



महाराष्ट्र फाउंडेशन

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>

March, 2015

Year of Establishment: 1978

Lead- Founder Member:

(Late) Mr. Yeshwant Kanitkar

Tax Exemption ID

Under IRS Section

50 (c)(3) 22-2213611

United Way NY, NJ, CT

Agency Code 011675

Board Of Directors:

President: Shaila Vidwans

Tel: (609)-336-7239

Vice President: Shirish Gupte

Secretary: Snehal Vaze

Treasurer: Avinash Patil

Board Members:

Ankush Karnik

Anand Sharangpani

Vaibhav Sathe

Pallavee Patwardhan

Anjani Gharpure

Inside this issue:

Report of Harali Camp 2

Report of Social Service

Award Ceremony - Pune 4

Harali Medical Camp -

Volunteer article 6

Outreach events 7

MAVA secretary visit 7

Hello friends,

Maharashtra Foundation activities kicked off as the year 2015 set in. The country was under severe cold wave here. However, the activities of Maharashtra Foundation in India were on the roll. The major function of Maharashtra Foundation's Social Service and Literature award ceremony took place in Balgandharv Rangmandir in Pune on January 10th 2015. Like the annual fund raising event in New Jersey, this event also is our very significant occasion where the Foundation re-emphasizes its objective of social service. Many members of Maharashtra Foundation visiting from US attended the ceremony. A detailed report about the ceremony is in this issue.

The annual Youth Wellness camp took place at Jnana Prabodhini-Harali from January 12-15, 2015. The team of doctors and volunteers had another successful camp this year. One major variation was that children and adults from 2 nearby villages were covered during the camp. This amounted to much load on the team of doctors and volunteers. However, this extension of medical service to adjoining 2 villages revealed the need of such camps in the rural areas even more.

Maharashtra Foundation supports projects run by various NGOs in India. Coordinator of one such project "Gender Sensitization and Mentoring of Young Men" run by NGO "MAVA" is in the US. Harish Sadani, Secretary of MAVA is presenting a paper at International Conference on Masculinities in New York. He is also participating in inter-generational dialogue in a conference at UN WOMAN (a United Nations conference). His visit has given us the opportunity to listen to his work in the critical area of preventing gender-based violence against women and creating gender-just society. We have been able to arrange his talk in Princeton University and Marathi Vishwa Community Center in NJ. His interview also will be aired on a local radio station.

In efforts towards outreach within the country, we are partnering with Chicago Marathi Mandal in their Gudhi-Padwa event on April 19, 2015. We are also holding a fund raising event in Florida on May 2, 2015. Shirish Gupte and Vaibhav Sathe are instrumental in such fund raising efforts. We also collaborated with BMM in sending the donations collected during the film screening for Prakash Amte's Lok Biradari Project.

Spring and Summer are the seasons full of cultural activities. The importance of "Giving" and "Social Service" somehow is never apparent in any such family or community events in Indian population. I am looking for ideas to create this awareness in our community and I welcome suggestions and discussion on this subject. Also we need to promote and participate in projects within US.

March 8 is celebrated as International Women's Day and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in her message says "gender parity must be reached before 2030. World needs full equality so that humanity can prosper. Empower women and power humanity..." She calls on all countries to "step it up" for gender equality, to reach 'Planet 50:50' before 2030.

Shaila Vidwans

Youth Wellness Camp at Jnana Prabodhini, Harali, Solapur January 12- 14, 2015

Fifth “Youth Wellness Camp” at Jnana Prabodhini School, in Harali, Solapur was held this year between January 12 through January 14. Maharashtra Foundation has funded this activity. These camps have been conducted successfully for past five years including the one this year in January. Camp services provided by volunteers, both non- physicians and pediatricians from US, consist of annual health check- up for 350 students attending this school – 250 of these students reside at the premises and others come from near- by villages on a daily basis. The school’s philosophy and goals are to offer wholesome education encompassing various elements of children’s growth and development.

by Jnana Prabodhini’s staff. One of the most important recommendations was to develop each student’s health record. This was implemented three years ago. This has helped maintain on-going records for each student. Students age, weight, height, vision screening, immunizations, nutrition and hemoglobin measurements are done before camp activity begins. Students are then interviewed by volunteers to obtain general, personal, family, social, and interim history. This has allowed pediatricians to review the information and then conduct complete physical examination. Findings of examinations are documented in the records including any noted abnormalities with appropriate recommendations for follow-up and referral to appropriate specialties.



