

Greetings from Ramana's Garden



Today is the final result day for our Ramana's Garden's school year. Parents who are veggie cart pullers, sweepers, and beggars stash their meager belongings under trees or behind broken walls and rush toward the school, adjusting their tattered saris and patched trousers to look their very best for this important day.

As each student steps forward to receive their marks sheet and awards, their parents stand tall, eyes gleaming with pride and tears to see their children receiving a chance in a life they never had or dreamed possible. Without Ramana's Garden, most of these children would be forced to work or beg in the street. Most of the parents are illiterate and still sign their names with a thumbprint. Their children now speak, read, and write fluent English. Their dreams are becoming a reality thanks to all of you out there who keep giving your love and support to us here.

Highlights

What a wonderful year this has been for us here in Ramana's Garden!

Special thanks to all in London, Berlin, Lefkas, Istanbul, Golden Bridges, N.Y., and Washington, D.C. who made my last funding tour the best ever. The highlight was a fantastic theatrical musical based on true stories of the Ramana's kids, written and directed by Kathleen Carroll and Joan Cushing and produced by Friends of Ramana's Garden. Edward Norton and Shauna Robertson paid us a visit and have launched a wonderful fundraiser for Ramana's Garden at www.crowdrise.com.

Thank you to Marie Badarani for her generous offer to host Sunita on a visit to the U.S. in summer and fall this year. Also thanks to Kathy Berigan for keeping us warm this winter and to Satya's Jewelry for continuing to support our creativity!

Very special thanks to Clifford Chance of London for providing for our school for the whole year!

Special Visitors

Our special friends from Madrid, Vicki and Christina, brought so much joy to all the students from UKG (upper kindergarten), bringing them warm winter clothing followed by taking the entire UKG class out to their favorite restaurant for an uproarious lunch.

Then, when Beatriz visited, she took the children on picnics and a jungle safari. We were not sure where there were more wild animals...in the jeep or the jungle?



It is all about love, and a little goes such a long way here.



The Youth VIP donation of a new generator is generating big smiles!

A gift of water is a gift of life these days in India. So many thanks to Farmaceuticos de Valladolid in Spain for their donation of a new pumping system!

One of the world's finest mantra singers, Seda Bağcan, came from Istanbul to offer two wonderful benefit concerts for the children. She will be joining me in Turkey May 18-22 for Empowering the Inner Goddess Retreat. You can learn more about her at her website, www.sedabagcan.com.



Seda Bağcan graced our weekly dance performance with her beautiful voice.



Gurmukh, the students from Miri Piri, the Poston family from Singapore, Lama, and our Tibetan friends gathered for lunch and a Prayer Flag Ceremony on Ma Ganga. Gurmukh Blessed our girls by inaugurating their new hostel. Then Graham, Haryati, Tara & Sofia Poston donated new bunk beds!



The girls are SO happy in their new home!

On March 19 we celebrated Holi, the Festival of Colors, with our friends from Preshil Margaret Lyttle Memorial School in Australia. Everyone had a blast throwing colored powder and water on the banks of Mother Ganga. We also enjoyed a fabulous picnic lunch prepared the night before with lots of help from our new friends!



Leaving the Nest

Three of our top students, Gagan, Krishna, and Indra Kala, are being blessed with the tremendous privilege of being able to complete their higher studies in one of India's finest Academies, Miri Piri, a Cambridge-affiliated international boarding school in Amritsar, India. www.miripiriacademy.org



Krishna, Indra, and Gagan visited Miri Piri in January and loved it!

When Krishna's father died of a fever and suspected ghost possession, her mother was pushed into the funeral pyre, leaving little Krishna orphaned and alone. Someone brought her to Ramana's from Nepal. Krishna aspires to be a brain surgeon now that she has recovered from a cyst in her own brain that was diagnosed as fatal.

Indra Kala also aspires to be a doctor - a gynecolgist to assist the hundreds of village women who still die in childbirth.

Gagan is interested in management and computer programming. After he gains some experience in the business world, he dreams of opening his own school and hostel for orphans and poor children.

Special thanks go to www.infinite-earth.org, Dariane Pictet, and Gurmukh and Gurushabd from Golden Bridges Yoga for making this opportunity possible. They are two of the brightest lights guiding us all home on our planet today. If you haven't had the privilege to meet them yet, join us for the wonderful 11-11-11 Celebration here on Mother Ganges' banks. This event is not to be missed! See www.goldenbridgeyoga.com.

Dreams Waiting to Be Fulfilled

In addition to the three students working toward Miri Piri, there are 13 more students who are ready to move beyond Ramana's Garden for higher education, including Prashant, who is preparing to sit for engineering school entrance exams. We are making every effort to raise the funds that will enable them to accomplish their goals.

Coming to a Cinema Near You

Two of our students have spread their wings and flown into the open sky. Chunnu and Ramu graduated from film media school in Delhi and are both working creating documentary films.

Thanks to Keith and Joshua from the Mary Pickford Institute in California, the kids have also had a chance to learn about filmmaking and tell some of their own stories through short films. They produced four outstanding films last October and continue to enjoy the Flip cameras and Macintosh laptop (complete with video editing software) donated by the Mary Pickford Institute.



Prashant (right) welcomes Chunnu home for Holi.



Maina, in 9th class, also aspires to be a director.



Lokjan: "Don't worry. I'll protect you, baby!"
Future actor? Not quite - future surgeon!
Maybe he can have a side career acting in the latest hospital TV drama!



At the end of January, Macbeth was fully revived, given a facelift, and a new Bollywood look when 7th and 8th class students performed it for our Republic Day Celebration . It was a delight for all students and teachers.

Divine Intervention

Very special thanks to all of you who poured so much love and light out to us when our beloved Lalita was kidnapped last July.

One of India's greatest Saints, Sri Neem Karoli Baba, said, "In the dark times to come, it will not be possible to see God in deities forms. You will only find him disguised as a beggar, or one of societies outcasts and downtrodden." We were blessed to experience this truth unfolding when Lalita was rescued in her darkest hour. An extraordinary bus driver, wearing a torn, sweat-stained singlet and chappals held together with tape, risked his life to drive twenty hours through the night without a break. He returned Lalita to us safely and refused to take a single paisa for his heroics. He said, "It is all about the children."



Yes! The Children Are Our Future!

May all our blessings be yours,
Prabhavati