foundation since its last Annual General Body Meeting. This year's Annual General Body meeting will be held on Sunday, 27th July 2014. The agenda and the accounts for the year 2013 are included in this issue of the newsletter.

As you know Maharashtra Foundation supports some projects of its own from its general funds. We receive numerous project proposals requesting funds. These projects are reviewed by our projects committee and selected projects get funding from Maharashtra Foundation. These Maharashtra Foundation's projects are progressing well.

Khedkar hospital project is the single largest project of Maharashtra Foundation and it has come to its tail end. As you know the local NGO partner in India is Yusuf Meherally Center (YMC). YMC faced some unavoidable issues in completion of the project and as a result faced cost escalation. We are appealing to our donors to support the project.

Recently Shirish Gupte and I had a chance to meet with Dr. Vinod and Meenatai Shah of Janaseva Foundation. Maharashtra Foundation was one of the partners in their "Rural Aging Research Program" in which a comprehensive survey was carried out in 30 villages of more than 1300 senior citizens.

In an effort to reach out to the donors in different parts of the country, we try to hold events in different cities. Last year we held a fund raising program in Florida with cooperation from 4 local Marathi Mandal. This year, Vaibhav Sathe coordinated a very successful fund raising event in Atlanta. Now some friends of Maharashtra Foundation in Research Triangle area (NC) plan to hold a short Marathi play "Mulgi Zaali Ho" on 13<sup>th</sup> September to raise funds for NGO Stree Mukti Sanghatana. If you are in that area, please plan to attend the event and support.

Someone has said "Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love." You create love by giving to the charities. So please watch for the details of the fund raising event, to be conducted on 8th November 2014 in New Jersey.

Thank you.

**- Shaila Vidwans**

(President, Maharashtra Foundation)

## The Annual General Body Meeting – July, 2014



### MAHARASHTRA FOUNDATION

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

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#### Executive Committee

**President**  
Shaila Vidwans  
[President@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:President@maharashtrafoundation.org)

**Vice President**  
Shirish Gupte  
[VicePresident@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:VicePresident@maharashtrafoundation.org)

**Secretary**  
Sushama Patil  
[Secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:Secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org)

**Treasurer**  
AvinashPatil  
[Treasurer@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:Treasurer@maharashtrafoundation.org)

**Members**  
Ankush Karnik  
Vinata Kulkarni  
Anand Sharnigpani  
Vaibhav Sathe

Dear Maharashtra Foundation Member,

As required by our constitution, the Annual General Body Meeting will be held on July 27, 2014. All members are invited to attend and participate in the meeting.

The details of the meeting are as follows:

**Place:** Residence of Shirish and Darshana Gupte  
**9 Centerville Road,**  
**Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889**

**Date:** Sunday, July 27, 2014

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

#### Agenda:

1. Approval of minutes of General Body Meeting 2013
2. President's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Introduction of BoD members / Ratification of terms
5. Election of new members
6. Amendment to the by-laws
7. Project Reports - On-going Projects and New Projects
8. Annual Fund Raising Event in NJ
9. Any other item with the permission of the Chair.

Members are requested to send RSVP to MF secretary ([secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org)) or call 908-534-4894 by July 24, 2014. It will help us plan the seating and food arrangements.

Yours Sincerely,

Shaila Vidwans  
President, Maharashtra Foundation

*Social and Economic Justice for All*

## Amendment to the Maharashtra Foundation By-Laws

The following article should be added to the Maharashtra Foundation (MF) By-Laws

### 15. Advisory Board

Effective the Annual General Body Meeting of 2014, an Advisory Board will be formed. The purpose of this Advisory board will be to share their experience with the existing MF Board of Directors and to guide the MF Board of Directors in consideration of future activities. The Advisory Board shall inform the MF Board of Directors if any action of the MF Board of Directors is in violation of the MF Constitution or the Mission of MF. Additionally, the Advisory Board will guide the Board of Directors in matters of resolutions and budgetary issues that seriously affect the functioning of MF.

### Members

Advisory Board will be made up of past Presidents of the MF Board of Directors.

There will be a maximum of 5 members in the Advisory Board.

