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February-March Newsletter, 2018

Support AFNA's campaign: Tapoban, the home for the disabled Children



In the year of 2005, the Student Welfare Mission established a special free residential school "Tapoban" for the disabled, poor, working, and abandoned children in Assam. At present 32 children reside in Tapoban, 7 of them are abandoned. Another 63 nonresidential differently abled children receive help at the rehabilitation day care center. The Student Welfare Mission dreams a place where socially unfortunate and needy children get proper socialization, love, care, and protection; where they can feel like an integral part of the society.

At present about 102 children are attending various training and therapy sessions at Tapoban. To help these children the institution provides physiotherapy, speech therapy, Braille, computer education, cutting and tailoring, art and craft work, and sports and classical music training (both vocal and instruments).

Tapoban also hosts the 1098 Children helpline services (which is India's first 24-hour, free, emergency phone service for children in need of aid and assistance) as a sub center at Barpeta.



The organization is working hard to provide a home for children who are disabled, abandoned, orphaned, street children, drug addicted, or have a criminal background. The number of such children in need is increasing in Assam and there is not much help for them in Assam. Tapoban is one of the rare places where these children can get help. Assam is in immediate need for places like Tapoban. But to accommodate these many children with special needs is becoming a challenge for an institution, which is driven by a single man's (Kumud Kalita, founder of Tapoban) hard earned money and small donations and community assistances. Some of our AFNA volunteers recently met Mr. Kalita, and witnessed first - hand his dedication, sincerity and selfless service. AFNA is currently running a special campaign to support Tapoban and we request your generous support and financial contribution for this cause. AFNA hopes to work with Tapoban and help it grow and support these children who have nowhere else to go.



“A Life Well Lived” a tribute to Dr. Brojen Bordoloi by Debojit Bora

Dr. Brojen Bordoloi, a Founders Circle Member for AFNA, a pillar of the Assamese community in North America, passed away on February 22, 2018 at his home in Bridgewater, N.J. He is survived by his wife Kalpana (Mamoni), son Pallav (Ritu), daughter Ruby, daughter-in-law Poonam, son-in-law Partha, and grandchildren Anjali and Ajay. Dr. Bordoloi was my uncle-in-law, who was my wife Bandana's Khura (uncle) and we fondly addressed him as our Bokulda. I was introduced to Bokulda sometime in 1981, soon after my engagement to Bandana. Bokulda came to visit me at Rutgers dorm where I was a graduate student with his family. After our wedding when we returned to USA from India as a newlywed couple, he and his family gracefully hosted us, and threw a reception party in Long Island, NY for us.

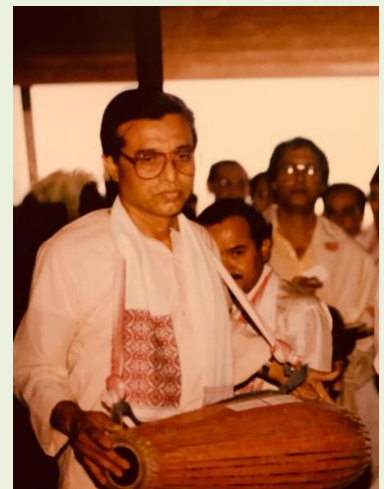


The Bordoloi family didn't just host the two of us; they were also very loving and caring hosts to my brother Satyajit, who was a post-kidney transplant patient, and also my sister (Sapna) and brother-in-law (Debojit Chowdhury), who had accompanied Satyajit for travel needs.

Then after, for the next 35 plus years, our close association with him brought me much joy, wisdom, and learning experiences from the depth of his life experiences. No doubt, he was an elder brother, a mentor, and a friend for me to always look up to. I witnessed remarkable perseverance and patience in him during the 80s and 90s when he had the challenges of being away from his family due to employment situations. The fact that he completed his Ph. D. later in life with a full-time job and other family and social obligations speaks a lot about his perseverance and determination. Among the Assamese community, many will rightfully honor him as one of the pillars of the North American Assamese community. This is not because he passionately introduced the Sri Shankardeva's culture of "Naam-Kirtan" and "Bhaona", but also more because how he motivated and entertained the second-generation Assamese American kids to enthusiastically embrace and participate in the Assamese culture in North America. I fondly remember how in many of our trips to Assam (in 80s and 90s), we were excitedly involved in collecting and bringing him artifacts/ costumes for the Bhaona plays.

Bokulda's spontaneous help and guidance as an elder continued to play significant part all through our lives. In 1984, his information was very resourceful to buy our first apartment in Woodbridge, NJ. This break had opened our fortune to become home owners from then on.

In those early years of my life (in the US), through his association, we came to know many other wonderful people in the Assamese community and got introduced through him to our organizations such as AANA and AFNA. Bokulda was a very kind and generous giver. He was a dedicated and consistent supporter to AFNA's charitable projects and also generously donated to many projects, charities, schools, colleges and cultural places in Assam. I last met Bokulda for some time at our Camarillo home, when he came to visit 2 years ago. We often chatted on the phone, checking on each other's wellbeing. Many of us will remember him for various reasons. His physical absence will be hugely felt and missed, although he will always remain alive with much love and reverence in our memories forever. Here was a very kind hearted, gentle natured, generous giver and always loving person who I also honestly attest that his was a very well lived life on this earth!



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