



Special Annual Edition 2017 Newsletter

Together we can make a difference ...



A NEW CHAPTER WITH SENEH

AFNA has started a new initiative, "Support-A-Grandma" with SENEH, a home for old and destitute women in Kahilipara, Guwahati. In the last 6 years, SENEH has worked in various remote locations across Assam and has rescued many hapless women who were abandoned by their families owing to their economic compulsion or have become targets of superstition. Currently SENEH hosts 20 women, all over 55 years age, majority of who are mentally and physically vulnerable and are in need of regular treatment. Medical expenses of these ailing women pose a major challenge to SENEH, a self-funded institution without any reliable source of funding.

An AFNA team has been working with Seneh to identify the support program over the last few months and have come up with the Support-A-Grandma program. **AFNA has a fund-raising target of \$6000 a year from this program to contribute towards the medical expenses of the 20 boarders (\$300 per boarder).** We welcome donation of any amount that can contribute towards this noble program. Here are two stories of the grandmas rescued by Seneh.

Story of Devi: In Assam's remote countryside, there is still high prevalence of witch hunting where women are tortured for allegedly practising witchcraft. Devi is such a woman whom the villagers branded as a witch. The 75 years old woman was beaten mercilessly and one of her eyes was damaged. Devi was admitted to a hospital for six months and fortunately she recovered completely with sound health. Now at the age of 81 Devi is living a graceful life. Her recovery is a miracle and Seneh is glad to be part of this effort to stand up for an unfortunate woman and make things right.

Story of Arti: Arti is from a very poor family. Her husband, who was an alcoholic, and had committed suicide, left her with 4 children. Her eldest son was abducted from a crowded marketplace by child lifters. Extreme depression, grief and poverty started affecting her mental health. Her relatives admitted her to the Tezpur Mental hospital but after 8 months of treatment she was forced to leave the hospital owing to lack of financial resources. Fortunately, a staff of Seneh found her in a village corner. She was admitted to a hospital in Guwahati and after twenty months of hospitalization, she recovered. Today, Arti is a healthy, normal woman, full of energy, with a captivating smile. Seneh also rehabilitated her two boys; one of them is currently studying in a free boarding school while the other is working as an apprentice in a motorcycle-repairing workshop. "Arti is our biggest success story....Seneh is very happy being able to make a difference in this world."

Support-A-Grandma



Support one Grandma (boarder) of SENEH by contributing \$300 a year or \$25 a month

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO STUDENTS IN NEED

SNEHALAYA

Snehalaya is a shelter-house in Guwahati which is providing a home for children in need of care and protection. These children are from broken family, or lost from their parents. They would loiter around in Railway stations, bus stations or might have been in different abusive conditions. Snehalaya, meaning "house of love" is providing shelter, love and guidance to these destitute children.

Snehalaya has been associated with AFNA for a long time. Volunteers and well-wishers have visited the institution over the years. AFNA also supported Snehalaya financially earlier. A new project is being initiated to provide financial support /scholarship to eligible college going (Higher Secondary) students of Snehalaya. This project is only for the inmates who are without any support and who want to pursue higher studies.

The inmates of Snehalaya are provided with lodging and other benefits from Snehalaya but for their higher studies Snehalaya is unable to bear their expenses. Some of the students are performing well but they are unable to continue with higher education. The monthly expenses of a student include tuition fees, books, materials for assignments, field work, food and transportation. AFNA is planning to provide scholarship to some of these students starting this college year.

Two such students are Montu and Ritumoni. Montu, who is an orphan and who grew up in Snehalaya, got separated from his father while travelling in a train when he was only seven years old. Since then he is staying with Snehalaya. Montu would like to pursue college education and needs financial support.

Ritumoni is also an orphan. She has foster parents who cannot afford her studies and so, she was in Snehalaya as well. She has cleared Matric this year and she is waiting to be admitted in a college. She can pursue her dream of continuing her education with your support. We are looking for donors who can support at least three such students this year. Please contact AFNA if you would like more information about this project.

PRESERVING A LEGACY

BRONSON

Nowgong Mission High School, established by Dr. Miles Bronson in 1846 is the third oldest government school in Assam. Dr. Bronson championed the cause of education in Assam when Assam and the Assamese language was in grave threat. He was the light of education for the people of Assam and also the savior of the language. He was the main leader of the movement against government enforcing Bengali language as the official language in courts, school in Assam. It is tantamount to say that Rev. Miles Bronson saved our Assamese language, heritage and culture.

Although the Baptist Mission has long left India, the school is still standing in support of our heritage, culture and language; but as an academic institution, the Mission School is in need of help to equally compete with the modern-day challenges. There are no more patrons left after the departure of the Baptist Mission. People belonging to local, regional and the state prefer to maintain its special identity as the venue of a monument of a savior, Rev. Miles Bronson.

Assam Foundation of North America is running a campaign to preserve this legacy. The Nowgong Mission High School had constructed an auditorium in the memory of Miles Bronson. This auditorium, known as the Rev. Miles Bronson Auditorium, is being regularly used by the school children for all their programs. The size of the auditorium is 100ft. x 50ft. and is in need of a good audio/visual system. The organization is requesting a financial support of Rs. 200,000 (2 lacs) from AFNA. Your contribution will go a long way towards developing the school auditorium. We thank all our supporters who have already contributed towards this project. We also hope that our campaign will raise renewed interest in the Assamese heritage and language.