As the current President leaves the office from the Board of Directors, the senior most past president of MF on the advisory Board will resign from the Advisory Board and the next senior past President will take his/her place on the Advisory Board.

A past president may opt not to serve on the Advisory Board by informing the President of the Foundation.

Current members of the Board of Directors may not concurrently serve on the Advisory Board.

All Advisory Board members should be at least Life Member, Patron Member or Benefactor Member and have some participation in fundraising.

### Duties

The Advisory Board will elect a Chairperson each calendar year and this name will be conveyed to the President of MF no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> of that calendar year.

Each Advisory Board member must attend at least ONE meeting of the Board of Directors in every calendar year that they serve on the Advisory Board.

There must be at least ONE member of the Advisory Board present at every meeting of the MF Board of Directors. Advisory Board members attending the meeting of the Board of Directors shall do so as a non-voting member but can express their opinion on any issue being considered by the Board.

The Chairperson will coordinate the attendance of the Advisory Board at the Board of Directors meeting.

The Secretary of the MF Board of Directors will announce the Board of Directors meeting dates and will distribute the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors to the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board by a simple majority of its members may call a General Body Meeting if they feel that such a meeting is required.

The Chairperson will inform the MF President to make appropriate announcements of such a meeting.

All applicable rules set forth in the Constitution and the By-Laws shall apply to this General Body meeting.

Any resolution(s) passed at this meeting shall be binding upon the Board of Directors.

### **Farewell**

After serving on the board of Directors (BOD) of Maharashtra Foundation (MF) as a member and secretary for past two years, Vasumati Deshpande is retiring from the MF Board of Directors, due to her other work- commitments. She has also served on MF Board in the past and is a life member of MF.

On behalf of MF Board of Directors, I thank Vasumati for her volunteering efforts and support to MF's mission. We will miss her on MF Board of Directors.

Best wishes to Vasumati Deshpande, in all her future endeavors.

- Vinata Kulkarni

### **Go Green**

**with your next copy of  
MF Newsletter  
in Electronic Format**

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 address to:  
Email: [secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto: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 INC. Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2013

<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Checking/Savings</b>			
	1000 · Citibank Operating		\$372,256.41
	1030 · Citibank Imma		\$20,088.57
	1050 · PNC bank		\$121,641.36
	<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>		<b>\$513,986.34</b>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>			
	1065 · Pay Pal Account		\$4,390.48
	<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>		<b>\$4,390.48</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>			<b>\$518,376.82</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
	2400 · Office Equipment		\$10,443.26
	2450 · Accumulated Depreciation		-\$10,443.26
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>			
<b>2500 · RJ Investments</b>			
	2510 · RJ Deshpande 85967850		\$204,788.40
	2520 · RJ Elite 52273430		\$219,487.72
	2540 · RJ Khedkar 52518847		
	2800 · Khedkar Project		\$205,264.29
	2540 · RJ Khedkar 52518847		\$29,844.15
	<b>Total 2540 · RJ Khedkar 52518847</b>		<b>\$235,108.44</b>
	2550 · RJ Tulshibawale 17797798		\$553,447.53
	2560 · RJ Jahagirdar fund		\$691,199.16
	<b>Total 2500 · RJ Investments</b>		<b>\$1,904,031.25</b>
<b>2600 · Investment</b>			
	2680 · Merrill Lynch Investments #20		\$372,826.44
	2681 · Merill Lynch acct #2276		\$307,753.41
	<b>Total 2600 · Investment</b>		<b>\$680,579.85</b>
<b>Total Other Assets</b>			<b>\$2,584,611.10</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>			<b>\$3,102,987.92</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
<b>Accounts Payable</b>			
	Accrued Expenses		\$5,275.00
	<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>		<b>\$5,275.00</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>			<b>\$5,275.00</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>			<b>\$5,275.00</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
<b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>			<b>\$417,237.36</b>
<b>3000 · General Fund</b>			<b>\$279,638.77</b>
<b>3150 · Temporarily Restricted Funds</b>			
	3200 · Khedkar Fund		\$301,767.00
	3210 · Deshpande Fund		\$135,439.28
	3220 · Tulshibagwale Fund		\$465,201.12
	3230 · Jahagirdar Fund		\$357,937.11
	<b>Total 3150 · Temporarily Restricted Funds</b>		<b>\$1,260,344.51</b>
	3500 · Endowment Fund Life/Patron & Li		\$540,275.00
	3800 · Retained Earnings		\$252,187.31
	Net Income		\$348,029.97
<b>Total Equity</b>			<b>\$3,097,712.92</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			<b>\$3,102,987.92</b>

Note: These are UNAUDITED account statements from our accountant. The AUDITED accounts will be available at the Annual General Body meeting on July 27th, 2014.

