



Shreyas Foundation

# SHARING JOY

SHREYAS BALGRAM SOS & SHREYAS GIRL CHILD  
EDUCATION PROGRAM  
NEWSLETTER



## INSIDE

How YOUR contributions have been helping transform lives

Achievers

Happy Moments

  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& HAPPY 2018!**



MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

&

Happy  
2018





## 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 rights of every child, regardless of their socio economic background.

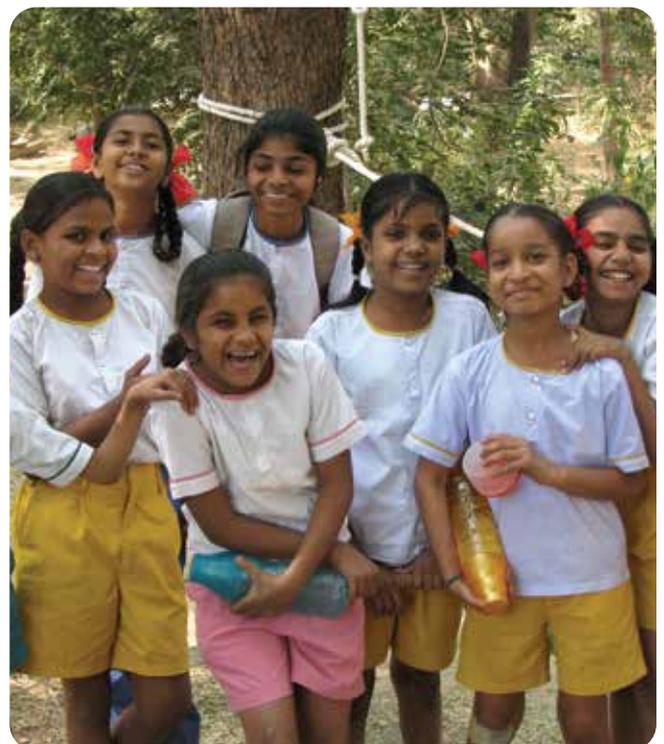
While the children are not all biologically related, at Balgram, they are family. Children arrive at the SOS Children's Village on the Shreyas campus when their parents are no longer able to take care of them or if they are orphaned. As they grow up in one of the five houses, each with a foster mother, 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. It operates with the support of donors spread throughout India and across the world.

## SHREYAS GIRL CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Shreyas Girl Child Education Program was launched in 2013 with an aim to provide quality education to underprivileged girls at Shreyas Foundation, and thus to empower them to lead an independent and self-reliant life when they grow up. 80 girls are a part of this program currently and we plan to add 20 more from this academic year. Under this program donors can sponsor an individual girl child by donating her annual fees of Rs. 21,000/- (325\$ approx.) or they can donate any amount, which will go into the common pool for other girls.





## THE WOES OF TWO SIBLINGS FINALLY ENDED

Read how Netra and Kunj found a loving home at Balgram

Kunj and Netra hail from a slums area in a Nava Vadaj locality of Ahmedabad. Netra was 9 and Kunj 5 years old when they came to Balgram in December 2014. The siblings had lost their mother some months back. Their father worked as a casual labourer. To add to the misery of the family, his health was not keeping well and there was no one else in the family to take care of the children when he went out to work. He saw a ray of hope when he learnt about Balgram.

The small children were in a wretched emotional state of mind. This was evident when they were admitted here; both were very diffident and cried very often. The transformation in them at Balgram is remarkable. They are happy and enthusiastic children today. Netra says, **"We are very fortunate that we found such a loving home here. Kunj does not remember much of the times before we**



**came here but I do remember some; ours was a horrible life, but today we both are very happy".** Kunj is in 7+Y grade and he likes reciting poems and maths tables in class. In the extracurricular activities he loves skating and yogasan (yoga). Netra who is in 9+Y grade likes studying science. She loves swimming, athletics, painting and paper craft.

