



## 2021 FALL NEWSLETTER

### WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



Greetings!

The pandemic has given each of us an extraordinary and unprecedented encounter with uncertainty. It has taught us to develop strength in handling adversity, practicing flexibility, and working together.

The rapid global spread of the coronavirus has shown us that we are all interconnected, especially our health and well-being. In the words of one humanitarian worker: ***“COVID-19 is making the already vulnerable exponentially more vulnerable.”***

As leaders and particularly during challenging times, it’s important that we keep asking the right questions to identify new opportunities to help when and where it is needed most.

#### ***What void is PRASAD striving to fill? Are we making the greatest contribution?***

In India, we take a holistic approach, which means constantly assessing changing needs and providing a wide range of services. Our current focus is providing COVID-19 relief and recovery.

In the US, rural, low-income children can’t access dental services for multiple reasons, including dentists not accepting their insurance or parents not having transportation. To provide care for these children, PRASAD operates a fully equipped mobile dental clinic.

In Mexico, many people cannot afford eye surgery. Normally, PRASAD eye camps provide free surgery, however the pandemic has paused the camps. Volunteers are currently finding resources for free eye surgery for those in need.

Our experience working with communities demonstrates that partnerships are key for providing relief and recovery. Effective communication and trust are also crucial to the success of service delivery, because it requires the participation of affected individuals and communities. In this newsletter, you’ll find stories about our partnerships.

Stay well.

Warm regards,

Tom Korula  
Trustee and Co-Chair

Dr. Vivek Panchapakesan  
Trustee & Co-Chair

Dr. M. Cecilia Escarra  
Executive Director

## A Steadfast Entrepreneurial Spirit



More than 94% of India's working women are employed in the informal sector, which lacks job security. According to the World Bank, women make up 48% of India's population, but they have not benefitted equally from India's economic growth. India has one of the lowest female labor force participation rates in the world. Less than a third of women – 15 years or older – work for money. PRASAD Chikitsa's Women's Self-Help Groups (SHG) empower and train women to become entrepreneurs. As their businesses grow, women earn and control income, allowing them to become decision-makers in their families and communities.

In 2020, the Saraswati Self-Help Group provided financial support for thirty-year-old Harshala Joshi to start a beauty parlor in her home in Vajreshwari. Harshala's business flourished; she was the primary breadwinner for her family of four. But the COVID-19 lockdown dealt a financial blow. Her husband lost his job at a local factory, and she chose to close her in-home beauty parlor to protect her family from infection.

Harshala still needed to support her family, so, again with support from her SHG, and a connection from PRASAD Chikitsa, she took advantage of an opportunity and opened a small tea and snack stall near her home. PRASAD Chikitsa arranged for Harshala to provide daily tea and biscuits to the local government-run Primary Health Center, which also led to lunch orders, increasing her income. ***"I am very grateful for this opportunity. I needed it during this difficult time. It has also improved my network, which helps me to expand my business."*** Since, she has also found work in a beauty parlor in her village.

## Partnering for Food



While the pandemic has been difficult for everyone, people experiencing poverty and homelessness have been hit particularly hard. Those whose livelihoods are dependent on tourism and allied businesses have had to close during the lockdowns. To support these vulnerable people, PRASAD Chikitsa organized a meal service program in Vajreshwari and Akloli Kund, popular pilgrimage and tourist destinations.

A local Women's Self-Help Group, Anandi, partnered with PRASAD Chikitsa to prepare the hot meals distributed twice daily by PRASAD staff. The partnership provided far-reaching benefits beyond food service. The 12 members of Anandi rented a food prep room and followed hygiene protocols to ensure food safety. Each member took on a different task: cleaning, chopping vegetables, cooking, and packaging.