# MAHARASHTRA FOUNDATION INC. Profit & Loss Statement As of December

Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
4000 · Direct Public Support		
	4030 · Individ, Business Contributions	547,483.73
Total 4000 · Direct Public Support		547,483.73
4500 · Investments		
	4510 · Capital Gains/Losses Realized	8,719.63
	4515 · Capital Gains/Losses Realized L	147.78
	4520 · Capital Gains/Losses Unrealized	171,030.28
	4530 · Investment Dividends	49,469.73
	4540 · investment income CG Distribute	32,329.95
	4550 · Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	1,373.19
Total 4500 · Investments		263,070.56
4900 · Release from temporily Restric		200,000.00
Total Income		1,010,554.29
Gross Profit		1,010,554.29
Expense		
	5000 · Donations/Disbursements	629,859.32
	5200 · Reimbursement	865.07
	5300 · withdrawal	0.00
	5500 · Bank Charges	436.46
	5510 · Investment fees	2,276.54
	5600 · Contract Services	
	5610 · Accounting Fees	4,950.00
Total 5600 · Contract Services		4,950.00
	5640 · Fundraising Exp	16,105.01
5700 · Operations		
	5710 · Advertisements Exp	1,112.00
	5730 · Postage, Mailing Service	137.96
	5740 · Printing and Copying	2,941.00
	5745 · Dues	1,106.19
	5770 · Taxes & Fees	275.00
	5780 · Office Exp	383.77
Total 5700 · Operations		5,955.92
5800 · Other Types of Expenses		
	5810 · Insurance - Liability, D and O	1,149.00
	5820 · Other Costs	927.00
Total 5800 · Other Types of Expenses		2,076.00
Total Expense		662,524.32
Net Ordinary Income		348,029.97
Net Income		348,029.97

Note: These are UNAUDITED account statements from our accountant. The AUDITED accounts will be available at the Annual General Body meeting on July 27th, 2014.



## Call for Nominations for 2 positions on MF Board of Directors

Nominations are invited for 2 positions from members to serve on the Board of Directors (BoD) of Maharashtra foundation (MF). One position is for 1 year for the remainder term of Vasumati Deashpande who is not able to compete her term on MF Board, due to some other commitments. The other position is for a three-year term beginning August 2014.

Only Benefactor, Patron, Life members and 2013 members are eligible to serve on the MF Board of Directors. Please email your written nomination and a brief bio-data to [secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org) or mail it by US postal service to the following address:  
Maharashtra Foundation  
c/o Shaila Vidwans  
8 Stonehedge Drive  
East Windsor, NJ 08520

All nominations must be received on or before July 15, 2014. Any nomination received later than July 15, 2014 will not be considered valid. All valid nominations, voting ballot, and method of voting will be posted on the MF website by 19th July, 2014. Voting will be open between July 20 and July 26, 2014. Election will be held on July 27<sup>th</sup> at the Annual General Body Meeting.

BoD members are expected to contribute and participate in the volunteer work related to preparation of appeals for donations and brochures, mass mailings, organizing fund-raisers, maintaining accounts, updating mailing lists, etc. It is also expected that BoD members attend monthly meetings.

For additional information, Please contact:  
[president@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:president@maharashtrafoundation.org)

## Special Appeal for Donations Khedkar Hospital project at Anjanvel - Maharashtra

The Surrogate Court of the County of New York awarded funds of the Estate of Prince Chitresh Khedkar to Maharashtra Foundation and Yusuf Meherally Centre for building a hospital at Anjanvel, Guhagar taluka, Ratnagiri district. This was according to the will of Prince Chitresh Khedkar also known as Teddy Khedkar.,

The construction of the hospital building is almost complete. The delay in getting suitable land, the usual delays in getting various state permissions and the mining ban by the courts etc. resulted in cost escalation. As a result the remaining funds from the Khedkar grant will not be sufficient to complete the building, purchase medical equipment for the hospital and staff the hospital.

