



Assam Foundation of North America  
48166 Inveraray Road,  
Canton, MI 48188

**TO**

**NEWSLETTER**  
**APRIL 2011 ISSUE**

*Assam Foundation of North America, Inc. (AFNA) is a publicly supported non-profit organization with foundation status serving since 1982, under section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code with tax exemption under section 501(c)(3) with Tax ID. #: 61-0994468.*

**Welcome to the April 2011 issue of the AFNA newsletter.**

The people at AFNA wish everyone a joyous Rongali Bihu season! **We deeply appreciate all our donors whose generous contributions make AFNA's work possible. Thank you!**

In this issue, we highlight some of our current initiatives, volunteer activities including visits to projects in Assam, and a response to the recent Japan earthquake. For more information about all our projects and about the organization, please visit our website at [www.assamfoundation.net](http://www.assamfoundation.net).

We always welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions. Please email us at [assamfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:assamfoundation@yahoo.com). To make a donation to AFNA, please write your check to 'Assam Foundation of North America' and mail to:

Pallav Saikia (AFNA), 5991 Corte Cerritos, Pleasanton, CA, 94566

## Support a Child – highlighting donor Monalee Saharia

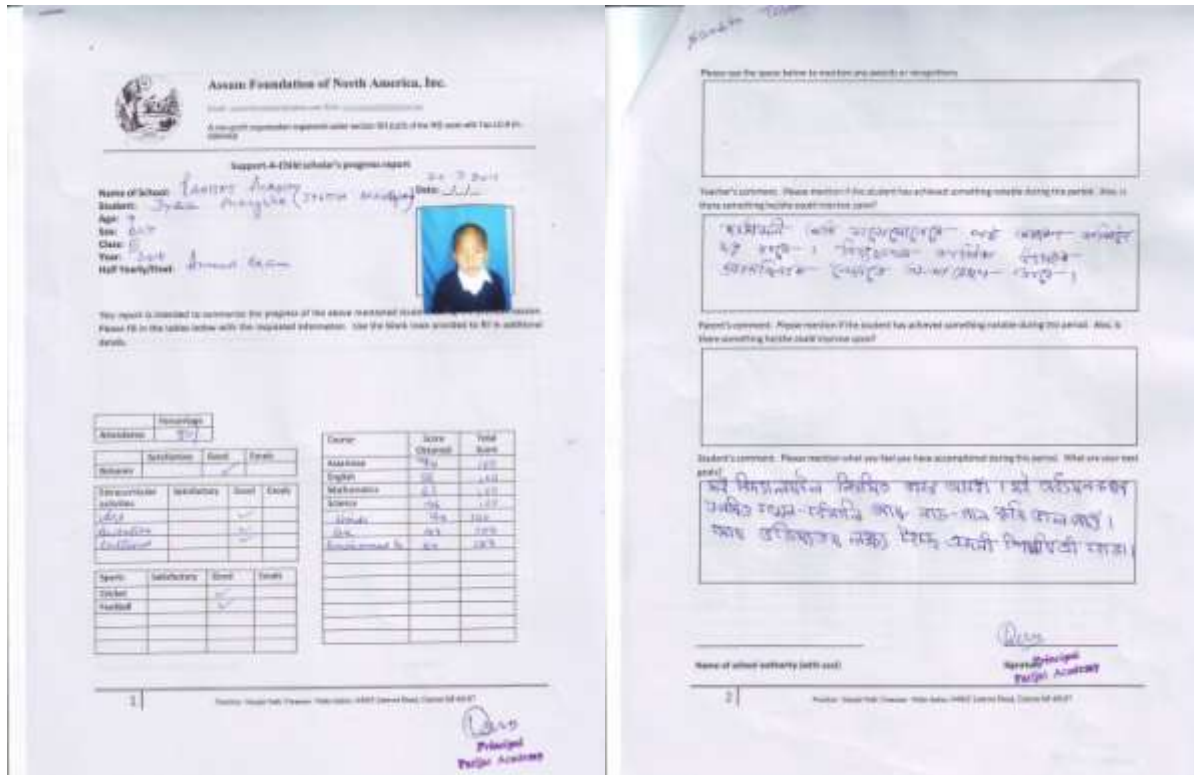
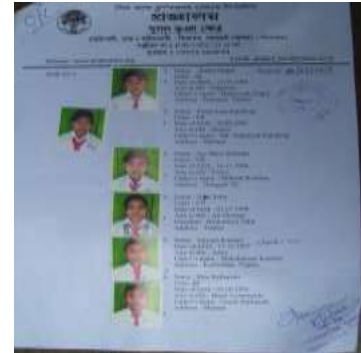


Monalee Saharia lives in Boston, United States. Her father, Dr. Sasanka Baruah, passed away 12 years ago. He was a professor at Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat, Assam, who dedicated his life to teaching. On the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their father's death, Monalee and her siblings (Swapnalee, Barnalee and Dipanka who live in Assam) offered to sponsor a child using AFNA's **Support a Child** program. A function was organized on this occasion and Bornalee Baruah and other family members attended the event. *We appreciate Monalee Saharia for supporting our program.*

**Support a Child** is an effective method for our donors to contribute to the progress and upliftment of specific people in society in Assam. So often when you give away to a charitable cause, you have no way of knowing who you are actually helping. In this unique experience, you not only get to know who, but you have the privilege of getting to know the child one-on-one. This is a wonderful experience and many times it brings joy and satisfaction to both the families. This is also an interactive process, where your own children too get to participate in another child's life and henceforth learn to count their own blessings and fill their young lives with love and gratitude. We appeal to you to support our program.

