Child Haven International

ACCUEIL INTERNATIONAL POUR l'ENFANCE
19014 Concession 7, Maxville ON K0C 1T0
613-527-2829
fred@childhaven.ca
childhaven.ca

Spring 2024



Kaliyampoondi - "*And the seasons they go round and round, And the painted ponies go up and down, We're captive on the carousel of time, We can't return we can only look, Behind from where we came, And go round and round and round, In the circle game*" Joni Mitchel

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This map shows the locations of Child Haven's 12 Projects and Children's Homes. See the list on the next page for more information.

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Savarsai - Our Assistant Manager Venancio (in the blue shirt above left) heard about a grounded airplane that is now used for movie shoots and the like which is kept in a field not far from our Home. He thought our children would enjoy visiting it since they have been hearing for years about Bonniema and our Volunteer/Interns flying over to see them. Luckily the man guarding the plane likes children, and permitted our crew to climb on board. He did draw the line at flying them over to visit Maxville. Maybe next time…

To the left co-pilots Rohan and Ashik look quite at home. They are both 6 years old.

Child Haven Homes

Meu, Gujarat, India, 68 children 8 women, Language: Gujarati
Hyderabad, Telangana, India, 183 children 14 women, Language: Telugu
Kaliyampoondi, Tamil Nadu, India, 325 children 35 women, Language: Tamil
Maitreya Foundation, New Delhi, India, 24 children 1 woman, Language: Tibetan & Hindi
Savarsai, Maharashtra, India, 48 children 4 women, Language: Marathi
Tribal Home, City of Pen, near Savarsai Home, 55 children, Marathi plus Tribal languages
Kathmandu, Nepal, 203 children 22 women, Language: Nepali
Tibet in China, sponsoring 14 children 4 women, Language: Tibetan
Chittagong, Bangladesh, 70 children 15 women, Language: Bengali
(Hundreds of other children are sponsored for education, but are not living in one of our Homes.)

Women's Programs Child Haven Sponsors

Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, education in tailoring for 50 women at a time; inexpensive sanitary napkin production and sale; Beauty and Wellness Course. Language: Hindi
Rahon, Punjab, education in tailoring for 50 women at a time. Language: Punjabi - Currently on hold
Pen Village, Maharashtra, inexpensive sanitary napkin production and sale. Language: Marathi
Kathmandu, Nepal, education in tailoring for women. Language: Nepali

Gia and Jaya, by Child Haven Staff Member Avani Pisapati

The sun is falling over the Savarsai Home in Maharashtra, India on a February afternoon, and the excitement is palpable. The opening ceremony for the new dining hall building is about to begin, and the children are preparing for their celebratory performances. A young girl in a blue and yellow ghagra choli runs by with a beaming smile. Her name is Gia, and she is hard to forget. She is 7 years old and has been living at the Savarsai Child Haven Home for 2 years now. She excitedly makes her way to the stage and starts dancing to Koi Ladki Hai from the 1997 movie Dil To Pagal Hai with 10 other young girls. They clap, shake, and smile at each other nervously as they try to remember all the important steps.



Gia and her mother Jaya

The next day, we are paying a visit to Gia's mother Jaya after she has finished a day of work cleaning toilets at the local bus station. She lives in a one-room house with limited facilities, including a small area for making cooking fires outside. Her husband left her a while ago, and she now lives in this small dwelling with her infant son, who is not yet old enough to come to the Child Haven Home.

Venancio, the assistant manager of the Savarsai Home, is playing Koi Ladki Hai on his cell phone, and Gia is reenacting the dance from the night before. Jaya is smiling at Gia, visibly relaxed and happy. It's a small moment. Yet, it speaks multitudes to see a single mother who has been forced into challenging, low-wage labor share tender moments with her family. It is a reminder of what is possible despite the dire financial challenges that so many in India face.



Gia's little brother, Jaya, Avani and Gia

There are many different reasons why a child or staff member may come to Child Haven. Sometimes it may be due to the sudden loss of family members or other times it may be due to the discrimination they face in society due to their gender, caste, or religion. Whatever the reason, we continue to witness the rippling impact that sharing basic resources in a loving manner with those that need it most has on our children, their families, and their futures to come.