This 20-bed cottage hospital will be a boon to the local people. YMC has also agreed to undertake other developmental activities in Anjanvel and the surrounding villages. This will benefit the local community a lot. The area is picturesque and it is possible to develop the village as a tourist spot. With our activities for development, the incomes of the villagers will go up and the migration to cities may be reduced.

Like Maharashtra Foundation, Yusuf Meherally Centre is a voluntary agency active in health care, education, empowering women and Adivasis, employment generation, protecting environment, organizing youth for communal harmony and opposing injustice, re-popularizing certain values of the freedom movement and making citizens aware of global warming. The Centre also promotes organic agriculture.

We need to raise additional funds to complete the hospital, for staffing and buying equipment. Maharashtra Foundation and Yusuf Meherally Center would like to appeal to you to DONATE generously for this project. Maharashtra Foundation will waive its membership requirements and administrative charges for non-members and one hundred percent of your donation will go towards this hospital project. Please contribute generously for this cause and help

## Youth Wellness Camp, Jan 12-15, 2015

Maharashtra Foundation and Share and Care Foundation (SCF) will hold its 5th "Youth Wellness Camp" at Jnana Prabodhini, Harali during Jan 12-15, 2015. It's focus is on development or rural youth. Medical doctors, dentists, pediatricians and volunteers are encouraged to join the camp. For more information, Please contact: **Shaila Vidwans** email: [president@maharashtrafoundation.org](mailto:president@maharashtrafoundation.org)

## Save - the - Date Annual Fund Raising Event





Maharashtra Foundation  
presents

**"Yaksha Prashna"**

a Marathi play in the Annual Fundraiser  
on November 8th, 2014. Please save the  
date.

## Maharashtra Foundation Projects, 2014 - Report

Each year Maharashtra Foundation (MF) receives several proposals / requests from NGO's for funding social and economic development, and educational initiatives in the poor and economically depressed areas across India. MF Project Committee, tasked with reviewing of such proposals/requests, combs through the details and selects specific projects to fund for the calendar year. In addition to fulfilling mandatory requirements, such as having a valid FCRA, the NGO's initiative shall also align with the principles and fundamentals of MF in order to be selected and receive funding. For year 2014, MF received over 35 project proposals and selected 7 projects to receive funding during calendar year 2014. MF supported projects are summarized below. MF would like to appeal its membership and donor base to donate to any/all projects, and in turn help them succeed.

### **Project: AtmaRaksha, NGO: Maharshi Vinod Siddhashram Sewa Mandal**

Maharshi Vinod Siddhashram Sewa Mandal has been actively involved in bringing about the social change and awareness since 1977. It is also one of the three organizations behind the AtmaRaksha project. AtmaRaksha is an awareness program designed to help students across various age groups to cope up with increasing volatile environment. The program is expected to target over 10,000 students in the 2014-15 academic year. Over the past few months the program management has been making necessary preparations e.g. selecting and training the trainers, printing necessary materials with the disbursed funds.

**Total required funds: \$8,000.**

### **Project: Library-In-A-Bag, NGO: Pratham Books**

Maharashtra Foundation has partnered with Pratham Books – established in 2004 with mission of putting a book in every child's hands for the Library-In-A-Bag project. Under this initiative, Pratham plans to introduce enrichment books in selected schools serving the most disadvantaged children. Currently, phase 1 of this initiative is underway, where Pratham is working with organizations such as HALO Medical Foundation, to identify schools that will receive the books. In phase 1 Pratham plans to deliver over 50 bags. Phase 2 will target additional schools, where in total Pratham is expected to reach out to over 400 schools under this initiative.

