



Shreyas Foundation

SHREYAS BALGRAM SOS

NEWSLETTER



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SHREYAS BALGRAM SOS

A loving home for desolate children

Shreyas Balgram SOS was founded by Smt. Leenaben Sarabhai in 1962. She was motivated by a deep urge to provide equal opportunities to children from varied socio-economic backgrounds and to the lost, parentless and destitute children, in need of a family and the security of a home. Balgram SOS was founded with a belief that security of a home, love of a family and quality education are the fundamental right of every child, regardless of their socio economic background. It operates with the support of donors spread throughout India and across the world.



While the children are not all biologically related, at Balgram, they are family. Children arrive at the SOS Children's Village on the Shreyas campus when their parents are no longer able to take care of them or if they are orphaned. As they grow up in one of the five houses, each with a foster mother, and attend classes at Shreyas, they learn important life skills, everything from cooking to computers in a loving and caring environment. Many generations of children have grown up at Balgram and are now living a dignified and honorable life as independent and contributing members of society.



PRUTHVI AND MAYUR FINALLY FOUND A LOVING HOME

Read how the two siblings got a loving home at Balgram

Pruthvi and Mayur, the two brothers, were born in a very poor family in the slums of Amraiwadi in eastern Ahmedabad. Pruthvi is 11 years today and Mayur is 9. Their father passed away 4 years back, when the children were very young. Destiny had more difficult times in store for the two little brothers; their mother left the family and remarried, leaving the children behind. Their grandparents were very poor and could not take care of the children, and thus the relatives informed the State Social Security Cell to intervene and Shreyas Balgram offered to adopt the two desolate children in 2014. They were scared and diffident when they first came to Balgram, but today both of them are happy and confident boys. Pruthvi says, **"I love living at Balgram, I have made many friends here. I am very happy that my brother and I can live very comfortably here"**. Both the brothers love



swimming and football, whilst Pruthvi is good at gymnastics too. Both, Pruthvi and Mayur are making good progress in academics.

BHAVIN – A LIFE TRANSFORMED AT BALGRAM

Learn how contributions from friends like you have changed Bhavin's life

Bhavin is a confident 18 years youngster today who aims to pursue a career in the field of sports. His life has been really transformed at Balgram. Bhavin was only 9 months old when he was brought to Balgram. Naturally, he does not remember the faces of his parents. Kalabahen, Bhavin's foster mother recalls, **"He was a very tiny and weak child when he came to Balgram and would cry all the time"**. She adds, "Look at him now, he is a tall and strong boy who is known in the whole school for his skills in various sports and games." Bhavin's passion is sports and he is adept at diverse sports like swimming, gymnastics, horse riding etc. He has also won a Certificate of Merit for his horse riding skills. He says, **"I thank Balgram for what I am today. Without being raised here, I wouldn't be what I am today. I am in 12th standard currently and I want to pursue a career in sports, as that's what I love the most."**



Like Pruthvi, Mayur and Bhavin there are hundreds of thousands of desolate children in India who have lost their families in similar circumstances. Fortunately, these three have found a home for themselves and a family they can call their own. The happiness and hope we see in their eyes show that everything can be done with the support of donors like you. Future promises a lot for Pruthvi, Mayur and Bhavin.



“I AM A SUCCESSFUL AND RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL TODAY. THANK YOU BALGRAM FOR INSTILLING RIGHT VALUES IN ME”

Read how contributions from donors like you helped make Vijay Kumar's life a success story

Dr. Vijay Kumar Kaushal is a successful and responsible professional today working with one of the most esteemed institutions devoted to sustainable development, but initial years of his life were far from happy. He was brought to Shreyas Balgram from Surendranagar Child Welfare Cell when he was just 4; the year was 1966. The small child found a home full of love and warmth at Shreyas. He studied till 5th at Shreyas Foundation (in those days Shreyas did not offer classes beyond 5th). Post this, he pursued his schooling from Lok Vidyalaya, Valukad in Bhavnagar district in western Gujarat. Vijay was always a bright student and he cleared his 10th and 12th with first class. **“I left Balgram after 5th but the qualities of independence, honesty, responsibility towards society, hard work and sincerity that I had imbibed here always stayed with me. Shreyas also taught me that one should always strive to give back to society”**, he says. Vijay did his Bachelors in



Rural Studies and followed it with a BEd. However, he was not satisfied with this and pursued a Masters in Social Work and won a gold medal at the university. Post this, he did a PhD in Social Work. He also holds a bachelors degree in law. Dr. Vijay Kumar Kaushal has been working as a Team Leader with Viksat, Nehru Foundation for Development in Ahmedabad for more than 20 years now. He is married to Rashmi and the couple has two sons. Tirth, the elder son, is 22 years old and Vishv, the younger one, is 18. Tirth is an MBA and is working as an Assistant Sales Manager with one of the reputed organizations in Ahmedabad. Vishv is pursuing his engineering from a well-known academic institution in Ahmedabad.

KOKILABEN – A MOTHER'S STORY

“I left behind two sons but I found many more children I could call mine at Balgram”

Kokilaben's life has unfolded in a similar fashion to the life of a number of children she has raised as a foster mother at Balgram for more than 25 years now. She too found a lost home here like the desolate children who came to Balgram. She hails from Malawada, a village located at a distance of about 55 km from Ahmedabad. Her husband worked as a priest in the village and the couple had two sons. Due to differences of opinion the couple did not get along and Kokilaben left her home and went back to live with her parents. She did not want to be a burden on her father and wished to earn her own livelihood. Kokilaben's wish was fulfilled when she found an opening as a foster mother at Balgram 28 years back.