## BHAVIN – A TINY INFANT THAT HAS GROWN INTO A CONFIDENT ADOLESCENT AT BALGRAM

Learn how contributions from donors like you have lit up Bhavin's life

Bhavin is a 19 years old adolescent who has made a name for himself at Shreyas through the years with his extraordinary talent in sports and athletics. It is hard to imagine the transformation that his life has taken at Balgram; he was not even a year old when he was brought to Balgram way back in 1998 along with his elder sister Reshma who got married recently at Balgram (she works with a very reputed heritage hotel in Ahmedabad currently). His Mata (foster mother) at Balgram remembers, **"Bhavin was such a fragile boy when he first came here; and look at him now, he has become a tall and handsome boy who has excelled at sports and other activities at Shreyas."**

Bhavin's upbringing at Balgram and his schooling at Shreyas School also exemplify the philosophy of Shreyas to aim for allround development of children and to not



judge them based only on the basis of academic excellence. Bhavin who failed to clear his 12th standard last year works as an assistant coach at Shreyas Equestrian Centre and at Shreyas Swimming Pool besides preparing for his 12th that he will attempt again. At Balgram he is also given assurance that though he should work hard at his studies he should not feel defeated if unfortunately he fails to clear his 12th, since attempts would be made by Balgram to find a placement for him as a sports coach at Shreyas or at any other institution he desires.





## POOJA & ROSHANI - TWO HAPPY SISTERS AT SHREYAS FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Read how Shreyas Girl Child Education Program has enabled Pooja and Roshani get a quality education

Roshani and Pooja are two sisters who live in slums in Bhudarpura area of Ambawadi in Ahmedabad, not too far from Shreyas. Roshani is 14 years old and Pooja is 10. They were enrolled under Shreyas Girl Child Education Program in 2013, the year of this program's launch. Roshani who is in 13+Y grade today was in 6th then and Pooja who is in 9+Y was in 2nd when they joined Shreyas, a school founded by Leenaben Sarabhai, one of the most known educationists of Gujarat, in 1947. It was founded on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Madam Montessori.



The aim at Shreyas is to strive for allround development of children and not mere academic excellence. Dance, drama, sports, art & crafts are integrated with studies and there are no formal exams till 6th standard. Roshani and Pooja are very happy studying at Shreyas. Roshani says, **"We are very fortunate to have been able to study in such a nice school. Our parents are very poor and couldn't have afforded such a good school for us."** Their father who works as a casual labourer and mother as a maid beam with joy as they see their daughters' happy faces when they go to school.

## DHARA - A POOR GIRL WHO STUDIES AT ONE OF THE BEST SCHOOLS IN AHMEDABAD

Learn how contributions from donors like you is helping transform Dhara's life

Dhara hails from a poor family; her father works as a casual labourer and her mother is a housewife who attempts to add to the family income by stitching people's clothes as and when she finds work. She lives in a joint family in an impoverished area of Ahmedabad. She is 10 years old and is in 9+Y grade at Shreyas. She found an opportunity to study at Shreyas, one of the best schools in Ahmedabad, under the Shreyas Girl Child Education Program.

Under this program donors can sponsor an individual child by donating their annual fees of Rs. 21,000/- (325\$ approx.) or they can donate any amount, which will go into the common pool for other girls. Dhara was enrolled 3 years back at Shreyas, and she sees a marked difference in her education after she came here. She says, **"I love studying here as here it is not just from the books that we learn; there**



**so much of activities based learning here that so much fun."** She likes Maths, Science and Social Studies in class. She also loves learning new activities at Shreyas and is good at painting and swimming. Dhara aims to work as a professional once she grows up and be independent & self-reliant.





## “I FEEL I HAVE BEEN LUCKY TO HAVE GOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK TO THE CHILDREN THE LOVE AND CARING I GOT AT BALGRAM”

Read Meena Jethva’s account of how contributions from donors like you have helped transform her life

I came to Balgram when I was five years old and my younger sister was just 3. I found a remarkable difference in my life at Balgram after I came here. Before, it was all miseries for us and here I found love and caring around. This is thanks to Leenaben, the founder of Shreyas Foundation and Shreyas Balgram, who ensured that generations of desolate children found a new life here. I studied here till 7 (Shreyas did not have further classes in those days) and I feel proud to say that Leenaben represented as my mother when she took me to Shardamandir School for my admission in 8th standard.