Sunanda Oka - volunteer in action

This year three volunteers and three pediatricians conducted the camp. Meena & Ashok Deodhar and Sunanda Oka from New Jersey participated as volunteers. Drs. Ranee Limaye & Suresh Talathi from Chicago and Dr. Sheela Laungani from Long Island, NY conducted health check-ups. Two of the team members Sunanda Oka and Dr. Sheela Laungani had attended this camp in previous years. Dr. Smita Todkar, a resident physician trained at “Nirman” who works for Jnana Prabodhini is a very welcome addition to the school and participated with our team the entire time. Additional members of the team who attended this camp were internist - Dr. Shubhangi Thakur from New Jersey, Dr. Sushila Patil, a surgeon from Solapur and Jnana Prabodhini board member, and Dr. & Dr. Mrs. Rayate associated with Jnana Prabodhini.

Format of this camp has developed very well over the past five years because of the recommendations made by previous teams and implemented successfully

This year’s team followed the same format. Both volunteers and pediatricians were given comfortable facilities with examination tables and curtains for privacy, necessary instruments and appropriately completed student health records from previous years. In general, there was a sense of comfort and trust amongst students and willingness to share information with volunteers and pediatricians. The team also noted significant improvement in health awareness among students, especially about eating habits, dental care, general sense of cleanliness including care of their nails. Until last year, dental check-ups were done by a dentist who was a member of the US team. More frequent dental follow-up examinations were recommended because of prevalence of dental caries amongst students. This year because of availability of dental chair donated by MF, dental check-ups are done regularly by a dentist from Solapur who comes to the school every week. Iron deficiency anemia is also seen very commonly amongst younger students. Although hemoglobin measurements are done in the school, in many cases measurements were found to be unreliable. Iron supplements are provided by the school nurse Mrs. Suhastai Sathe, but further steps are needed to get more reliable readings and manage anemia appropriately. School also maintains a good supply of medications for common childhood problems. Having a full time resident physician, Dr. Smita Todkar available on the campus, any health related issues get attended to in a timely manner and dispensing of medication is also supervised for all students attending Jnana Prabodhini School. She has become a go-to person for students and school staff.

This year Jnana Prabodhini expanded camp activities to two neighboring villages – Sayyad Hipparga and Karavanji – where adults and children came to meet the US team with their health problems. Sheer number of people was huge and physicians who participated in

examining all adults and children felt rushed to complete the task at hand although everyone was seen. Health problems of this population are very different. There is more malnutrition, more illness and significant lack of health education. The team felt that people from these and similar villages will require a well-planned and well organized medical camps with detailed, focused and comprehensive assessment of their health issues for which more time and personnel is required to make a difference.

In keeping with the spirit of dedication and commitment from every member of Jnana Prabodhini at Harali, this year's camp was very well conducted. It is amazing to see the progress made with tireless work done by this organization's team under a very industrious and enthusiastic leadership provided by Dr. V.S. Tamhankar (known as Anna) and Dr. Swarnalata Bhishikar known as Latatai. New full time members who have joined this school in 2014 are Commander Abhijit Kapre, Center Assistant in -charge, Professor Gauri Kapre, Principal, Agricultural Polytechnic School and Dr. Smita Todkar – a full time physician for the school.

This campus begins its day every morning at 6:30 am with a prayer meeting conducted by Dr. Swarnalata Bhishikar attended by students, and staff. Attending these Dhyana sessions were very uplifting to all of us. One has to see it to believe that at the site of a natural disaster that devastated this and the neighboring villages in 1993, now stands a campus full of activities throughout the day. The atmosphere at this remarkable site is conducive to team work, camaraderie and sincerity. The energy is palpable and riveting.



From left - Mr. Tare, Ashok Deodhar, Meena Deodhar, Latatai Bhishikar, Dr. Ranee Limaye and Dr. Sheela Laungani

As in previous years, this year too, our team had a briefing session on the last day of the camp with school's staff members. This was chaired by Latatai Bhishikar.



Our team members gave our impressions & opinions of the camp that was completed this year and made recommendations for future camp activities. We also provided some helpful ideas for expanding medical check-ups for neighboring villages.

From a very warm welcome on January 11, 2015, to a grand farewell on January 15, 2015, we were treated with love and respect. Our accommodations were very comfortable with attention to details for all our daily needs including tasty meals prepared fresh every day. We thank Mr. & Mrs. Tare and their staff for being so attentive to our lodging and boarding needs. We thank the entire staff and the students at Jnana Prabodhini's Harali campus for giving us an opportunity to be of service and for making our experience and stay unforgettable.