Hyderabad - We are thrilled to welcome 12 new kids to the Hyderabad Child Haven Home in Telangana, India! Listed here are just some of the stories that brought them into the Child Haven family.

Ram Charan, pictured above left, is 7 years old and in the first grade. His mother unfortunately passed away from jaundice, a disease affecting healthy liver function. After this, his father abandoned him and disappeared, unable to be located. Ram Charan was then brought to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) by a teacher at an Aganwadi center, which is a rural childcare center that provides pre-school education and public health services. The CWC then finally referred Ram Charan to Child Haven Hyderabad, knowing that we deliver quality care to orphaned children. It's been quite the journey for him to make it to our Home, but we are excited to finally provide him with the loving support and basic needs that he deserves.

Bhumika is pictured above right. She is now 14 years old and in the 8th grade. She, like Ram Charan, lost both of her parents at a young age. Her father died in an unknown accident, and afterwards her mother died of cancer. In the wake of this loss, Bhumika's grandmother and aunt were kind enough to take care of her. And once they learned about Child Haven, they brought her to join the Hyderabad family. Here you can see her resilience and determination shining through despite all that she has been through!



Pictured to the left are brother and sister Vishal and Akhila. Vishal is 12 years old and studying in the 7th grade. His younger sister, Akhila, is 11 years old and studying in the 5th grade. Their father tragically passed away in a motorcycle accident and they were brought to the Child Haven Home shortly after. They are both lucky to have each other as siblings as they navigate their new lives at the Home!





Ghaziabad Women's Vocational Training Program - There continue to be a number of bright and talented women leading and participating in our vocational training program for women. Lalitha, above left, with a fashionable duffle bag of her making, has been empowering women in the community for the past 5 years by teaching tailoring skills. Komal, pictured center above, is a dedicated stitching instructor of 3 and a half years that also focuses on bag-making. And Kalpana, pictured to the top left, has been a part of the MVP family for 12 years. She started working there when her grandmother was part of the team and has now worked her way up to senior instructor.

Chaya, pictured in the lower right with a newly made pair of pants, is a 22 year-old mother of two who has been a student of the program for the past 4 months. She heard about the program from her aunt who studied there a long time ago and dreams of opening her own clothing shop one day to support her family. Rinky, pictured in the bottom left with a dazzling blue frock, has been a student for 3 months now. She also dreams of having a shop, especially to support her differently-abled husband.




Bonnie Lore by Fred Cappuccino, her long-suffering husband



Over her many years of steering Child Havens' flotilla of Homes across the sometimes treacherous seas of governmental regulation, Bonnie has become quite adept at responding to the helpful suggestions/demands of well-meaning officialdom. A case in point involved the construction of a new boundary wall around our largest Home in Kaliyampoondi India. Walls around Homes can be helpful! They keep out the marauding sacred cows which wander everywhere in India. They encourage guests to come in through the main gate where our intrepid gate-keepers can welcome them. They keep many of the cricket balls, soccer balls and badminton birdies from the necessity of retrieval on the road out front, and, they do keep our exuberant and indomitable kids somewhat contained under the watchful eyes of their devoted supervisors. Compound walls are OK, they can be most helpful.

The challenge came when the Home was informed that the 6 foot tall compound wall being planned for around our Home must be topped with shards of glass pointing up and embedded in the cement on the top of the wall. This was presented as a necessity to keep children from escaping. Hearing about this requirement, Bonnie asked for a meeting with the official from whom it came. After the usual cup of tea and pleasantries she thanked him (they seem to be mostly hims) for his concern and helpful guidance for our Home. She then explained that we aspire to be a Gandhian Home, dedicated to nonviolence and that we did not want to rely on the physical pain to keep our children in our Home. What we will do she said was to treat everyone with love and respect, and that would do a better job than glass shards at keeping them within the compound. Furthermore, our kids were very resourceful, and if they wanted to escape they would surely find a way to do so glass shards or no glass shards, and at least if they did climb over the walls they would not be traumatized by being cut to shreds. Then she smiled the smile that I have come to know so well over the past 70 years, and after having another sip of tea, the official acquiesced, realizing, as I also have too many times over the past 71 years that sometimes you are out argued and you just have to agree.