I studied till 12th there and then pursued my PTC (Primary Teachers Course) at Adalaj near Ahmedabad. Post this, I found an opportunity to work under Leenaben’s guidance as a



primary teacher at Shreyas. I have been here for last 32 years and I have been the coordinator of Shishu Vibhag (Primary Section) for last three years. For me this is an opportunity to give back to the children love and caring that I got at Balgram. I was felicitated by Eklavya Foundation with an award for Best Teacher in 2010. I feel I have been very lucky to have been a part of Balgram and of Shreyas. But for Leenaben and Balgram god knows what turn my life would have taken.

## “THE BALGRAM CHILDREN ARE SO LOVING AND SO FULL OF LIFE; I FEEL I HAVE FOUND A NEW ZEST FOR LIFE WITH THEM”

Read Krupali Raval’s account of how being associated at Balgram as a mentor has enriched her life immensely

I am from Ahmedabad; after pursuing my M.Com., B.Ed. and then M.Ed. I have been working as a lecturer in a college here in Ahmedabad. I have been associated as a mentor at Shreyas Balgram since 2011 and I teach the Balgram children after my college and their school hours. I find a great satisfaction in teaching and interacting with them. These children are so loving and so enthusiastic; I have found a new zest for life with them.

We do a lot of activities together and I feel it is not only them who learn from me, I too learn a lot from them about how to care for others and how to share what you have. Besides, I have also learnt a lot about child psychology here. I make



sure to attend all the festivals at Balgram like Navratri, SOS Day Celebrations etc. We have so much fun together during these festivals. I am very happy and proud of the fact that the Balgram children share all their joys and sorrows with me.





## THE ACHIEVERS



**Tara Dantani**

Participated in Standing Long Jump, Under 9 Years, State Level, Khel Mahakumbh



**Gopi Dantani**

Participated in Standing Long Jump, Under 11 Years, State Level, Khel Mahakumbh



**Kunal Dani**

Gold Medal in 100 Metres Freestyle Swimming, State Level, Khel Mahakumbh

Gold Medal in 100 Metres Breaststroke Swimming, State Level, Khel Mahakumbh



**Vaishnavi Chauhan**

Gold Medal in 50 Metres Freestyle Swimming, State Level, Khel Mahakumbh

Silver Medal in 50 Metres Breaststroke Swimming, State Level, Khel Mahakumbh





## “EVERY TIME I CONNECT WITH THEM, THE BALGRAM CHILDREN TEACH ME SO MUCH”

Read what inspires Naomi Shroff-Mehta to keep contributing to Balgram and how she feels inspired by Shreyas Foundation & Shreyas Balgram SOS

*Naomi Shroff-Mehta is a student at Scripps - Claremont College Consortium, studying neuroscience and filmmaking in California.*

For me going to Balgram is always like going home - it is the warmth the children give unconditionally. I feel they are part of my family. Every time I connect with them, they teach me so much. Spending time with Balgram Community is the most valuable education. I met the Balgram kids the first time when I visited Ahmedabad with my mother in 2010. I remember the first evening at Balgram - we exchanged stories about life and culture in India and United States.

Children asked me about the snow in America and festivals, and I told them all about the holiday season, especially the Christmas tree and snow. They enjoyed knowing about how families create gifts at home and share them with each other.



We all made drawings with crayons to create holiday cards. A group of my friends and I were inspired by Balgram, and created a cultural exchange program with the Maret School, in Washington DC. I now enjoy coming to Balgram as often as possible and will make sure to give my time to the Balgram community. I feel that Balgram has given me the meaningful connect in life.

