

Sonoma Ashram Foundation eNews

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,

Shuani

15 April 2010

Sonoma Ashram Foundation PO Box 950 Sonoma, CA 95476 sonomaashram.org info@sonomaashram.org

> Please click here to help further the Foundation's work





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



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

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.





Bathing Lakshmi inside the gowshala.

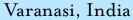
Please click here
to help further
this work





Nearly complete bio-gas system.





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.