



# VAROSHA 2018

**Hope and Empowerment through  
Education and Opportunity**

*"Condemn none: if you can stretch  
out a helping hand, do so."*

*Swami Vivekananda*

We are grateful for the dedication  
of our partners in Kolkata:

Debsankar Roy and the  
team at Pub Pashchim

Arup Chakrabartty and the team  
at Health Vision Research

Geeta Venkadakrishnan  
and the team at Hope



*There are countless charities in the world. Why do we choose to work for Varosha and why should donors choose Varosha? Our mission follows the simple idea: 'Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.' We have found investing in education and vocational training has profound effects on a person, family and community. Economic stability changes lives and allows people to live with dignity.*

*Often we write a check to a large charity with a prestigious corporate office and we do not really know if our funds went to pay for their CEO or for gift bags or advertising materials. Unfortunately at Varosha, we cannot offer our donors tote bags or gifts. We can offer you to visit our schools or our sites and see exactly where your donation went. All your donations are used to pay the salaries of our teachers, books and materials to teach our trainees, to buy small animals and plants for farmers and direct project costs.*

*Not one penny is used for administration. Our directors travel several times a year to each of our sites, speaking with the trainees and staff, listening to their challenges and what they really need. Our directors pay for all their travel expenses themselves. We donate the cost of printing and mailing all the newsletters and receipts. We want all your generosity to go to those you want to help. We operate on a small and tight budget however the results have been amazing. Please take a look at what we have accomplished this year with your support.*

*Sincerely,*

*Santi Banerjee, Krishna Chakrabarty, Shompita Chatterjee, Neela Dasgupta,*

*Bikram Dewanjee, Chandrima Roy, and Shuvani Sanyal*

## CONTACT VAROSHA



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## Mother's Day Fundraiser

Our long-time supporter, Dr. Dipankar Mukhopadhyay generously offered to match all donations made to Varosha up to \$10,000 in memory of his beloved wife, Dr. Alpana Mukhopadhyay. Dr. Alpana Mukhopadhyay was an accomplished pathologist as well as an adored wife, mother, grandmother and friend. Everyone who met her was charmed by her gentle and kind nature. This photo of



them taken at Daley Plaza was on their wedding day, April 11, 1968. They had taken their friends to Chinatown for a reception after the wedding. April 11, 2018 would have been their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Alpana passed away peacefully in their home on January 16, 2018 so Dipankar wanted to honor the occasion and the memory of his wife by helping women and children in need. This generous offer sparked our Mother's Day fundraiser as a way to honor the special ladies in all our lives.



We thank all our donors and honor the following mothers.

Our Donors	Honoring
Rana Banerjee	Mrs Swapna Banerjee
Santi and Mekhala Banerjee	In memory of Mrs Chameli Banerjee, Mrs Suruchi Mukherjee, Mrs Suniti Chatterjee, Mrs Kamala Banerjee
Ashoke and Swapna Banerjee	In memory of Mrs Amiya Banerjee
Agneesh Banerjee	Mrs Mekhala Banerjee, Mrs Kumarika Banerjee, Mrs Megan Banerjee, Mrs Connie Nickel
Uma Bhattacharyya	In memory of Mrs Usha Rani Chaudhuri
Kaneka Box	Mrs Marvise Box
Krishna Chakrabarty *	In memory of Mrs Sulata Chakravarty
Kaberi Chakrabarty	Mrs Krishna Chakrabarty
Amit and Tanima Chakraborty	Mrs Prativa Chakraborty and in memory of Mrs Bani Chakraborty
Debabrata Chakravarti	Mrs Anima Chakravarti, Mrs Monisha Datta and in memory of Mrs Shasthibala Chakravarti, Mrs Sobasona Mukherjee and Mrs Binapani Chakrabarty
Debasish Chatterjee	Mrs Suprity Chatterjee
Pia and TC Chatterjee *	Mrs Rina Chatterjee and in memory of Mrs. Reena Dutt
Shompita Chatterjee	Mrs Rita Chatterjee and Mrs Purabi Bhattacharya
Shamita Chatterjee	In memory of Mrs Anima Bhattacharjya
Debajyoti Chatterji	In memory of Mrinmoyee Chatterji and Pratima Banerji
Nabendu and Leela Choudhury	In memory of Mrs Snehalata Chaudhuri and Mrs Kamala Ray
Paula Covell	Mrs Sioban Sengupta
Shatabdi and Pramit Das	Mrs Suchitra Sengupta
Janice Das	Mrs Ida Cherin

