

## Greetings from Bal Ashram!

November 2011



Blessed by the presence of Babaji, ashram residents and friends experienced many new beginnings in November, including a wedding, youth mobilization and new resident!

On November 7<sup>th</sup> I celebrated my marriage in a short and sweet ceremony in ashram's temple. My husband, Pawan, a fellow social worker, had some skepticism about the progressiveness of an ashram. However, after experiencing the warmth and support of our ashram community and listening to Babaji's message for simplicity and selfless service he was very touched. Moved by the effectiveness of Bal Ashram's programs, Pawan reflected, "it is hard to find a bigger or better platform for social work in north India. The ashram is well set up to make a huge impact."



Bal Ashram's elder boys and young men from the community have set out create that impact with the formation of *Yuva Shakti*, which means "Youth Power". Yuva Shakti members plan to bring the eco-park to life by educating themselves, mobilizing other youth, and reaching out to the wider community via education campaigns and the marketing of the eco-park's organic products.

Chandan (in white t-shirt), age 26, comes from a large farming family. Highly motivated by what he can learn from and create with Yuva Shakti, Chandan plans to replicate the eco-park's organic methods on his families' farm! Above Chandan is explaining his research on wormy composting.



**Step One:** To increase their knowledge Yuva Shakti members are conducting independent research, networking with local experts for training and working at the eco-park daily to gain firsthand knowledge. After Chandan's compost presentation the boys hoisted bricks and mixed cement, building two compost boxes at the eco-park to solidify their practical training. They also made a list of the benefits composting for both farmers and the larger society.

### Inspired by Eco-Park?

Ramesh, 18 year old ashram resident, is so inspired by the eco-park, that he has chosen to permanently reside, in more challenging conditions, to contribute to the success of the eco-park!

You can help too!

Please consider contributing towards an irrigation tank or protective fencing.

[Click here to learn more!](#)



Always thinking of innovative ways to improve the ashram, Babaji brought Bajrangee, a baby langur to the ashram from the village. While Bajrangee looks cute and cuddly now, as he grows he will protect the ashram as his home, keeping away other monkey gangs, who often break the branches of small trees, steal clothes and food, leaving a mess behind. The joy of both the young boys and Banrangee is very visible as they take turns chasing each other for hours!

Many other projects and events have made this a lively month at Bal Ashram. Some examples are, the construction of a new darshan hut, a great Children's Day competition at Anjali School and another successful year of Vision Varanasi.

Stay inspired by ashram's projects by visiting our website: [www.sonomaashram.org](http://www.sonomaashram.org)

Best Wishes for a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

~Stephanie