Manisha Patil, the Group president, described the experience, ***"Besides an income opportunity, this activity brought many positive changes. It built our confidence, strengthened unity and improved business skills. This work gave us immense joy because we knew our food was satisfying the hunger of society's neediest and most neglected people. It allowed us to be part of a noble cause."***

**From April to August 2021, PRASAD Chikitsa served more than 22,000 hot meals to homeless families and unemployed workers.**

## PRASAD COVID RELIEF & RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

### INDIA

- 2,400 face masks
- 250 bottles of hand sanitizer and two sanitizing stations
- 3,586 food & essential supplies packages
- 22,000 hot meals to homeless and unemployed workers in the Tansa Valley.
- 2,000 ration kits in partnership with Manav Sadhna in Gujarat and with MCKS Food for the Hungry Foundation in Delhi
- Partnered with Americares to support COVID-19 treatment facilities in 10 states in India by providing 1,100 oxygen concentrators, ventilators and PPE.

### UNITED STATES

- PPE to healthcare workers in New York State
- Dental hotline for children's services
- Partnered with the Federation for the Homeless to provide 1,800 meals and donated a food storage freezer and food, clothes, and toys for children
- Produced dental health videos for school-based online education.

### MEXICO

- Distributed food packages to fifty low-income families



# PRASAD CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM



For 23 years, PRASAD CDHP has been committed to improving the dental health of children by providing affordable, comprehensive dental services through education, prevention and treatment to thousands of children annually.

When schools closed, on-site dental treatments and in-class

dental education paused. In response, we opened our mobile clinic at our office and produced dental health videos for schools. Due to the Pandemic, extra precautions have been mandated to ensure our patients and staff are safe during appointments. The new requirements mean extra expense and more time per appointment.

# PRASAD de MÉXICO

In Mexico, because of the pandemic, PRASAD has had to cancel our volunteer-led eye camps that perform free eye surgery on adults and children with cataracts and misaligned eyes. Instead, the PRASAD de Mexico team is helping individuals access free eye surgeries through local clinics and hospitals.



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR PRASAD?



In India, **PRASAD Chikitsa's** goals for the next year are to continue delivering medical services and providing nutritional support to children at village care centers, and to help 400 Adivasi families start kitchen gardens, plant 20,000 trees, distribute 15,000 jasmine saplings to farmers for market crops, and help 150 families build toilets, among other services.



In the U.S., **PRASAD's Children's Dental Health Program** will continue to offer quality, safe mobile dental services to low-income children in New York State. We are planning to resume dental services at the schools and provide in-person oral health education when it is possible.

The **PRASAD de México** team will continue helping individuals receive free eye surgery and will reopen eye camps in rural areas of Mexico when it is safe.



## YOUR GIFT CHANGES LIVES

Your gift to The PRASAD Project funds innovative solutions to help restore vision, improve oral health and wellbeing, and break the cycle of chronic poverty, creating opportunity and empowering people and communities so that all may prosper in harmony with the natural environment.

## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT PRASAD

**MONTHLY GIVING:** Sign up to become a PRASAD Partner, and, as a bonus, when you give a monthly donation of \$25 or more, you will receive a luxurious scarf donated by Love Quotes™ on your Partnership Anniversary.

**MATCHING GIFTS:** Ask about your employer's matching gift program.

**LAUNCH A PEER-TO-PEER CAMPAIGN:** For more information visit our website at [www.prasad.org](http://www.prasad.org)

## HOW YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

**\$30** provides 10 medical visits in India

**\$50** helps a family start a kitchen garden in India

**\$70** provides one eye surgery in India

**\$100** provides a preventive or restorative dental visit for a child in the U.S.

**\$250** provides nutritional support for 2 children for one year in India

**\$750** sponsors jasmine cultivation for 12 farmers in India

**\$1,500** supports the construction of a farm well for one family in India

Please donate to PRASAD so we can help where it's most needed.

Visit us at [www.prasad.org](http://www.prasad.org)

Find us on    

## THE PRASAD PROJECT

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Dr. Vivek Panchapakesan, Co-Chair

Harriette Cole, Treasurer

Deborah Royce, Secretary

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# SAVE THE DATE

## BEING TOGETHER PRASAD Virtual Annual International Fundraiser

Sunday, November 14, 2021  
[www.prasad.org](http://www.prasad.org)



The PRASAD Project is a Non-Government Organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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