Of course we have no compound wall around our simple holdings here in Maxville, but I can assure you that, Bonnie's loving smile will keep me content here for the rest of my days.

To the left is the happily unsharded Kaliyampoondi compound wall.





Maitreya Home - Ganesh, not shown, Avani and Robin were fortunate to visit this Home on Losar, the Tibetan New Year this year. Many of the young people staying here were off visiting relatives, but there was a good crew present to show us how to toss barley seeds over our shoulder for a propitious New Year and lead us through sampling the delectable Losar treats you can glimpse on the ceremonial table above.

To the left, Tsering Yankey, Rinchin Chomu and Dechen Youdon make the best cheese and parsley momos in the world for our supper. We will have to be sure to schedule our trip so that we can arrive again on Losar next year!



Maitreya Home - Pictured above is Norbu, the Administrator and All in All Coordinator of our Home on one of his twice annual trips to visit his family and village in Arunachal Pradesh. Norbu came to Child Haven in 2002 at the age of 7. His parents were subsistence farmers in his village growing potatoes, barley and corn. He has one sister and one brother. Five other siblings died from malnutrition compounded by their being no health facilities close by. There was also no school in his village. One of Norbu's uncles was a Buddhist monk and had heard about the Maitreya Home from other monks. Wanting a better life and an education for Norbu, his parents made arrangements for him to come to the Home.

Norbu recalls that in the beginning it was hard for him to settle into the Home. He had never seen ceiling fans and only knew about the kerosene lights his family used in the village. In the beginning he also missed his parents very much but says he soon developed a loving relationship with Tendak the Manager of the Home and Karma, who was a staff member for many years there.

Eventually with Child Haven's support and a lot of hard work, he graduated from Grade 12. He then went on to graduate with a Bachelor's Degree with honors in history. He is now studying for an exam which would make him eligible for a job with the central and or state government in Delhi. He plans to keep working for the Home even if he gets a government job.

In addition to the 15 primarily college students studying at our Home, Norbu stays in contact with the 31 children Child Haven supports at the Tibetan Children's Village near Dharamsala.

Norbu's family is part of the Monpa tribal community, registered with the Indian Government as a scheduled tribe. It is a very small community with only 50,000 members. They are Tibetan Buddhist as Arunachal Pradesh was once a part of Tibet. Norbu remembers his grandfather speaking about his trips to Lhasa to pay his taxes when it was still a part of Tibet. As much as he enjoys his work at our Home, Norbu's trips to see his family and his other home in the mountains are deeply meaningful for him. We are very grateful that he is a part of our family as well.

Halima, Child Haven Super Woman by Avani Pisapati

Halima is not the type to work for the credit that comes afterwards. You can tell by the way she carries herself, with a gentle, measured walk and bashful, large eyes. She shares her life story with a matter-of-factness, unaware of all that she has accomplished. She has been a caregiver at the Child Haven Home, or Shishu Shorgho, in Chittagong, Bangladesh for the past 20 years. At the Home, she provides all she can for children whose guardians are unable to provide all the support they need. She wakes them up every morning, helps them get dressed before school, makes sure they eat all their meals, and provides encouragement to overcome their everyday challenges.

When Halima was a teenager, her father suffered from health issues and needed help with taking care of her six younger siblings. She recognized her financial responsibility as the eldest child and decided to refuse marriage, leave high school, and work in a garment factory as a machine operator to support her siblings. After 10 years, she switched to quality control over production work and helped her brothers and sisters continue their education up until the 7th grade. But around when she turned 28, her father passed away, and she could no longer financially support everyone with her income from the garment factory. The Bangladeshi garment industry has been plagued by dangerous, low-paying working conditions and unfair practices by the Western fashion brands that demand their products at a very low cost. We can only imagine the challenges Halima must have faced when she was a young woman, and the stress she must have been under at that time.