**Total required funds: \$10,000.**

### **Project: Envelope Punching Machine, NGO: RS Akshar Institute, Wai**

Established in 1982 for education and welfare of mentally challenged children and adults, RS Akshar Institute has successfully trained adults in tasks such as making candles, greeting cards etc. The focus of the program is to help adults increase self-awareness and morale. Under the Envelope Punching Machine project, the institute will procure the punching machine and conduct workshop to train adults on its use. The trained adults are expected to use the machine to punch envelopes and be able to earn wages for their effort. To date order has been placed for the machine and training is scheduled to begin in June – July 2014. **Total required funds: \$3,000**

### **Project: Hearing Aid, NGO: Vijay Shikshan Sanstha**

Since 1958, Vijay Shikshan Sanstha has been catering to the hearing impaired population. The institute provides vocational guidance and helps the hearing impaired seek employment. Under the guidance and assistance of the institute students from example schools such as Sadhana Vidyalaya and Pragati Vidyalaya, Mumbai have successfully completed SSC exams and advanced vocational courses, which have helped them seek permanent employment. In this project the institute will procure behind-the-ear digital programmable ear aids for the children in order to help them understand speech better. **Total required funds: \$6,000.**

### **Project: Fight Breast Cancer, NGO: Maina Foundation, USA**

Maina Foundation is a non-profit group dedicated to providing critical funding for increasing awareness, promoting early detection and helping with treatment to women in need of financial assistance. By working at a grass roots level, the foundation devotes 100% of the gross funding to hospitals and clinics for furthering the cause of early detection and treatment. Maina Foundation was started in USA and is registered as a non-profit organization both in USA and India. Maina Foundation is collaborating with Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) in Parel, Mumbai on several fronts. First and foremost it has pledged to provide funds for the treatment of breast cancer patients. **Current Focus** is to increase the number of patients from 10 to 50 at Tata Memorial Hospital. **Total required funds: \$5000**

### **Project: Akanksha, NGO: Janavikas Pratishthan**

Focus of the project is on Rural and Urban school dropout girls & boys. The budget is for 2 batches for 18 months and 40 candidates. Main aim of the program is to impart knowledge & skills of nursing assistant to the girls to get employment in various types of Nursing homes and hospitals. Maharashtra Foundation will provide partial funding. **Total required funds: \$5000**

### **Project: Think Maharashtra**

Objective is to build a platform to strengthen positive forces (individuals as well as organizations) in society through networking and to channelize their energy to form pressure groups as required. It may pave way to a cultural renaissance in Maharashtra.

Functions: We would like to recognize this feeling among the people of Maharashtra, and through *Think Maharashtra*, create initiatives to preserve our cultural heritage and also highlight organizations and individuals who are hard at work in this field. *Think Maharashtra* will strive to make this work more attractive to broader society. MF will work with "Vision Maharashtra Foundation" as consulting partner. **Total required funds: \$5,000**

**- Ankush Karnik**

## Fund Raising Event

### A Marathi Play “Mulagi Zali Ho”

On 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 2014, 4:00pm to 6:00 pm  
at The Cary Theater  
122 E. Chatham Street, Cary NC 27511

Maharashtra Foundation along with a group of friends of NGO Stree Mukti Sanghatana will be hosting a fund raising event on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014. A play **Mulagi Zali Ho** (A Girl is born) written by Jyoti Mhapsekar will be presented by local artists. The play **Mulgi Zali Ho! (A Girl Is Born !)** (1983) is a flagship play of Stree Mukti Sanghatana with more than 3000 performances to its credit. This musical satire is translated in 8 Indian languages besides English.

The play was also performed at 3rd International Women Playwrights' Conference at Adelaide in July 1994, at NGO forum in Beijing in September 1995 and many prominent Universities and colleges of India. It has become part of syllabus of two universities and was telecast and broadcast several times. It is also used by many organizations as tool for training.

Maharashtra Foundation has been supporting Stree Mukti Sanghatana for many years. Jyoti Mhapsekar was key-note speaker at Maharashtra Foundation's fundraising event in the past.

For more information about the event, please contact:

**Dipti Damle** (diptivinayakdamle@yahoo.com)

or

**Vaibhavi Arekar** (vaibhaviarekar@gmail.com)

## An evening with the Founder Chairman

The founder-chairman of the Janaseva Foundation Dr. Vinod Shah and his wife and partner in his endeavors Mrs. Meenatai Shah were in New Jersey and Shirish and I had an opportunity to spend an evening with them at the residence of Sushama and Satish Sheth.