She says, **“The saddest part of my life for me was that I had to leave my two boys behind. But as I became a mother at Balgram this void in my life was filled; I found here many kids who were like my own children”**.



Through the course of last 28 years she has raised many desolate children whose lives have changed. They are in touch with her and visit as well as call her regularly.' Kokilaben does not see her being a foster mother at Balgram as a job; she feels that she could not have had a better life.



“I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT AS A RESPONSIBLE HUMAN BEING I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY NOT ONLY TOWARDS MY FAMILY BUT ALSO TOWARDS SOCIETY AT LARGE. EVERYONE SHOULD GIVE BACK TO SOCIETY WHENEVER THEY CAN”

Read what motivates Mr. Snehal Gosalia to contribute to Balgram

Mr. Snehal Gosalia is an individual who strongly believes that a person with enough resources should always give back to society that has made him what he is. He has always been very impressed with Leenaben Sarabhai's philosophy and her contribution towards the cause of education and well being for all children, regardless of their caste, creed or economic standard. He has been a regular donor to Shreyas Foundation for many years now and has contributed towards many projects at Shreyas. Mr. Gosalia adopted Chandni and Netra last year. Chandni is in 2nd standard and Netra is in 4th. Both of them are doing well in their studies and are very happy living at Balgram.



Mr. Gosalia says, **“My heart is filled with joy and satisfaction when I see a smile on the faces of Chandni and Netra. I am very happy that I have been able to contribute towards making their lives better”.**

“VOLUNTEERING AT BALGRAM TO TEACH CHILDREN ENGLISH HAS BEEN A VERY FULFILLING EXPERIENCE FOR ME.

Read Kathleen's account of her experience of volunteering at Balgram

Kathleen Wane, a UK citizen, has been living in Ahmedabad for sometime now (her husband is stationed as Deputy Commissioner at The Deputy High Commission of the UK in Ahmedabad). She has been striving towards reaching out to underprivileged children in various slums and making a difference in their lives through education.

As soon as I heard about Balgram from my friend Sylvie, I knew I needed to visit and meet the children. Once I met the children, it was very easy for me to offer some help in supporting them in practicing English. The Balgram children are eager to learn, they are keen to find out about different cultures and to hear about where I have been visiting in India. They are, rightly, very proud of their school and of their country and from our discussions about the UK and other countries we learn from each other. We try to speak English throughout the session, and the children tell me when they



don't understand something, or indeed if something is boring! They enjoy role play with dialogue and games which help them retain better some of the more challenging grammar. Practicing dialogue is a great way to prepare the children for the future, building confidence and confident young people is key and that is at the heart of everything Sylvie and I do and the children seem to like it.

Knowing that the children enjoy the sessions makes it all worthwhile for me. Knowing that they can speak English a little bit better or plan a sentence with more confidence is a joy and makes me want to keep coming back. Accepting the children's invitations to Swimming exhibitions or Balgram evenings helps me get to know them more and helps me understand what motivates them, what they want to achieve and make me think how I can help them, in some small way, achieve their goals.



THE ACHIEVERS



SHREYA

Winner, Under 19, 100 Meters and 200 Meters, Paldi Ambawadi Ward, Khel Mahakumbh 2017



NITAMMA

Winner, Under 17, 50 Meters Swimming, Breast Stroke Category at District Level.
Was part of the pre-national camp at Vadodara for 10 days



SANDHYA

Winner, Under 19, 400 Meters at District Level



VAISHNAVI, BHAVIN AND NITAMMA

Represented Ahmedabad Relay Team at State Level and won Bronze Medal



VAISHNAVI

Winner, Under 14, 100 Meters Swimming, Breast Stroke Category at District level



SAURABH

Was part of the District Level Winning Team and has been selected for the State Level Team



HAPPY MOMEMNTS

Reshma's Wedding

Reshma has been living at Balgram for close to 20 years now. She came here when she was just 5 years old. Reshma is working as a Food Controller with The House of MG. She is a BCom and is currently pursuing her MCom as an external student. She married Tejas on 15th January. Tejas works as a Computers Education Teacher at Shreyas Foundation and lives in Ahmedabad. Their wedding was held at Balgram.



Reshma and Tejas's Wedding Ceremony at Balgram



Reshma and Tejas with Mr. Abhay Mangaldas, Managing Trustee – Shreyas Foundation



Reshma with her Balgram sisters

Nimisha's Engagement



Nimisha and Satish just after their engagement

Nimisha came to Balgram when she was just 2 years old and has been living here for close to 25 years now. She has been working at Shreyas Museum for four years. Nimisha has studied Diploma in Fine Arts and is currently pursuing her BA as an external student. She got engaged to Satish on 26th March. Satish is working as an Arts Teacher in Mahuva and is planning to relocate to Ahmedabad once the couple gets married shortly this year.



Nimisha with Satish and her new family



CONTRIBUTE

Give a child a second opportunity to have a family!

Pay via NEFT / RTGS / Cheque / SWIFT (Offline Payment)

Deposit money directly to our account

Account Holder Name **Shreyas Balgram SOS**

IFSC Code **BKID 0002019**

Bank **Bank of India, Sharda Mandir Road Branch,
Ahmedabad, India**

Account No. **2019 1010 0002 061**

Contribute towards general expenses of Balgram **Any amount**

Education

Contribute the annual fees of one Balgram child **Rs. 27,000/-**


Contribute the annual expenses for a Balgram child
(food, clothing and other requirements) **Rs. 71,000/-**

Contribute the annual expenses of one Balgram home
(one foster mother and up to nine children) **Rs. 6,18,000/-**



CONNECT WITH US

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We will be happy to receive your feedback or any query you might have about Shreyas Balgram SOS