Lucky for everyone, Halima met a Child Haven student that introduced her to the Shishu Shorgo Home (the Bangla name for our Home), and she was relieved to find a better paying job. When she first came to Child Haven, she admits that she was merely looking for a job and wasn't sure what to expect. But when Halima looks back on it all, she recognizes that she has learned so much over the years and really grew up as a person throughout it all. She has not only learned with loving guidance, how to take care of many children at once, but also more of the English language. Today, the children smother her with glowing affection when they come running to her, and she confesses that this is her favorite part. It's even more gratifying and deeply emotional when older children who have grown up and left the Home, come back asking for her. Her only wish is that the Home could be bigger to provide care for more children. Child Haven is so lucky to have Halima as part of our family!





Kathmandu

These are some of the young monks whose secular education is being supported by Child Haven. They reside at the monastery in Kathmandu which was begun by monks who fled from the monastery in the village in Tibet in which our Children's Home was located in before it was closed by the Chinese government.

Child Haven Support Groups and Fundraising Dinners 2024

Date	Location	Contact
June 9	**Cornwall, ON**	Elaine MacDonald 613-330-3117 elainemacdonald11@gmail.com
TBA	**Waterloo, ON**	Sydney Cook 226-929-4275
Oct 6	**Edmonton, AB**	Sylvia Krogh 780-454-6216
Oct 19	**Montreal/ Lennoxville**	Sheila Laursen 514-697-4195
Oct 26	**Hardwick, VT, USA**	Robin Cappuccino 802-533-2296, Deborah Hart 802-472-5284
TBA	**Mississauga, ON**	Shyam Sheth & Leena Motwani 647-876-8488, Tushar Mehta 416-839-1938
TBA	**Vancouver, BC**	Yamini Gandesha 604-999-2549, Katherine Doyle & Ian Cameron 604-255-4077
	Hamilton, ON	Ginny Megin 905-332-6474, Valerie Doughtery 905-465-1911, Marion Sewell-Sneyd 905-972-0773
	Comox/Courtenay, BC	Heather Holm 250-338-2181
	Victoria, BC	Robin Colyer 819-432-5997 & Peter Hamilton 819-432-5997
	Qualicum/Parksville, BC	Cilla Lewenhaupt 250-752-0968
	Kingston, ON	Jackie Morgan Rush & Andrew Rush 613-542-6992 or 343-333-1974
	Calgary, AB	Salimah Jina 403-991-4696
	Ottawa, ON	Lynda Inkster 613-824-1720, Parin Bhimani 613-422-1573
	Perth, ON	Lori Taylor 613-803-1184, Tracey Parker 613-267-4305
	Glengarry, ON	Alyson Graham 613-525-0796, Julie Slater 613-525-1104
	Burlington, VT, USA	Elango Dev 615-440-7913
	Lennoxville, QC	Phyllis Baxter 819-364-8273
	Lincoln MA USA	Christine Damon 781-879-5870
	Canmore, AB	Simon Bryant 403-609-8125
	Carleton Place, ON	Jane Hamilton-Eaton 613-853-7959
	Winnipeg, MB	Zobida Ambtman 204-489-7630



Kathmandu - It's a Saturday afternoon at the Kathmandu Child Haven Home, and the older and younger girls are all crowded in a small room with a very large mirror. Sangita, the accountant, (in glasses above) is also there to help supervise and support the many last-minute needs that come on the day of a cultural program. The girls are getting ready for their dancing and singing performances that will start in a few hours. This involves adorning themselves in the *Chaubandi Cholo* and *Fariya* and the *Gurung* cultural dress, traditional Nepali dresses, traditional jewelry, long braids, and bright make-up. Some of the older girls who are not performing this evening have taken on the role of perfecting red lipstick stains, mustering all their concentration to help apply liquid eyeliner, and sticking bobby pins and safety pins wherever they may be needed to pull final looks together. Another group of girls is huddled in a corner reading the lyrics for the song they are about to sing, trying to remember every last word. It's an exciting ritual, full of sisterly care for one another and electrifying anticipation and nerves; so, it may be of no surprise that some curious younger girls want to have a peek at all the action, as you can see in the pictures below







Kathmandu - Birajan, left, John, in the center and Badal to the right are cleaning the Home's court-yard. Birajan is 10 and studying in Grade 3 in our Green Tara Child Haven School. John is 11 and in Grade 6 and Badal is 7 and in Grade 1. Thanks to all of them for doing their chores so well!