Get Involved:

Monthly volunteer call:
First Sunday, every month,
10am - 11am PT
Dial in: 641-7153272
Access Code - 457920#

Become A Volunteer:

We need active volunteers to run our projects. Please reach out to us (contacts above) or join our monthly volunteer meetings to know more.

Donate By Check:

Pay to: AFNA
Mail To:
Sarfraz Taher, Treasurer, AFNA
4391 McMenemy St.,
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

AFNA's College Scholarship Program

AKADAMICS

In 2017, AKADAMIC Scholarships, entered the 4th year of its successful operation. To date, 37 AKADAMICS awardees have successfully completed their bachelor's degree from colleges across Assam. 14 graduates are from the STEM stream and 23 are from the non-STEM stream. 14 of the graduates are females. Based on our success, AKADAMICS is embarking on an ambitious program to increase the number of scholarships to be awarded this year from 20 to 30. In order to achieve that goal, **AKADAMICS is looking to raise \$3500 at this year's Assam Convention in Toronto, Canada. A contribution of \$350 enables awarding 1 college student for 1 year.** In addition to financial help, AKADAMICS is also partnering with Xomidhan (www.xomidhan.org) to support the awardees with mentorship. Here are some testimonials from the awardees:

1. Himanjyoti Das (pursuing MBBS at F A Ahmed College, Barpeta) – “....You have inspired me and I have made my mind that when I will start getting salary I will help others needy like you have always done and help me in my last 6 months.....”
2. Kuldip Saikia (pursuing B.Tech in Gauhati University, Jalukbari) – “....for all that AFNA has provided me till date, I would like to thank all of you for your immense support...”
3. Jamani Yasmin (pursuing D. Pharma in Institute of Pharmacy, Dibrugarh) – “...It has been possible only because of the help from AKADAMICS that I have been able to appear in the Part – II of the Final Exam....”
4. Pritam Das (pursuing MBBS at F A Ahmed College, Barpeta) – “....I am really thankful to AKADAMICS for giving me a way to pursue my dreams. I don't need any other help now but if any problem arises I will inform.....”
5. Arohan Dutta (graduating with B.Sc. degree from Pragjyotish College, Guwahati, this year) – “....After receiving financial help from AFNA I am able to afford good books related to the branch that I have taken i.e. Geology, which I did not have earlier. Thus, my academic results are becoming good. And I can now see a hope of studying further and achieving my goals..”

SUPPORT-A-CHILD – HELPING CHILDREN FOR DECADES

Support A Child (SAC) program provides financial assistance to children to enable them to attend formal education during their early formative years. We believe that during the early years of a child's life financial assistance can provide a major incentive to the child to stay at school instead of dropping off and joining the workforce as a child labor. Our program is making an impact in many ways:

- our scholarships provide an incentive for poor parents to continue their child's education
- we help our partner institutions to make education more affordable to the needy
- we help enhance the quality of the education through deeper ties between educational institutions and AFNA

How SAC works: SAC program provides a scholarship of \$100 per student per year. Our selection criteria are mostly based on financial condition of the child's family and their willingness to attend school. We work with the educational institutions to receive nomination and we help the institutions disburse the scholarships.

Our scholarships are either provided in full, as cash to the child or the institution which would utilize the funds directly as reimbursement of the expenses it incurs for the student. For example, students in Patacharkucchi Girl's High School were provided cash scholarship, but in SHED, the nominating institution used the scholarships to meet the boarding expenses for the 23 students living at SHED.

S-A-C

Join AFNA at 2017 Assam Convention, Jun 30TH to Jul 2ND

AGENDA FOR THE 2017 GENERAL BODY MEETING

- Last year in review
 - Projects Updates
- Operations Overview
 - Finance Overview
- Nomination and Election of Board of Directors
 - 2017-2020 Roadmap
 - 2017 Budget
 - Getting Involved

Support AFNA and pick up a button at the AFNA Booth



We also support – Atma Nirbhar Ek-Challenge, Sishu Sarothi, Fertile Ground, SHED, Tapoban, Swabalambi, Tree-4-All and more.....

Easy ways you can help and support AFNA



You shop. Amazon gives.

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Assam Foundation of North America Inc** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

Support AFNA by starting your shopping at

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/61-0994468>



Help AFNA earn during tax season

- Mention AFNA to your H&R Block Tax Consultant
- AFNA earns \$20 for your referral
- There is no cost to you
- In the first year, AFNA earned \$180 via this non-profit referral program

Checkout AFNA's website at <http://assamfoundation.net/>

Volunteer Email DL:

Subscribe to
afna-vols@freelists.org
at
freelists.org/list/afna-vols

Newsletter Team

Editors: Lipika Deka and Pallav Saikia

Contributors Of Articles

Senesh, Bronson: Ankur Bora, Chandan Talukdar
AKADAMICS: Sarfaraz Taher
SAC: Pallav Saikia

Donate Online

