

RAMANA'S GARDEN 2014



Beloveds,

Sorrow prepares you for joy. It violently sweeps everything out of your house, so that new joy can find space to enter. It shakes the yellow leaves from the bough of your heart, so that fresh, green leaves can grow in their place. It pulls up the rotten roots, so that new roots hidden beneath have room to grow. Whatever sorrow shakes from your heart, far better things will take their place.

Rumi



We were last speaking together autumn 2012. Falling leaves were replaced by a brilliant blanket of snow which insured an abundant harvest in spring.



We were blessed with joyous Christmas. Our favourite present was a visit from our Beloved Krishna Das to sing with us on Christmas day.



As the orchard burst into blossom new babies of all kinds started arriving.

Compared to last summer our kids summer camp went on without any impending danger. Not one forest fire this year and we were ready for the cabbage moth invasion with nets all in place and the little buggers didn't get a single bite.

INDRA, KRISHNA AND GAGAN

Indra, Krishna and Gagan graduated from Miri Piri Academy in Amritsar and are now certified Kundalini Yoga Instructors.



Indra will continue with her dream of opening her own Dance school.

Krishna is already teaching Yoga and getting work as an artist while she prepares to study Psychology.

Gagan created the Ramana's Homemade Chocolate Factory to delight all our friends and Café customers.

Everybody loves Gagan's Chocolates!!! If you are planning to come, start saving your pennies now.

YOU CAN HELP A CHILD LIVE HIS DREAMS

When Gagan came home for his first break from Miri Piri Academy in Amritsar, Ali, his little brother, began wearing his turban and continued to wear it all summer insisting that he would also go there when he was “big.”

Ali just graduated from 8th standard and is ready to finally live that dream of going to Miri Piri, the wonderful Cambridge affiliated school created by Yogi Bhajan. We aren’t able to send him there without your help.



Ali

THE FLOOD

Suddenly it began to rain like we've never seen. It rained for 6 days without stopping. Then in the middle of the night of June 16, disaster struck. We were awakened by huge waterfalls pouring down from the mountain top upon us...both our roads to get out were destroyed by landslides. There was nothing we could do but pray. In the early morning of the 7th day, the rains stopped. A single ray of sun illuminated the dark clouds silver lining, as we made our way out and down to Tapovan. We were all safe, a little damp and muddy, but very grateful and happy that our homes weren't destroyed and we are all safe and together, singing and praying for all those unfortunate to be out in the rain without food and shelter. It is in these times that I really know we are being held in the hands of the Divine.



GIVING RELIEF

Weary beyond words from living on the edge for so many days, I fell into bed only to be awoken moments later by Karen, our long-time rafting Co. friend.

“They are not giving any relief to the villages where there were not tourists, they are starving; they lost everything! Some villages are now turned into islands trapped in middle of the raging Ganga and we are going to try to raft in with blankets, food etc. can you help them?”

OK. Let's do it!!



We first trekked 12 kilometres on a treacherous and damaged path, then rafted the swirling river to Delivery!!

I knew in my heart if we had been clearly spared as death reaped so many around us it was for us to give it all back to those who weren't so lucky.

Early the next morning, trucks were called and our own village men and women jumped into action preparing and packing food and vital supplies to go up to help those who lost everything.





ONE SMALL ACT OF GENEROSITY ON THE PART OF ONE CARING PERSON CAN TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF HUNDREDS. IT TAKES ONLY ONE LIGHT TO DISPEL THE DARKNESS.

[News Articles](#) — 21 June 2013

A manmade disaster: "It was a temple. Now it is not even a home."

Standing at a height of 11,760 feet and surrounded by majestic snow-capped peaks, the holy town of Badri Kedarnath was a picture of devastation after torrential rains in the eastern Himalayas breached a glacier, flooded mountain rivers and triggered scores of landslides on June 16, 2013. Many local residents, tourists to this very picturesque region, and Hindu pilgrims to Kedarnath and Badrinath – are dead or missing. A massive rescue operation is under way to reach survivors in the flood-hit Indian state of Uttarakhand, where 1000's people have died. More than 50,000 people are stranded after the floods swept away buildings.

The horrific disaster, described by some as a 'Himalayan tsunami', was triggered by excessively heavy rainfall of more than 220mm in a region home to the headwaters of the river Ganges. The major cause of the devastation of Kedarnath town was the breaking of the Kedar Dome, a glacier-like body that caused a rupture of the Charbari lake reservoir less than 6km from the shrine. Locals said a huge rock as high as the temple broke away from the Kedar Dome and got stuck some distance behind the shrine protecting it from destruction while the entire village surrounding it was swept away.