It's a good thing they do because our court-yards get a whole lot of use! Including by our uber-talented young dancers performing here for visiting guests… Thanks to all of them for welcoming so well!





Kathmandu

To the left, Care-giver Kabita has a multiplicity of motherly duties that she performs on a daily basis. Not the least among them is checking the hair of Bil Bahadur for unwelcome visitors. Waiting for her turn is Melissa, age 14, to the left.



Above right, Ramita is an accomplished guitar player. Several years ago, Volunteer/Intern Andy Rush was assured by the boys that none of the girls were interested in learning to play the guitar. Andy, a retired high school music teacher wasn't so sure about that so he asked the girls and quite a few of them said of course they were! They have since become very talented players much to the boy's surprise. Ramita is 18 years old, and studying Hotel Management in grade 11. She was admitted to our Home when she was four years old after her father died and her mother could not provide for her.

Below Ishika, demonstrates her strumming skills and gets a few tips and compliments on her playing from Sudeep Tamang, center, and her twin sister Aisha, further to the left.







Kathmandu - Sister and brother Lakapa and Dawa are new to our Home. Lakapa is 8 years old and enrolled in the Montessori Program at our Green Tara School. Dawa is 5 and in the Montessori Playgroup. Their father is unable to walk and their mother was the only one supporting their family. When she suddenly ran away there was no one to sustain the family. Someone in their village knew about Child Haven, and after attempts to reach their mother did not succeed, and with approval from local authorities, the children became part of our Child Haven family while continuing their connection to their birth family.

Below, Lakapa, center, learning to fly across the courtyard with two of her new siblings…



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We are also able to receive **gifts of stocks and securities.** (which provides donors better tax advantages than donating cash.)

Another way to offer your support is by **leaving Child Haven a bequest in your will**. There is a brochure on several ways to do this on our web site under "Donating"



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Kaliyampoondi - During school break, our illustrious staff works hard to come up with engaging and meaningful activities for our brilliant and compassionate children to take part in. Above, our art teacher Dr. Vikaram took the children to a local temple where they drew their interpretations of the ancient statues and carvings to be found there.

To the right, Deepika and Dakshaya, both in Grade 5, take part in an English Conversation Competition and below, there's nothing like a water balloon toss on a scorchingly hot day!







Kaliyampoondi - Some of our boys preparing for an exam in their dormitory. The boys sleep on mats which get rolled up and put away every morning making the space more usable for other activities!



Sudhakar, left, has worked at our Child Haven Home since 2011 as a driver, electrician and most importantly a care-giver for our boys. In this photo taken to send to Bonniema, he is holding his 10 month old daughter Isai Yazhini, the most beautiful baby in the world. To their right is Aruna, mother of Isai Yazhini and wife of Sudhakar. Aruna also worked at our Home and is now taking a leave of absence to care for Isai Yahzini.



Kaliyampoondi

Satish, right, has been a caregiver and carpenter at our Home for the past 14 years. His mother Kutiyamal was our beloved cook for many years until she passed away several years ago. Here he is with his wife, Gomathi, and the most beautiful baby in the world, Goushik, 17 months old. Wouldn't we be lucky if he comes to work for Child Haven too like his father and grandmother before him!



Satish works with some very talented boys who are very adept at all kinds of things including making tops fly and catching them still spinning on their bare hands! It is astounding to see how many tricks they can train those tops to do!