In the photo from left:

Mrs Meenatai Shah, Sunita Dhumale, Dr. Vinod Shah, Shaila Vidwans, Shirish Gupte and Darshana Gupte

Dr. Shah founded Janaseva Foundation in 1988 and they started their work in 1990 by organizing health camps in rural parts of Maharashtra and later set up a rural hospital and an old age home. Over the years, the Foundation rapidly expanded its activities and does a wide range of charitable projects. The activities include care to the elderly, disabled, destitute and the disaster-affected. They also work in the areas of education, training and research. The work is predominantly in Ambi-Ranwadi area near the Panshet dam about 50 km. from Pune. The Janaseva foundation is not alone in its aspirations.

It has received a helping hand from many organizations and Maharashtra Foundation is one of these. It was indeed an inspiring evening to listen to his presentation.

## Volunteering opportunity for the Youth

Why people volunteer?

They volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, especially wanting to help others. There is a long tradition of seeing volunteering as a form of charity based on selflessness. Volunteering does involve the desire to serve others. It makes one feel happy and satisfied. School children here do such volunteering to earn credits.

Whatever be the motivation, there have been inquiries from some families regarding volunteering opportunities in India for the youth. Maharashtra Foundation works with the NGOs mostly in Maharashtra. Maharashtra Foundation can connect interested individuals from here with some of the NGOs in India like HALO Medical Foundation, SOFOSH (Society of Friends of Sassoon Hospitals) Vanasthali or Jnana Prabodhini – Harali where the youngsters can work in the various fields depending on their interest. It can be working in the hospital, teaching school children in villages or some such activity. Maharashtra Foundation will connect you with person-in-charge in India. However, Maharashtra Foundation will not be responsible for making any arrangements like living arrangements, lodging, boarding, travel expenses and insurance. If interested, please send email to:

**Shaila Vidwans** (president@maharashtrafoundation.org)



## Letters from the NGOs

Maharashtra Foundation sends funds from our donors to various institutions. From time to time, we do receive letters from them appreciating the funds they receive. Here are a couple of such letters.

You may be aware that we are running a scholarship batch for needy students from village background. Since fees are not charged from them, we are required to raise funds to run the batch. Due to your support, we could smoothly run the center and more than that the results of this center are encouraging. We are giving hereunder the details of the same, for your ready reference.

Yours faithfully,  
For 'Swa'-Roopwardhinee,  
S.R.Patwardhan  
Joint Chairman

\*\*\*

Dear Sir/Madam namaskar.

You know about our activities for the mentally retarded children and adults ( details at - [jeevanjyotmandalpune.org](http://jeevanjyotmandalpune.org)). There are about 170 beneficiaries in all the areas of activities in the institution.

The inmates participate in the intra school and inter-school activities spread over the year getting prizes and pleasure. December 8, is celebrated as the world day for the retarded for which this institution organizes the events for three days for all the local institutions for the retarded. This time about three hundred students participated.



The donations received by way of foreign aid are utilized for the food and snack expenses for the hostel inmates. Sometime back we have constructed a nice shed for the hostel inmates under which they play and have recreation in the evening hours.

In the day institution, the inmates are given snacks and sweets in the recesses many times.

On 15th March 2014, annual social gathering was celebrated in the new shed constructed recently.

I thank you very much for your good wishes and support to Jeevan Jyot Mandal.

**R.C.Inamdar**  
Secretary

## Story of Golu ...

GOLU was admitted to Shreevatsa by the Lohgaon Police Station and by orders from the Child Welfare Committee, Pune. He had several injuries and burn marks on his body, mostly on his hands and legs. According to the police, Golu was locked up by his parents for over 4 days, when they had gone out for work. They also reportedly beat him up brutally for passing urine and stools in his pants during school time. The neighbours complained to Mr. Sachin Khandwe, the local Shivsena leader, who immediately visited Golu's house and found him crying loudly. His step-mother was near him. Golu's face was swollen, his whole body had reddened and there were burn marks on his body. Mr. Khandwe immediately admitted him to the private clinic of one Dr. Chawan. When his stepmother was confronted, she accepted that she and her husband had been beating up Golu for the past 3 days. She was arrested; however, Golu's father was absconding. Golu was admitted to the hospital from 12 Nov to 21 Nov, and was brought to Shreevatsa only when his condition had improved.