"Mother Nature was raging here. Ma Ganga was a torrent of fury and destruction. 70,000 stranded many without food or water; over 10,000 missing and many known dead. Entire villages on Ganga's banks were swept away. The water rose to touch the Ram Jhula bridge [below our Laxman Jhula bridge]...400 roads gone...21 bridges swept away, all on the Char Dham Yatra routes.

Outside my window as helicopters flew so low they shook my desk Ma Ganga was raging against all those who cut her beautiful forests, carried away her precious stones and sand, and encroached on her sacred banks with their illegal dams, power stations, and buildings. It all began just the day before Ganga Dusshera, the day she is believed to have descended to the earth from the heavens. It is as though she is finally striking back at all the evil that continued to defile her for so many years.

The ASIAN AGE reported, *"What we have on our hands in the Garhwal Himalayas in Uttarakhand is a manmade disaster of unforgivable magnitude, and not death and devastation caused by nature's fury, which appears to be a lesser factor when the overall situation is considered. And behind the unmitigated failure are politicians – cutting across party lines – who come to the aid of sand-mining, stone-quarrying, forest-cutting, and construction mafias by bending or breaking rules, or bringing about rules and regulations that strike at the ecological balance of a sensitive region in order to line their pockets. More than 200 hydroelectric projects on the Mandakini and the Alaknanda, the small tributaries of the Ganga before it enters Haridwar, have been sanctioned."*

Some call it "The Wrath of Kali Maa!" As heavy rains caused further destruction, the high priests spoke out to the world. On the eve of this tragedy, the on-going battle between priests and the hydro dam company over their demand to destroy the Kali Temple in Rudraprayag to build the dam was decided in the hydro company's favour and they removed Kali Maa's *murti* to a platform outside and began to demolish temple. Goddess Kali Maa is the protector of Kedernath shrine. Believe what you like, here are the facts:

All hydro projects between the temple and Kedernath were destroyed!! Rudraprayag was hardest hit after Kedernath Temple, which was protected by 3 massive boulders which came down first...Jai Kali Maa!

We have weathered many storms here and I've seen more than my share of rampant corruption but never have I been witness to man's inhumanity to man as is happening this time with this disaster relief. Or should I say "no relief". Day after day we got more horrific reports from the affected villages, people and animals were starving, esp. after they had given their entire winter stockpile to the stranded tourists who were then airlifted to safety leaving them with empty coffers.

As helicopters flew overhead lifting out the last 600 from Badrinath, I woke up feeling whew!! We can take a small much needed break...hesitant to touch the Newspaper since all headlines have been full of horror stories of chopped fingers, ears, and noses for their gold jewellery and closer to my heart the 4000 starving ponies and mules trapped in Kedernath..I toasted the Gods (all 108 of them) in gratitude for seeing us through so far with a steaming cuppa and opened the paper....Uhhhh: Child rights activists have warned that disaster-hit Uttarakhand is turning into hub of child traffickers. "Many street children working in Uttarakhand are discriminated against even at the official relief camps and thus they become easy prey for the traffickers," said Sanjay Gupta, director of the child rights organisation, Chetna.

I skipped breakfast and went on bended knee to our gruff neighbour who we have been at war with for years over piece of land rightfully belonging to us but claimed by him... WE NEED TO BUILD!!! ... Before he could throw me out, I blurted out... "Name your price" we have to have that land. I looked straight into his wife's eyes and said , please, we have to get the kids into Ramana's. Miracles happen ..1 hr. later she came with their price... I told our kids what was happening and that they have to share their beds, they all agreed and some said we can take 3 in our bed . Make sure they are my size so they can wear my clothes

Soooo... I calculated I have 694 friends on FB... We needed \$40,000 NOW!!! That meant if everyone gave just \$57 we could do it....

And **“They did it!!”** People around the world, many strangers to us, poured out their hearts and pennies to help us help these kids. I am so touched by your response to help us help. It would be impossible to name all those who helped make this miracle, and so many others, a reality but you are all written in our hearts forever.



KALI DHAM Girls Hostel



AND A NEW PIECE OF LAND TO BUILD A NEW HOME FOR THE BOYS!!