Our Donors	Honoring
Sumitra Das	In memory of Mrs Kamala Venkat Koppikar and Mrs Ranibala Das (I miss you so much and love you so much)
Sheila Das Rawat	Mrs Janice Das
Milan Dasgupta *	Mrs Bithika Dasgupta and Mrs Purnima Roy (grandmothers) and Mrs Neela Dasgupta
Kalyan De	In memory of Mrs Anandamayee De and Anila Sarkar
Antara Deb	Mrs Khona Deb (from Kelvin and Tuli)
Avro and Rachel Deb	Mrs Khona Deb
Arpita Debray	Mrs Malabika Sarkar
Soumojyoti and Natasha Duttaroy	Mrs Ira Dutta Roy and Mrs Kusum Nagrecha
Anjan and Reena Ghosal *	Mrs Manisha Ghosal and in memory of Mrs. Pratima Kundu
Monika (Ronti) Ghosh	Mrs Manjusri Chakravartti and Manjusree Ghosh
Swapn and Rita Ghosh	In memory of Mrs Chhaya Ghosh and Jyotsna Mitra
Carla Henderson	In memory of Mrs Ruby Sims
Subhasish and Bhaswati Laha	In memory of Mrs Rekha Laha and Mrs Indrani Ganguly
Pradip and Srabani Majumdar	Mrs Namita Basu
Anna Makarova	Mrs Zhanna Savchenko
Atanu and Ajanta Mazumder	Mrs Pratima Mazumder and Mrs Ashima Biswas
Swati Mitra	Mrs Jharna Mitra
Shampa Mukherjee	Mrs Sova Chatterjee
Arpita and Devajeet Mukherjee	Mrs Dipika Mukherjee and in memory of Mrs Bashona Ghosh
N. D. Mukherjee *	In memory of Mrs Basanti Mukherjee
Minati and Sabyasachi Mukherjee	Mrs Madhabi Mukherjee
Biswajeet and Sanchita Mukherjee	Mrs Sushmita Sarkar and Mrs Bithika Mukherjee
Reba and Debkumar Mustafi	Mrs Latika Mustafi
Malabika Palit	In memory of Mrs Anima Basu
Mira Paul	In memory of Mrs Shanta Sengupta
Tarak Paul	In loving memory of his wife Mrs Amita Paul
Biswamay Ray	In memory of Mrs Suruchi Ray
Pradip Raychaudhuri *	private
Sumit Roy	sister Dr. Geeti Ghosh, Mrs Minati Banerjee, wife Mrs Mallika Roy and in memory of Mrs Suprova Roy
Indranil and Tonnishtha RoyChoudhury	Mrs Roma Roychoudhury and Mrs Debjani Kanungo
Manabendra Sarkar	Mrs Mani Sarkar
Rajashree Sen *	In memory of Mrs Pran Kumari Gupta
Himika Shergill and Debanjan Dutt	Mrs Nupur Dutt and Mrs Davi Gill
* > \$1000	

Our Founding Director's daughter, Dr. Kumarika Banerjee was blessed this year with the birth of a baby girl, Anjelika. Kumarika was so moved by the generosity of our donors that to celebrate her joy in becoming a new mother, she matched Dr. Mukhopadhyay's offer entirely. Varosha received over \$36,000 during the fundraiser which has given us the financial security to continue our successful programs for the next year and start new promising programs. We are overwhelmed and very grateful for your generosity and faith in Varosha.



Varosha was one of 30 exhibitors at the first Rotary International Service Summit held on February 10, 2018, at Northern Illinois University Naperville Campus. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with other nonprofits doing incredible work throughout the world. Jerome McDonnell host of Worldview, WBEZs daily global affairs talk radio show moderated the discussion panel. CNN journalist stationed in Afghanistan Atia Abawi was the keynote speaker. Panelists discussed challenges they have faced operating in different countries and how they have overcome them. Many people took great interest in our activities. We were able to make connections with possible future partners. It was an inspiring day and we look forward to learning from, working with and sharing our experiences with these outstanding groups. We are very grateful to Rotary for arranging the summit and giving Varosha a platform. Directors Krishna Chakrabarty, Neela Dasgupta, and Shompita Chatterjee attended.