## “WE HAD GREAT FUN DURING THE TRIP AND LEANT MANY NEW THINGS”

The Bicycle Tour that enhanced the spirit of camaraderie, bonding and adventure

Shreyas Foundation conducted a bicycle trip on 2nd December to Thol Bird Sanctuary that lies at a distance of approximately 25 km from Shreyas. Four Balgram children – Chirag Sudra, Pruthvi Jadeja, Anil Jadav and Bhavin Dhir – were amongst the 150 participants who took part in the trip. The children left at 6.30 am and returned late in the evening. They had breakfast on the way and lunch at Thol and after they returned they had dinner together at Shreyas.

Thol is known for a number of rare migratory species that arrive here in winters, and the children had an opportunity for great bird watching. The trip also aimed at developing the spirit of camaraderie, bonding and adventure amongst the children. Chirag says, **“We had great fun during the trip and learnt many new things on the way.”** Anil says, **“First we were apprehensive about the trip since we had not cycled such a long distance before – 25 km going and 25 km coming back – but once we started in groups we never felt tired; it was such a nice trip and I hope to do many more of these”**





## HAPPY MOMEMNTS

### *Nimisha's Wedding*

**"I HAVE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF BALGRAM AND IT IS BECAUSE OF BALGRAM THAT I AM WHAT I AM TODAY"**

Read the account of Nimisha who lived at Balgram for more than 20 years and got married this year

I came to Balgram when I was just 1.5 years old, naturally I don't remember much of my initial years here. I found a loving family here, I lived with 8-9 other children who were like my brothers and sisters and Savitamasi, our Mata (foster mother) in a home here. I learnt important life lessons at Balgram and at Shreyas School I had an opportunity not only to get a very good education but I also took part in many extracurricular activities. I especially loved arts and crafts.



I did a diploma in Fine Arts and joined Shreyas Museum Department as an assistant. Along with that I did my BA as an external student. I have got immense love and inspiration first at Balgram and then at Shreyas. I believe that my upbringing at Balgram and my schooling at Shreyas have helped me become a socially responsible citizen. I got married recently and my marriage was organized at Balgram. I live with my husband in Ahmedabad. I believe that I owe what I am today to my upbringing at Balgram.

## SOS DAY CELEBRATIONS – 12th November

Shreyas Balgram celebrated SOS day on 12th November. It has been celebrated every year since 1987. Balgram alumni attended this with their families. It was also attended by former Matas (foster mothers) at Balgram. Both the alumni and Matas reconnected with Balgram and had an opportunity to refresh their memories. Abhay Mangaldas, Managing Trustee – Shreyas Foundation, and many well wishers of Balgram were at the event.





## CONTRIBUTE

### Give a child a second opportunity to have a family!

Pay via NEFT / RTGS / Cheque / SWIFT

Deposit money directly to our account

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

Account Holder Name **Shreyas Balgram SOS**

Account No. **2019 1010 0002 061**

SWIFT Code **BKIDINBBAMD**

IFSC Code **BKID 0002019**

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 **Rs. 71,000/-**  
(food, clothing and other requirements)

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

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## SHREYAS GIRL CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAM

You can also contribute towards Shreyas Girl Child Education Program. Currently education of 80 underprivileged girls is being sponsored under this program and we plan to add 20 more girls to this soon. Your contribution will help transform the lives of many girls and will help them become responsible global citizens.

### Contribute and give an underprivileged girl an opportunity to pursue her dreams

Annual fees for the education of one girl child **Rs. 21,000/-**

Pay via NEFT/RTGS/Cheque/SWIFT

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

Account Holder Name **Shreyas Foundation A/C - I**

Account No. **201910100006363**

SWIFT Code **BKIDINBBAMB**

IFSC Code **BKID0002019**





## CONNECT WITH US

**Surav Thakrar**  
E-media Executive

 Shreyas Foundation, Ambawadi  
Ahmedabad, India

 +91 88660 35214

 shreyas.surav@gmail.com

 [www.shreyasfoundation.in](http://www.shreyasfoundation.in)

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

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