It is such an important message Mother Ganga is giving us: Nature is not ours to objectify, use and abuse. Mother Nature brings life when we treat Her with respect, care and love. But nature neglected and abused wrecks Her own havoc upon Her abusers. By Her grace, I believe She is giving us another chance. Let us take the message to heart and change our ways so that Mother Nature, Mother Ganga and all our brothers and sisters upon Her banks may live safe, healthy and nurtured lives....”



Shivram and Kissan took a big leap all the way to ladak to work for the summer. Kissan is being called back for a 2nd rd. And Shivram working full time in Ramana's Garden. Neeraj, Basanta, and Kulkeet have their summer jobs lines up...

CREATING MIRACLES, WITH MORE THAN A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

One day last year, I was called to the Café to meet an Australian group who asked, “If you know you’re so busy why don’t you build another level on the café rooftop??”

“No money? There is always something we need more, Now!”

“Well, we are builders in Australia. We could come and build it for you. But, we only build in teak wood”

“Ohhh, a tad expensive for us.”

“Then we will raise the money ourselves!!”

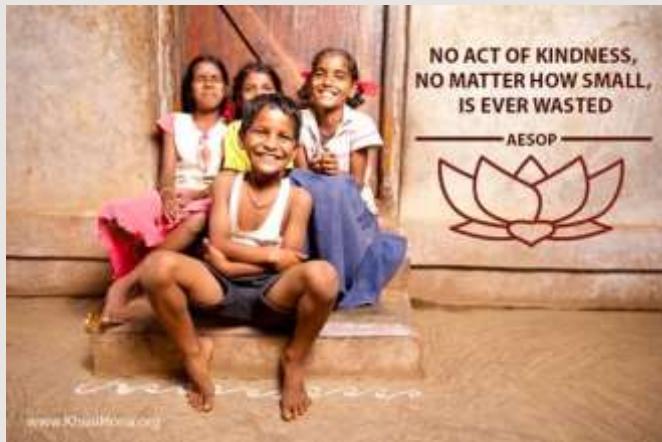
This is **living from the heart...** And so they did and came back in October with money and 3 Angels in disguise, Paddy, Rusty, and Evan. They built us a beautiful new teak deck that made it possible for so many new friends to come for lunch at Ramana’s Café: still No 1 in Rishikesh! (http://www.tripadvisor.in/Restaurant_Review-g580106-d2035249-Reviews-Ramana_s_Garden-Rishikesh_Uttarakhand.html)

They gave us the best season ever in Café and carried our hearts away with them back to Australia.



ANGELS WITH THEIR WINGS HIDDEN!!

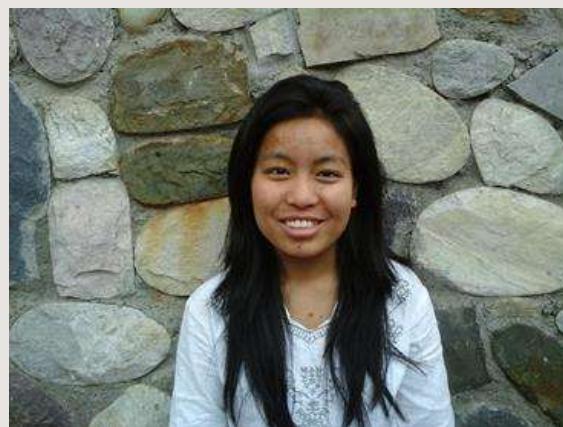
NOW A QUESTION THAT MAY CHANGE YOUR LIFE: *CAN ONE MAN OR WOMAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?*



Matthew van Rooyen was a successful CEO in marketing and PR. He realized he had a greater purpose and greater responsibility to humanity. He learned that there were over 31 million orphaned children in India alone and the numbers were growing. Matthew decided to embark on an exploratory mission to India to learn of the issues for himself with his own eyes. The issues were far greater than any paper could convey and there was very little outside support from international NGO to solve them. Matthew decided to take drastic measures and sold all his possessions and changed his career and life path in search of more personal purpose and meaning. Khusi Hona was born to form a new way of supporting orphaned and abandoned children in India and Nepal and help uplift the culture he had fallen in love with. Through Khusi Hona's innovative crowd funding platform and in less than two years Khusi Hona has funded over 60 projects, impacting over 1000 lives across India and Nepal over 10 of which have been at Ramana's Garden In Rishikesh.

At Khusi Hona we don't pretend that we will bring an end to the struggles of orphans around the world but by making one small thing happen with great love can make all the difference to one orphan, or perhaps one orphanage at a time.

The biggest difference they are making in Ramana's Garden is making it possible for our topper student Hari Kala to have a 4 year scholarship to University of Wisconsin STOUT polytechnic.