Our directors made several trips to our Dipto Alo after-schools care centers. Top left, Bottom left and right, Shuvani visits Dipto Alo in New Alipore. Top right from Bikram's trip to Dipto Alo in Kulti (western Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman, WB)





Last year our well-wisher, Mrs. Indrani Biswas, gave us a donation to be used specifically for the children at our Dipto Alo school in New Alipore. We decided to host an Eye Health Camp and have all the children tested to see if they needed glasses. Poor eyesight can affect school work and motivation to do well in school.



Partnering with Rotary Club of Calcutta, Inner City and our partner Pub Paschim on January 27, 2018 we held the camp. Ophthalmologist, Dr. Vivek Dutta, his optometrist, and eyeglass technician provided checkups to 53 women and children. All the participants received snack packs (packet of cookies/banana/orange/ladoo). Twenty three children were diagnosed needing eyeglasses. The prescription glasses were ordered. All the parents/guardians of the 23 children picked up the glasses showing their commitment to their children



The members of Rotary who attended were impressed so many people took part in the camp. They explained that when well-meaning people try to hold wellness checks and offer free services hardly anyone will attend. People in these communities are often taken advantage of so are naturally suspicious of anyone offering something for free. It is different for Varosha since we have been in this community for a long time and people trust we have no other agenda.

Two ladies needed cataract surgery and were scheduled for follow up visits with the doctor. Both were found to have very high blood sugar levels which prevented surgery. They were prescribed medication and monitored. One lady was able to reduce her blood-sugar levels and have her surgery 4 months later. Mrs Sandha H was given new glasses and is now doing well. She and her family express their gratitude. We hope to share similar good news of the other patient soon.



(Photo) Varosha Directors: Santi Banerjee, Neela Dasgupta, Chandrima Roy and Bikram Dewanjee attend the Eye Camp at our Dipto Alo school in New Alipore and are welcomed by Swarup Saha of Pub Paschim, teachers and students.

Our experience highlighted the need for medical services and preventive checks for this community.

In January of 2018, both me and my wife visited Kolkata and kept in the back of our mind that we would be visiting one of Varosha's facility near Chetla. It was an unannounced visit. It was quite an enjoyable and emotional visit to see that our donations are well spent and well managed by the Varosha team and these kids and the ladies are seeing a bright future at the end of the tunnel. As a closing, I must say that Varosha will always have our continued increased support and presence in the future and urge that more and more folks get involved with such philanthropic projects like Varosha in Kolkata.

Nikhiles Mukhopadhyay





*Varosha's support for farmers in Sandeshkhali, a village in Basirhat subdivision of North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, near the Sunderbans*

Director Santi Banerjee and Director of Project Management Bikram Dewanjee made separate trips to this site in early 2018 to evaluate the project and speak to our beneficiaries. We had been supporting approximately 15 families each cycle. The requests for assistance grew with the successes of the ladies who managed small animals. Over 90 women came to request assistance in some form.

In 2018, we expanded the project to help 31 of the most in-need ladies and indirectly, their families. The age of the ladies ranged between 20 and 67, with a median age of 42. Goat shelters were given to 9 ladies. Chicken and ducks were given to 8 ladies and 14 ladies were given goats. A few ladies at the site are able to sew and asked Varosha to assist getting sewing machines so they can offer tailoring to people in the village. We have secured financing and are in the process of arranging this based on genuine needs.



*Top left and Center left, Santi is welcomed to the village by beneficiaries of prior years. They present him with home grown vegetables. Bottom left, ladies of the village meet with Bikram. Below our partner Dr. Arup Chakrabartty of HVR travels with Bikram via launch to the village.*







Varosha fully funds the Hope Skills Center in Chetla. The students from neighboring disadvantaged areas come to take classes in spoken English and computer skills. After they have completed those successfully they take a course in the accounting software program used extensively in India, Tally. The students are also taught job readiness, interview skills and taken to companies for corporate exposure. During the year April 2017 to March 2018, we had 56 students. We are pleased to share that Akash B a student of the Skill Unit, was offered a job in Tech Mahindra. He is working full time with a salary of Rs 8000/-. The following 6 students: Tanmoy M, Pritam B, Santanu N, Ajit B, Partha M and Sujoy H have received jobs with Flipkart. Their salary is between Rs 8,000/- to Rs 12,000/- per month. The following 4 students: Raja H, Sourav B, Rahul H and Binay M have received jobs with Swiggy. Their salary is between Rs 11,000/- to Rs 16,000/- per month.