I want to thank my team members for providing me with their impressions and opinions. That made this task a lot easy.

Dr. Sheela Laungani
On behalf of 2015 Harali, Camp Team

(For doctors visiting in India - if you are interested in offering service and working at Jnana Prabodhini or surrounding villages, please contact shaila Vidwans at shaila@vidwans.com)

MAHARASHTRA FOUNDATION SOCIAL SERVICE AND LITERATURE AWARD CEREMONY at BAL GANDHARVA RANGMANDIR, PUNE on JAN 10, 2015.



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



Jayashree and I read the special issue of Sadhana and watched the DVDs of the award ceremony. The well-thought out criteria for selection of award recipients with emphasis on ideas and work related to social transformation and the systematic, transparent, 'democratic' and painstaking method of selection by complementary committees of Sadhana Trust and Maharashtra Foundation were clearly spelled out by Sunil Deshmukh, the 'Pravartak' of the Maharashtra Foundation awards.



Rajani Shendure felicitating Himanshu Smart

We found the sentiments expressed by the literature award recipients and the hard work done by the social service award recipients thought-provoking, informative and at times emotionally overpowering - the heartrending 'Manogat' by the social activist, Ms. Manisha Tokale working for helping the unorganized labor and downtrodden women in the rural area of Beed District in Marathwaadaa was particularly moving in her choice of words and the heart-felt feelings behind expressing them.

The various issues for which the literature award and service award recipients were honored included, among others, conversion of Hindus by Christians in historical times in Goa, cinematic art and art appreciation, haphazard development in urban and rural areas,

LGBT, miners in Goa and rural women.

Following major points made by the recipients and others made a deep impression on us :

- 1) The Dalits, particularly in rural areas and the nomadic people (e.g. Paaradhee jamaat) continue to suffer from discrimination, poverty, exploitation and lack of education to a greater degree than people in Maharashtra and Marathi-Americans seem to be aware of. And women belonging to these segments of society suffer even more than men because added to these factors is sexual harassment and even rape of girls, young women and widows. It was pointed out that the women's liberation movements in Maharashtra are primarily city-centric and need to reach rural areas.
- 2) Educated self-sufficient Marathis do not either have sufficient sensitivity to the issues affecting the lower social strata or perhaps the people in these strata are beyond the periphery of their consciousness.
- 3) There is lack of appreciation of the fact that true progress is achieved by both material development and development of human capital involving all strata of the society.



Mrs. Shaila Dabholkar and Steve Mills felicitating Nikhil Wagle

4) Shree Naiknavare, the Sadhana trustee remarked that it is necessary for the social activists and their organizations to reach out to the students (and there are 11 million of them in Maharashtra) and young citizens and inspire them to give their time and expertise to social work. He added that the American concept of 'Community Service' to be rendered by students and others needs to be introduced in Maharashtra.

5) Politicians and educated Marathis seem to make 'noise' rather than have a sound, organized, progressive-minded discussion about social issues.

6) Pockets of quasi-urban or pseudo-urban environment of new homes and some modern amenities but without concurrent cultural development and values built by the small number of new well-off rural people are arising in rural areas.

7) Freedom of expression, of objective reporting and of investigative reporting is being progressively restricted in the current political climate in Maharashtra, nay India and undeclared emergency is casting its shadow on journalists' activities.

8) There is a continuing anti-capitalist feeling bordering on



Pushpatai Bhave receiving Life Time Achievement Social Service award from Madhav Chavan

Based on what we heard and saw following thoughts occurred in our mind:

1) We feel that the Maharashtra Foundation award ceremony which is an expression of the magnificent efforts of the Foundation for social reform and literary excellence in Maharashtra should reach a far wider audience in Maharashtra and in US. This can be achieved by making an edited abridged video of the proceedings and of the special issue of Sadhana available on the Maharashtra Foundation and Sadhana websites and/or sending such material to all Marathi Mandals in North America and BMM. The abridged video of the proceedings can be shown at the Ganeshotsav or Diwalee functions of various Marathi Mandals. Such an effort will enhance the awareness of the harsh realities of Maharashtra.

2) We took particular notice that the Chief Guest at the ceremony was Dr. Madhav Chavan, founder and CEO of Pratham, the nationally and internationally acclaimed organization in the field of remedial school education and spread of education in the rural areas and city slums. Therefore it occurred to us that perhaps Maharashtra Foundation can consider giving an award in the field of education since all-inclusive education of the masses is crucial for their own development.

