

Sonoma Ashram Foundation eNews

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Dear Friends,

It is wonderful to be back at the Oasis of Stillness in Sonoma after having spent three active months in Varanasi, India. Since returning, many beautification projects have sprung up

throughout the property, all in an effort to make the Ashram more welcoming. This year's program focus is to make Babaji's teachings more accessible to people near and far, and the primary construction project is replacing the Ashram's old dilapidated barn. Most of all, this is a time of year to welcome friends across the country to the Ashram to spend time around Babaji and in personal retreat. As Babaji says, the Ashram is not an institution or organization, it is a family.

Babaji sends you his love and blessings.

Namasté,

Shivani



[Please click here to help further the Foundation's work](#)

Beautifying Sonoma Ashram



Face lift given to the Ashram office and recently upgraded gift shop.



Courtyard entrance.

Take time for Personal Retreat

Let the peaceful Ashram grounds nourish and replenish you and let a daily routine of meditation, yoga, rest and self-reflection inspire you.

[Please click here for more information](#)

Sonoma Ashram's Organic Garden



Ashram garden with ten more gopher-proof boxes, doubling this season's growing space.



The Ashram's old barn, quite an eye sore on the property, is due for replacement. Planning has started to build a new barn.



Two previously pregnant goats recently gave birth to four kids who have added a joyful presence to the grounds.

News from Varanasi, India

Project Shakti



Measuring the Anjali School children—making school uniforms was their first paying job.

New life was breathed into Project Shakti this winter. Vocational classes in tailoring, stitching, knitting and preparing marketable food items are equipping women in need with new tools to become self-sufficient. Sixty women of all ages are enrolled in the various classes held five days a week in the Bal Ashram compound. When a local female gynecologist heard of the project, she was moved to give the women regular check-ups and ongoing lessons about hygiene and preventative medicine (most of them go untreated due to lack of family resources). We are very inspired by this work, and the benefits are already evident in the local community.

Varanasi, India



Learning to make stuffed pickles.

Amrit Sagar Environmental Center Varanasi, India

The environmental initiatives started this winter at Amrit Sagar (“Ocean of Nectar”) are progressing well, and the seeds of self sufficiency for Bal Ashram are beginning to sprout.

- Amrit Sagar is already producing enough vegetables, milk and honey for Bal Ashram to experience a reduction in weekly spending.
- The *gowshala* (cow shelter) is complete and a few cows have arrived.
- Ten pounds of honey were harvested, and we plan to double the bee population by summer.
- A local solar company was inspired to donate a few solar panels for indoor and outdoor lighting. We are still in need of a complete solar system.
- You may remember the 20 ft. deep hole dug over the winter—now it contains a bio-gas system, soon to convert green waste and cow dung into fuel for cooking.



*Checking a
bee box for
honey.*

*Installing
solar
powered
street light.*



*Bathing
Lakshmi
inside the
gowshala.*



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this work](#)



*Nearly
complete
bio-gas
system.*

Bal Ashram

Varanasi, India



*It was a
wonderful
three months
with the
children, staff
and friends in
the Bal
Ashram
community,
sharing daily
activities,
inspiring each
other, and
working
together to
further the
many Varanasi
projects.*