At Shreevatsa, Golu soon became a happy child, but expressed his desire to go back to his mother Geeta. He could only say that she lives in Madhya Pradesh and that his father had brought him here without telling her. He could not give any other details about her whereabouts. Meanwhile, some of his neighbours, along with his step-brother, came to meet him. The step-brother was able to provide a more detailed address of Golu's mother. Accordingly, a Social Worker contacted Childline requesting them to trace Golu's mother. A few days later Childline informed us that Golu's father was arrested. On enquiring with the police, they told us that they had arrested him and that his brother and sister had come to bail him out. Golu's uncle and aunt wanted to obtain his custody. However, they were only allowed to meet him and were told firmly that they would not be given his custody. They were also asked to bring along his mother. They insisted that his mother would not come as she was not interested in him and had left him with his father. The Social Worker then took Golu's mother's detailed address from them.

Using personal contacts the Social Worker was successful in tracing Golu's mother and informed her that Golu was in Shreevatsa. On 24 Dec, Geeta, along with her brother, came to Shreevatsa to take her child home. All the required legal procedures were completed and on 26 Dec and Golu was handed over to his mother. It was a highly emotional moment for all present.

(From the newsletter of SOFOSH)  
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## An inspirational story of Ashwini Kamthe-Thakar

I was born as Ashwini Narayan Kamthe in Kusgaon village near Pune. This village is in Bhorsalka (block) of Pune district. We were a large family, I had grandparents, parents, two brothers. My mother used to say that my father really wanted a girl child, so I followed their two sons. I was the only girl and was also the youngest one so everyone was fond of me. Our was a little 'forward' in outlook. So even if I was a girl there were not too many restrictions on me as they were with other girls in the villages where I grew up.

I went to a school in our village, JeevanShikshaVidya-mandir' from 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. However, there was no school beyond this in Kusgaon. The nearest school after 8<sup>th</sup> grade was in the village Khed-Shivapur, which is 5 kilometers from my home. There were two other villages in between. Since no transport was available then, I had to walk with some friends 10 kms everyday just to be able to attend this school. I did this for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, come rain or shine. My family was very supportive for my schooling, unlike many other families. However, after 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I could not attend school because there was no companion with me to walk this distance. This was the situation for most girls then in small villages. Even today, the condition is same for many girls even in the 'developed' Pune district.

That year, I stayed home and helped my mother with all household and farm work and in selling our produce in the village market. At that time, Jnana Prabodhini was organizing Self Help Groups in our village. Prabodhini was also conducting various programs/activities for girls of my age at that time in our village. This NGO has been active in our area since 1970 and also ran a school in Shivapur and conducted many other programs for social benefit. In one of the meeting of her Self Help Group, my mother came to know that they were going to start a brand new center in Shivapur for various skills-training courses for teenage girls and ladies. This center was the Ram Sita-Puranik Technical Training Center. Mother also brought a handbill for various skills courses to be taught there. I was very happy to know that now I had an opportunity to learn something new. My parents of course supported me and soon I joined this course, along with 4 friends whom I convinced to come.

In the year 2001, I finished blouse tailoring course but still wanted to be part of this training center. So then I enrolled for a one-month blanket making course. We learnt to make 5 different types of blankets. Then during the holidays I enrolled for 3-4 shorter duration skills courses such as rakhi making, gift envelope making etc. I enjoyed this learning experience after a gap of from school. I also made friends with a number of other girls. We became a very close group and would share joy and sorrows of each other's lives. We were also learning new things and learning to 'think' at this center. My parents would always encourage me whenever I used to show them the new things I made in these courses. All our teachers were really nice and the atmosphere in this training center was

very friendly.