HARI KALA

AASRAA TRUST



Shaila Bijnath worked in Investment Banking as an Equity Trader. She left banking to set up Aasraatrust.org working in slums of Dehradun with children who live on the street-they rag, pick or beg to survive. Now they are provided protection, education, medical & nutritional care, and a loving hostel.

ALMAYUDA FOUNDATION

Marie France & Pierre continue to help the children in Ramana's Garden Flower.



SIZE FOUNDATION



Internationally acclaimed Greek-Swedish DJ and music producer, Steve Angello, known as one of the members of the Swedish House Mafia and the owner of Size Records a.k.a Size Matters.

"I grew up in Sweden. It was a secure country that offered me many opportunities as a child. I didn't have to worry about being hungry, not being allowed to get an education and did not have to live with the fear that my rights would be violated. Instead I had access to a world of opportunities. I could make music, learn a language or play hockey if I wanted.

Anything seemed possible. My childhood is an exception and not the norm in the world. Today there are children all over who are struggling to get their voices heard and who are trying to survive. It is my strong belief that each and every child deserves a chance to a decent life and the opportunity to fulfill his/her dream. That is why Size Foundation is important. Its purpose is to empower children by opening doors that would otherwise be closed." Size is helping Ramana's kids continue their higher education.

MAN ON A MISSION



Paulo Thiago is riding into new frontiers of Service with that giant heart of his. He created Friends of India Giving Back. He has already helped organize eye-camps to help over 200 villagers, 2 prosthetic legs, a pledge for a new burn ward , and now the biggest impact: mobilized the Anti-begging campaign for Street Children's Day 12/4/14 in Gandhi Park

NOW FOR A LOVE STORY

Fourteen years ago, a little girl named Jyoti was found abandoned and abused in a train coming in from Calcutta. She grew to become one of the most radiant flowers in Ramana's Garden with a very feisty nature and a strong will of her own. She fell in love with Pradeep who worked in the Hotel next door and was sneaking to meet him till the fateful night they were caught... Given the option to marry her or "get out of town by sundown," he chose to leave. Jyoti was heartbroken and went on writing him letters in her diary for the next year even though we heard he was engaged to be married. Then one night she was kidnapped and sold into a remote village in U.P. The police were hopeless in helping us and we had no clue where to search. Nearly a month passed till one day Pradeep rang to say she had managed to get a hold of a phone and called him for help. We traced the call and went to get her back. Pradeep had become an excellent chef in the meantime. He broke his engagement, came back for her, and they were married on November 20. And YES! I still believe in fairy tales...



Living happily ever after in Kerala.

THEN ONE DAY OUR WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

A dear friend from Aasraa Trust in Dehradun called. A young mentally and physically challenged girl was found abandoned in the street and no facilities for children with special needs available?? During the drive to Dehradun, I was recounting the reasons that it would be impossible for us to take on a challenged child on top of all we already have going on. But when I looked into Vimla's star-filled eyes and saw her smile in such innocent joy there could only be one answer: YES! We will find a way to do this. Once she was home with us she kept telling us that she had been begging on the Ghats of Haridwar with her mother. So the search for Mommy began. It took 3 trips to finally find her but heart-breaking to discover she is also quite mentally challenged. We took her in anyway. Every day, there is a new challenge that stretches us all way beyond our limits and brings us out the other side with more space for love in our hearts.

We are reaching out to anyone who has experience working with children with special needs that would want to come and share their skills and heart with her!



VIMLA

DARE TO DREAM

A year ago in January I visited Gokarna, what felt to be one of the last vanishing beach paradises left in India. I promised I would find a way to bring all the kids there to see the ocean for first time in their lives before it was spoiled. Again friends around the world helped make that dream a reality and on Dec.24 2013, 84 people, 48 hrs by train from Haridwar- Gokarna. We all had the adventure of our lifetime. Sometimes you just have to jump and risk all and the reward was sooooo much joy for one and all...It took months of preparation. It was a massive undertaking just to get the train tickets sorted. The railways couldn't have been less helpful. They wouldn't let us do any group bookings and each of the 84 seats had to be purchased individually in competition with all the rest of India, which led to kids and volunteers getting up at 4:00 in the morning to be sure to be first in the cue in 3 different cities. And changing trains on top of it all in Goa with only-- 5 minutes to spare...Paulo and Inti went ahead to scout for a location; a feat well accomplished. They found us the perfect setting: guesthouses and space for tents and outdoor cooking, all nestled in a lush coconut plantation minutes away from the beach. Volunteers came from around the world to form a world class team destined for FUN!! After 18 glorious days of non-stop adventure playing in the sea and sun, boating, expeditions spotting dolphins, teaching all the Gokarna Hippies to get high on singing Bhajans not drugs, preparation for our return began. The journey started with a gap 5 hrs waiting on platform till 2:am for next train which arrived with all out seats already given away to someone else in a giant fiasco pitching all 84+luggage and food into the aisles for 4 hours.