Kaliyampoondi - Our Home Supervisor, William, (left) and two younger boys (above) recently worked together to set up a new vermicompost system at the Kaliyampoondi Home in Tamil Nadu, India. Vermicomposting is the process of decomposing organic matter, such as food or yard waste, with the help of worm digestion. It results in a product rich in nutrients that can be used as fertilizer for vegetable gardening, thereby returning nutrients back into the local food production.

To establish the system, a layer of tree branches was first laid out in a grid-like pattern on the bare ground. Then dried leaves collected from nearby trees were spread evenly over the branches. The leaves were later watered, and cow manure was added. This whole process was then repeated several times until a long pile or windrow was created. Finally, a long rod was used to poke holes in the windrow to encourage aerobic decomposition processes. With time, worms from the earth naturally emerged and entered the vermicompost system.

We look forward to seeing this composting system grow, improve the Home's garden soil quality, and help with recycling waste over time. Thank you to our staff and children for taking care of the earth and making this possible!



Kaliyampoondi - Above some of our fine musicians play the traditional Tamil drum the parai. The word parai means to speak or communicate. In ancient times, the drum, made from neem wood and water buffalo hide, was used for everything from calling people together for community gatherings, to being played at weddings, festivals and as part of temple rituals. After the onset of the caste system following an invasion in the 1300's the parai was only allowed to be played at funerals and the people who played them were relegated to the dalit or "untouchable" caste, no longer allowed in temples and relegated to a degrading oppressed social status. The word "paraiah" meaning outcast, originated with the East India Company as a reference to the treatment of parai players in Tamil Nadu.

In recent years, Tamil drummers and musicians have been embracing the parai drum and the people who play it as an important and esteemed part of Tamil culture and society. Popularizing and playing the parai by people of all caste backgrounds is seen as a liberating challenge to the very premise of the caste system. It confronts affirms that people who touch a parai should be given the respect that every human being rightly deserves.

We could not be more pleased that drumming teachers Maiyam Kalaikuzhu Joana and Gokulakrishnan Crew have brought this awareness and challenge to the caste system to our Home. Not only seeking to challenge caste oppression, they also are empowering girls as well as boys to play this instrument that in ancient times was played by both men and women.

The pulsing, energetic rhythms of our young musicians, accompanied with the traditional dance steps of parai players, filled the Dining Hall with excitement and joy during a recent performance, heralding too, the desire, the promise, that caste oppression and gender inequity will one day be overcome.

Child Haven is on Social Media! If you are a social media user, you can now see short clips or reels on:
Instagram.com/childhavencanada
Facebook.com/ChildHavenInternational



Meu - Siblings Prakash, age 7, Sonal, age and Deepak age 10, recently joined our Home. Their Mother was a heavy tobacco smoker and sadly she died of use-related illness. Their father works for farmers doing day labour when they need help with planting or harvest and is not able to care for his children alone.

Below left, our gardener Sureshbhai with a bucket of tomatoes from the garden he cares for to provide Prakash, Sonal and Deepak, and all our other children and staff with fresh vegetables and fruit in season. To the right below is this year's crop of onions doing very well!







Meu - Sisters Vishwani, age 9, left, and Ritu, age 12, are beloved members of our Home. They came after their mother became ill and father could no longer financially support his family. We make every effort to keep birth siblings together and in close touch with their birth families while also welcoming them into ours.

"Let me light my lamp, says the star,
And never debate if it will dispel the dark."
Rabindranath Tagore



Kaliyampoondi - Digital Engineers of the future putting our computer equipment through its paces as they explore the wonders of the world around them from the safety of our Home. Computers are now located in the Home's library. After the completion of our new education building, there will be a designated computer lab, tailoring room, music room, sports room and general study room located there.

For donations please make cheques out to CHILD HAVEN, and mail this information slip to CHILD HAVEN, 19014 Conc. 7, Maxville, ON K0C 1T0 (or to Box 5099, Massena, NY 13662-5099, USA.) Donations to Child Haven are tax receiptable in Canada, India and the USA. General Full sponsorship is $30/month or $360/year.

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