3) Justice Hemant Gokhale, last year's Chief Guest had remarked that all the award recipients are 'Ekaande Shiledaar'. Can Maharashtra Foundation help them to work as a team for developing a multi-pronged, organized, coordinated approach to remedy social ills of Maharashtra?

Vijay V. and Jayashree V. Joshi

New Jersey

(If you are interested in watching the DVDs of the award ceremony, please send email to shaila@vidwans.com)



Awardees and guests at the ceremony

anger among the rural people and social workers (we became aware of similar sentiment during last year's Maharashtra Foundation award ceremony). It seems to us that Indian capitalists should take a note of this anger and give a thought to practicing inclusive, compassionate capitalism.

9) In the video-taped interview shown at the ceremony late Dr. Narendra Dabholkar seemed to suggest that social reform and eradication of blind faith can be achieved without challenging common man's faith in God and in his religion.

It appeared to us that the awards given by Maharashtra Foundation are an attempt, by proxy, at transforming into action the compassion Maharashtra Foundation office-bearers and supporters feel for the common Marathi Manos. In other words compassion properly understood is behind the mission of Maharashtra Foundation.

Harali Medical Camp - our experience

January 12- 14, 2015

Maharashtra Foundation has been conducting a medical camp at Harali for last 4 years. This year for the first time we could get away to India during this period. We decided to take advantage of this opportunity to give service to a good cause and signed up right away.

The camp was Jan 12 through 14. On Jan 10th we attended M F's literary and social services award ceremony. Listening to the awardees, their work, their selflessness, passion and devotion was a treat in itself. On 11th six of us - 3 doctors and 3 volunteers from US went to Solapur. We were picked up by Cdr. Capre and by the time we reached Harali it was late evening. We were greeted with a warm welcome. We got situated in very clean, comfortable living accommodations with not only necessary things like blanket, towel but also small things like slippers, two keys for each room, 'Goodnight' plug-in, comb etc. After dinner there was a well conducted meeting with Latatai (Dr. Bhishikar – Administrative and Educational activities in charge), resident nurse Sathe tai, doctors Smita, Priya and Mr & Mrs Tare (in charge of housekeeping and kitchen) as well as other volunteer doctors – Dr. Sushilatai Patil, Dr. and Dr. Mrs. Rayate - associated with Jnana Prabodhini.

Jnana Prabodhini school in Harali has over 300 students 250 of which reside at the premises in a Gurukul type system. The rest come either from Harali or are picked up from neighboring villages by car or van. The students here are privileged in respect that they get 3 nutritious meals a day and the activities include community prayer, daily exercise, allotted time for sports and cultural activities. Emphasis is given for their all round development on self learning – thinking skills, leadership skills, creative expression and more. Jnana Prabodhini is inspired by the ideals of Swami Vivekanand. What we saw that we never did before was that there was no Murti pooja or Vyakti pooja here. There was a map of mother India hung on the wall and the aarti was that of Bharatmata.

Even though the whole campus is spread over 60 acres with an impressive building that houses the school, dormitories, offices etc it started in a small house by Dr. Anna Tamhankar (now age 82) in 1995 who resides on

campus along with all full time employees/volunteers. The sense of dedication in all of them from top to bottom is palpable. The school has grades 1 through 10. There is an Agriculture Polytechnic college that offers a diploma course. Rain falls are scanty so they make good use of bright sunshine to harness enough solar energy for their needs. They are self sufficient for their dairy needs too. There are orchids where they grow guava, amla, tamarind, mango, lime and some vegetables. They run a center for rural medical services.

The purpose of this camp was to have annual check-up of student population and compare the data against previous years. This year the screening of two nearby villages – Sayyad Hipparga and Karavanji – was added which was a new experience even for the local team. They had advertized the event well in advance. No one knew what kind of turn out to expect. Two days out of three we were transported to these villages for morning sessions. Both days the day started slow but got really busy after around 10 or so. Here there were men, women, elderly and children. We as volunteers were trying to get their history and list problems on their case paper and that put us directly in touch with rural India. Some felt that since the doctors are from America they can fix any problem! It was equally interesting to talk to the students at school – their background, values and to note that children will be children any where you go - some shy, some smart, some curios, some obedient, some naughty. Since same questionnaire is used for last couple of years or so we did feel that consumption of tobacco among the men at their homes did go down. We tried to emphasize importance of oral hygiene while talking to them. Tried to find out what they want to be when they grow up. All three days we were in a different world. The fact that we were well fed and taken care of beyond imagination certainly added to make the experience positive. If life is a sum of all experiences then this one made us rich.