The training center became such a strong magnet for me that daily walk of 3 kilometers each way seemed nothing at all. Since I was learning so many things there, my parents decided not to make hurry for marriage –as was the custom- but rather to wait till I was at least 19 years old. I was married in 2004 to Mr. ShyamThakar and thus became AshwiniThakar. Ours was an arranged marriage; while discussions were going on for the marriage, I could confidently tell my future in-laws about various skills I was proficient in, thanks to the Ram Sita Puranik Technical Center. In marriage in our community, the bride's family is supposed to display a number of decorative items during the marriage. Some are also gifted by relatives. Usually, these are simply bought out, but in my case I made all those things on my own, benefitting from the skills I had learnt.

After marriage I moved from my small village to Pune, a big city. The in-laws were a big household, comprising 12 members, and they all welcomed me from heart. They also encouraged me to find a gainful employment for myself. So it was very natural for me to think about the training center and the skills I had learnt that could help me earn a living.

So I met Harshatai Kirwe, the head of the Training Center. I did not have the direct job experience as such; however, she knew me well and knew about my proficiency in various skills. So she asked me to work at the center itself and to teach there. I knew most of the staff, and they were all friendly to me, so I never felt any undue pressure while working. I am now working at this center since 2006.

Initially I also learnt to make various items from (natural) Sisal fiber. I had a friend in Pune, Rajashree Jade, who was also teaching various skills in Pune; she was an expert in 50 such skills. I thought that many of them would be helpful to 'our' students in the Technical Center at Shivapur. So with Harshatai's permission, I invited Rajashree to Shivapur to teach. I also learnt a number of (8 in fact) new skills from her , (जर्दोसी, ज्वेलरी, भरतकाम,

ग्लास पेंटिंग, वारली पेंटिंग, रांगोळी, मॅक्रमीच्या वायरपासून वस्तू

बनविणे, धबधबा बनविणे). In the big cities such learning opportunities are available to anyone who can pay for them, but they are rare in small villages. I got to learn them, thanks to the Technical Center.

After learning many such new skills myself, I thought of teaching them to the new batches of the Center. I talked to Harshatai and she liked the idea. I initially taught a few courses, and over time Harshatai gave me the complete responsibility of organizing and running the training courses. For the first courses under my charge, I campaigned in about 15 villages around Shivapur and enrolled 35 girls. During the training, our big Hall was completely full of students and teachers and in fact 4-5 skills training were going on there at one time. I was very happy to see that. I knew that now I could also 'teach' and erased my habit of thinking that 'my schooling is inadequate, I can't teach'. I was thus confident of myself and for the efforts I had taken over the years. Thus, from a student, I now became a teacher at the Training Center.

Since we keep updating with the changing times and offer new skills, the response to our courses has always been quite high.

In the Ram Sita Puranik Technical Center, Personality Development training is also given along with skills training. So one learns to think beyond oneself and to persevere when the times are hard. This new 'learning' that I had helped me a lot when I was diagnosed with womb cancer barely a year after my marriage. I had to undergo not only chemotherapy but had to be operated upon to remove the womb. Due to chemotherapy there was severe hair loss, but I used to go the center to teach. I would forget all my pain and worries when I would reach there and start teaching. I was also lucky to have a supportive family of in-laws.


After recovering from the cancer, I again started working full time at the center. Now I have decided to keep learning and to enjoy every second of my life. I can look at the life positively thanks to Prabodhini and to the Ram Sita Puranik Center. Of late I have also become familiar with computer and communication skills while working on a project at the Center.

Thus, starting as student, now I am a teacher at the Center and in-charge of one project run there. For the last three years, I am handling the project of personality development program of about 250 girls in 10 schools in 3 blocks (Taluka), namely Bhor, Haveli and Velhe of Pune District. I design the personality development course and also conduct the workshops and lectures. I also help Harshatai conduct similar programs in the low income neighbourhood communities in the Pune city.

I can carry out this work with confidence, thank to the many things I have learnt at the Ram Sita Technical Training Center. Now I am also completing my formal schooling. As I mentioned in the beginning, I could not go to school after 9<sup>th</sup>. But in the last few years, I passed the school graduation exam externally. Now I am also taking B.A. courses from an open University (Tilak Maharashtra Open University).

I should say again that all this was possible for me and many girls like me only because of the Technical Center. I give my heart-felt thanks to all those who made this possible. I also thank the Puranik family sincerely and hope their blessings are always with me.

Thanking You,  
**Ashwini Thakar**

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