In the session April 2018 to March 2019 we have 61 students. There are 8 students under 13 primarily learning spoken English and Computer applications. Of the 53 students over 13, 37 students are taking classes in spoken English and Computer applications, 10 in Computer applications and Tally and 6 in spoken English and Tally. Tally classes cover basic accounting concepts and inventory management as well as the computerized accounting system and overview of Tally ERP 9. The teachers regularly conduct home visits to combat absenteeism and drop outs. They speak with parents and guardians to make them aware of the opportunities available for students who complete the course. They also prepare makeup classes for students who have to return to their villages and miss classes. The staff also visited local schools to spread awareness of this free program and increase enrollment.

*Top left Director Chandrima Roy attends awards ceremony at the Chetla Skills Center. Top right, students at the center. Below left Director Bikram Dewanjee with the computer teacher at the Chetla Skills Center.*



"I, would like to take this great opportunity to share my deep gratitude towards VAROSHA. I want to thank the Chairman Sir of Varosha and Geeta Mam, Debasree mam and Sabitri mam for rendering great support by helping me to do my training at OYO rooms. VAROSHA has given me "varsha" when I seemed to have lost the reason to live due to several family issues. I was in desperate need of money to continue my son's education. The opportunity they have given me will help me get a good earning after 5 months of industry training. I am ever thankful to VAROSHA to help me find a reason to live and sustain life. VAROSHA the name itself explains their dedication towards those who need help. THANK YOU.

Chandrani C, Behala

## Visiting Healthcare Assistants and Physiotherapy Training

By Shuvani Sanyal

Hearing of the success of friends who had recently graduated, a new batch of students gathered on a Saturday afternoon, eager to absorb as much knowledge as they can from their guest lecturer. These young adults were full of hope for a more empowered future. In the winter of 2018, HVR welcomed its fourth class of students to complete training as healthcare assistants with specialized skills to support elderly adults.

Currently organized into two parts, the first three months of the program are dedicated to foundational knowledge spanning an immense breadth of subjects from the signs/symptoms of common ailments of aging to lessons in sterile care and infection prevention. The second half of the course placed students in nursing homes where they worked alongside nurses to learn the practical skills of care. The value of this training was well known to these students; some of whom had traveled over three hours each way to attend four hours of class every Saturday and Sunday. When we asked of their impressions of their education thus far, we repeatedly heard of aspirations for more advanced skills, and training on specialized physiotherapy equipment, which would make them more competitive in the job market.

After even a brief conversation with the director of HVR, Dr. Chakrabartty or with any of the guest instructors, it becomes clear that this course is continually evolving, striving with each iteration to best prepare its students to provide a uniquely professional level of care to patients with chronic illnesses (a growing population throughout India). This goal for excellence is being recognized by the nursing homes HVR partners with, who are now requesting to train more and more of their students. As the community of alumni from the program grows, each following class more readily finds employment opportunities in nursing/rehab homes and with families upon graduation.



*Drs. Arup Chakrabartty of HVR and Shuvani Sanyal of Varosha with students from the Nurse Assistants and Physiotherapy training program in Laketown*

This project is funded by a generous grant from Adrija and Amitava Das.

### Looking ahead to 2019

- ◆ We have found a teacher for the beautician's training program and after some unavoidable delays look forward to starting this program
- ◆ Health and hygiene camps for our students
- ◆ Health clinics for women's health, children and general wellness, preventative health checks
- ◆ Moving Dipto Alo school in Kulti to a larger facility
- ◆ Renewing our commitment for our existing successful programs
- ◆ New computers and internet for both locations of Dipto Alo



*Because of your generosity Varosha has helped improve the lives of over 2000 people. From all of us at Varosha, THANK YOU for your support!*