म्हणतातना तुम्ही कसले Thank you आम्हीच Thank you, meaning we gained more than what we gave!

Thank you Maharashtra Foundation!!

Meena & Ashok Deodhar, New Jersey

Outreach and partnering with community organization

In our efforts to reach out to various communities in the US, Maharashtra Foundation is always looking for opportunities where local mandal or community group can be our partner in spreading awareness about the work of the NGOs that Maharashtra Foundation is supporting. Following such events are being planned:

1. Theatrix is presenting 2 plays in New Jersey on **March 29, 2015**. They will be our partners in promoting Maharashtra Foundation's initiatives. Shirish Gupte will be presenting a short video and will be available for providing information.
2. New England Marathi Mandal (NEMM) will be celebrating **Gudhi Padwa 2015 - Gele Dyayche Rahuni** on **Saturday March 21, 2015 from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM EDT**. While their core mission is to promote Marathi culture and heritage, they also believe in supporting the initiatives that are trying to make this world a better place to live. Avinash Patil will be representing Maharashtra Foundation at the event.
3. Chicago Marathi Mandal (CMM) is another mandal showing interest and partnering in supporting the cause of Maharashtra Foundation. Sucheta and Pankaj Akolkar from Chicago Marathi Mandal are working with Vaibhav

Sathe from Maharashtra Foundation. Vaibhav will promote Maharashtra Foundation's work at the CMM program "**Ayushyavar Bolu Kahi**" by **Sandeep Khare and Salil Kulkarni** to be held at The Hindu temple of Greater Chicago: 10915 Lemont Road, Lemont IL 60439 on **April 19th 2015 from 2 to 8 pm**.

4. Maharashtra Foundation is going to Florida once again to reach out to our community in Orlando-Tampa area. **Kishore Pathare** is working with Shirish Gupte to hold a fund raising event on Saturday May 2, 2015 at **Darden College Auditorium in UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management** (9907 Universal Boulevard , Olnado, LF 32819). Tickets can be purchased online on www.maharashtrafoundation.org. For more information, please contact **Kishore Pathare (321 960 5497) or Shirish Gupte (908 578 5047)**.

5. Vibhav Sathe is exploring the possibility of taking Maharashtra Foundation to Seattle area.

If you, your friends, or your Marathi Mandal is interested in holding fund raising events in your area to support the cause of Maharashtra Foundation, we welcome you and your ideas. Please contact any board member.

MAVA Secretary Harish Sadani's Visit to United States

Maharashtra Foundation is supporting a project on Gender Sensitization and Mentoring of young men run by NGO Men Against Violence & Abuse (MAVA)

Inside every man, there are two men.

One man wants to play the role assigned by the society. The other wants to rebel.

One man listens to the voice of the system. The other wants to listen to the voice of his heart.

One man holds back his tears. The other wants to cry.

One man wants to live behind his masks. The other wants to tear them away.

One man wants to dominate the woman. The other wants to befriend her.

The journey of MAVA is to get more and more men come in touch with their '**other**' man. It is only when men break the molds of society and express rather than suppress their emotions, they can become less violent towards women.

Harish Sadani of MAVA will be in NJ . He will be meeting with the staff of Manavi on March 11, 2015 . He will be talking at Princeton University on Thursday March 12th, 2015. He will participate at a session on UN Women on March 13, 2015. . His interview will be aired on local radio on March 14, 2015 and he will have an interactive session in Marathi Vishwa Community Center on March 15, 2015 For more information , call shaila (609 273 1408)

Maharashtra Foundation

P.O.Box 2287

Church Street Station

New York NY 10008-2287

Maharashtra Foundation Presents

A talk and interactive session with

Harish Sadaniwww.mavaindia.org**On Sunday - March 15, 2015 from 12:00-3:00 PM****AT Marathi Vishwa Community Center (MVCC)**(For directions, please visit <http://www.marathivishwa.org/community-center/directions-to-mvcc/>)**Men Against Violence & Abuse (MAVA) is India's first voluntary organization run by men since 1993 to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.****Come and join us to listen to Harish in a thought provoking session ...**Please send RSVP by March 13, 2015 to: vicepresident@maharashtrafoundation.org
secretary@maharashtrafoundation.org**(Sandwiches / quick lunch will be provided before the program)**

For more information - Please call Shaila: 609-273-1408 Snehal: 723-591-2357 Shirish: 908-578-5047