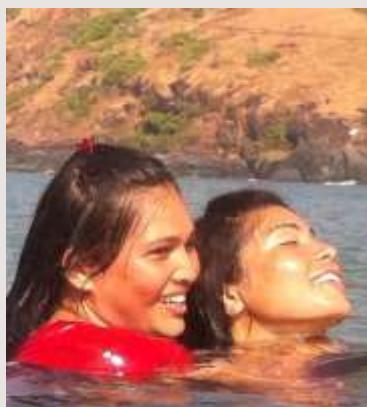
TRAIN TO GOKARNA



SAFI OUR "HERO"

Our Heroine Safi accomplished the impossible and managed to finally get them to upgrade everyone to AC Sleeper for the rest of the 40 hour journey home.

JOY AT THE BEACH IN GOKARNA



Last sunset in Paradise

Waited for “our prince” to come...but the only fellow hopping into our beds was....

RAMANA'S DANCE TROUPE

Our Ramana's Dance Troupe was all set to perform their weekly sacred dances at the Ananda Spa Palace when they spotted their all-time favourite Indian Singer, Sonu Nigam, in the audience. They quickly improvised a beautiful dance by holding a microphone next to their cell phone music. Meanwhile Mr. Nigam seeing them dance earlier was just wishing that they could dance to his music when they did! He was delighted and came up on stage to sing a love song to them personally.

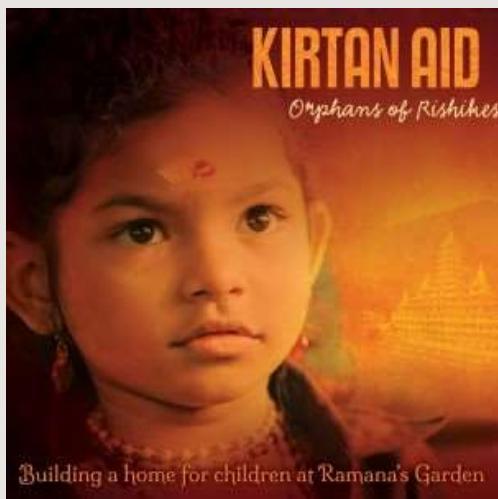


ANTI-BEGGING CAMPAIGN

Ramana's kids joined Friends of India and over 250 street children from Aasraa Trust's outreach programs in an event to bring awareness to the plight of millions of children worldwide that are forced to live in the street and beg. The day aims to increase pressure on governments and the United Nations to act on this critical issue.



KIRTAN AID



One of the most beautiful gifts of love we've ever been blessed to receive. Please support us and the wonderful artists that have donated their song and time to create this. Please order a CD today and pass this along to all your friends.

100% of the profits from this album will go towards building a green, sustainable dormitory at Ramana's Garden to expand the number of children this remarkable place can reach. Many of the artists whose music is on this album have been to Ramana's Garden and chanted with the children themselves and all agree it is life-changing! Help us build a home for the orphans of Rishikesh!

Krishna Das, Snatam Kaur, Deva Premal & Miten, Ram Dass, Jai-Jagdeesh, Harnam, Nirinjan Kaur, Tina Malia, Shimshai, Jai Uttal, Wynne Paris, Simrit Kaur, Dave Stringer, Karnamrita Dasi, Sudha and Maneesh de Moor have donated tracks to Kirtan Aid: Orphans of Rishikesh.

You can help fund Ramana's Garden by purchasing this album or donating to our Crowdfunding campaign. You're not just buying music; you're buying a child in need a future.

Here's the website to order: <http://www.satnamfoundation.org/kirtanaid/kirtan-aid-orphans-of-rishikesh-april-2014-2/>

COME AND VISIT!! WE ALL HAVE SUCH A GOOD TIME WHEN YOU DO.



*I will find new meaning in every joy and sorrow,
In that silence, I will hear the voice of spirit.
And freed from this world, I will see another world,
Where the end is another beginning.*
Rumi