

# *Sonoma Ashram & India Service Project Update*

## *July 2009*

[www.sonomaashram.org](http://www.sonomaashram.org)    [info@sonomaashram.org](mailto:info@sonomaashram.org)

Dear Friends,

As we continue our efforts to keep you connected with the Ashram in Sonoma as well as our service projects in India, this is our first monthly email update. There are lots of exciting programs and events happening in both countries.

### *Sonoma Ashram*

### *Sonoma, California USA*



Friends from around the country, India and Italy, coming for visits and personal retreats, enhancements to the property, daily meditation and yoga, chanting with Tiwariji, and wellness seminars, are making a very rich summer in Sonoma. We have a new bamboo courtyard, an expanded and thriving vegetable garden, a new bathroom and shower by the pool, a few more guest rooms, a new office and gift shop, and even three goats.



A great deal is accomplished everyday through generous offerings of time and energy from visitors and residents alike. From painting to gardening and landscaping to cleaning, the Ashram becomes more welcoming and nurturing, providing a much needed place of respite and retreat, where all are able to experience stillness and connect with their wholeness.



The Ashram's annual celebration of Guru Purnima on July 6 was a full day program that included puja, chanting, satsang and just being together on sacred grounds with friends. The atmosphere was imbued with devotion and gratitude for the presence of Guru, our own Higher Self, in our lives.



*Above: Tiwariji expressing his devotion to Babaji (Tiwariji, our beloved Bal Ashram music teacher and professional musician, is visiting the Ashram for the summer and is offering classes in Indian music, sacred mantras and chanting).*

*Left: Babaji's satsang*

### Ashram Membership

Babaji's Sunday satsangs are now published on our website and are accessible to Ashram members with a special password and user ID. Membership is a minimum offering of \$25 a person.

[To join membership](#)  
[CLICK HERE](#)

### Personal Retreats

Taking time to honor and nurture yourself, rest and rejuvenate is a wonderful gift to give to yourself. If you have some time this summer or fall, we'd love to see you come to visit.

[For more info](#)  
[CLICK HERE](#)



### Babaji's Fall East Coast Tour

Babaji's fall east coast tour plans are starting to take shape with a confirmed weekend program in southern New Hampshire Oct 30-Nov 1. Reserve your space early by emailing Suzanne at:

[ideaswithmerritt@aol.com](mailto:ideaswithmerritt@aol.com)



### Note from a recent personal retreat guest:

*"After I left Sonoma, my heart was so full of gratitude, love and joy. You gave me the gift of seeing my true Self, full of the innocence and wonder I remember being as a child. A new depth opened within me and reminded me of the Beauty within. A stillness now resides in the center of my being. That Oasis has permanently become part of me and my heart remains open, vulnerable and overflowing. "*

**Anjali School**

What started as bare land back in February is now a school and playground adjacent to the Bal Ashram compound. More than 100 children from poor homes are receiving quality education at no cost.



**Amrit Sagar — Educational Eco Park**

We have begun cultivating a portion of the land we acquired across the river from Bal Ashram for the Eco Park. Although there are several more plots we hope to have in the near future to complete the planned park (est. cost 350K), we decided to start working on the portion we have. A team of workers built a temporary shelter and are busy fencing, building a utility room, and soon will drill a well to bring in water for drinking and irrigation.

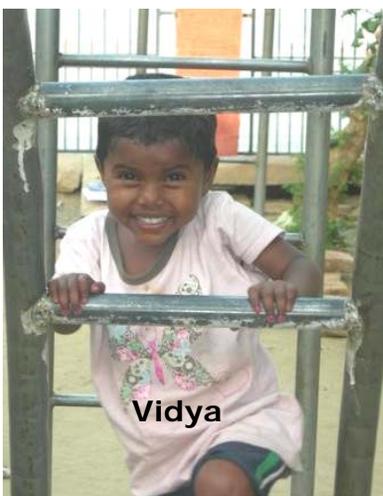


To learn more about supporting these projects, please send us an email:

**info@sonomaashram.org**

**Bal Ashram — Safe Home for Children**

All the children are happy, healthy and back in school. The extreme heat has passed and the monsoon is on its way. We speak almost daily with the staff and stay abreast of all our Varanasi projects. You may remember the story of Indra and Vidya, two very young children welcomed to Bal Ashram last February. Many have asked about them—Vidya continues to blossom beautifully and Indra is now walking on his own. Last spring, Tiwariji and the children recorded a “Chanting for World Peace” CD of their daily prayers and chants. Soon it will be available through our website.



**Vidya**



**Indra**



*Thank you for all you do and give to make the Ashram in Sonoma and our service projects in India flourish.*  
*Babaji sends you his love & blessings.*  
*Namasté,  
Shivani*



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