### Support a Child - Student progress report

AFNA is striving to provide useful updates to Support a Child donors on a regular basis. We have created a standardized process that includes a detailed form to assess student progress that is filled out by the Support a Child student, teachers, and parents. This process is intended to help us as well as donors to get a better idea of the progress made by the student and will be used to determine how funds in subsequent years are allocated to beneficiaries. We initiated this progress report process in March and have begun to get these reports. A sample of progress reports from Prajnalya is shown on the right. Another more detailed sample report, from a student at Parijat Academy, is shown below.



### Society for Health and Educational Development (SHED)

Training & Rehabilitation Centre for Differently Able Children

A Letter by Lanu Areng Aimol

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to AFNA family for your kind humanitarian action and to support three children of SHED. SHED has been supporting these three special children in its own ways by providing free food, lodging and bearing educational expenses. However, the needs of these children are much more than what SHED can presently provide to them. We appreciated the step taken up by AFNA in this direction really address their problem and enable them to stand on their own feet. By doing

so, it will not only help these underprivileged children but also create general awareness among the society that they also have the right to live a normal life and enjoy the blessing of the creator.

We would like to request AFNA to include few more children who are really in need of your valued support. The matter has been informed to Ms. Meghnalim Sarma during her visit, for consideration. Hence, these children can be considered most genuine, special to support for their rehabilitation service charges. We extend our heartfelt gratitude thanks to all the member of AFNA.



Name : Krishna Barman  
 Age/Sex : 6 years Sex: Female  
 Type of Disability : Intellectually Challenged, Hearing Impaired  
 Father’s name : Sri. Jagadish Barman  
 Mother’s Name : Smt. Manjushree Barman  
 Address : Rajdhani Majid, ghy-28, Assam.

Kumari Krishna Barman is born with multiple disabilities (mentally retarded cum hearing impairment) has been attending **SHED** a special school since the last 2 years. She lives with her parents in a small rented house. There are four members in their family. Krishna father’s has small tea stall in a road side in Guwahati. This tea stall is the only means for their family daily bread. Her mother is a home maker and they have a nursing baby too. They have no land, housing or land to grow vegetation, or rear cattle, poultry in their family.

**Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP):**

Short-Term goal	Technique	Achievement within 6 months of rehab service /training.
Self-help Skills( SHS)	Behavior therapy + spl.Education	She can do with little assistance for toileting, hunger, bathing and dressing etc.
Functional Academic	Behavior therapy + spl.Education	She can write her name, numbers, alphabet, coloring etc.
Communication	Speech therapy	She could follow simple instruction. and speaks two words phrase



**WE SHALL OVERCOME SOMEDAY**

SHED Children along with staff singing a song for Meghnalim Sarma from California, USA.

## **Bold sStep: Domestic Workers in Guwahati** By Smita Das

Walk through Japorigog in Guwahati and take a look at women walking on the street. Think about how they work and how they relax, who they respect and who they care for, what they think about and what drives them. Japorigog is home to the Society for Social Transformation and Environmental Protection (sSTEP), which manages a group of 250 domestic workers. Many of the women you see walking beside you work tirelessly, at their job and at home, trying to find happiness and vigor in a life of



struggle: tension at work, tight budgets, difficult marriages, obligations from their villages, dreams for their children, class and gender discrimination. And still, these inspiring women have managed to find time for their community as well. Under the leadership of sSTEP, domestic workers have formed a samiti for mutual support, which benefits them, their families, and their employers at once, a large cross-section of society in Guwahati.

Rani was one domestic worker who contacted the samiti. She worked and lived in the home of her employer for 2 years and had not been paid for the last year. She was rarely permitted to leave the house and suffered poor sleeping conditions and frequent verbal abuse. Mina and Keshabi, elected officers of the society and staff members of sSTEP, were able to remove Rani from the situation, find her a new job, collect her back-pay for the last year, and open a bank account for her. This is one of several examples in which domestic workers have helped themselves by using their connections and recognizing their strength, newly emboldened in their homes and their community. They have also come together to register to vote, establish savings accounts, solve family disputes, encourage the education of their children, apply for BPL cards (below-poverty-line ration cards), and occasionally enjoy a rare opportunity to socialize. The samiti is also used as a communication network for sSTEP's efforts to place and train domestic workers.

The samiti is one of part of the strong foundation that sSTEP is trying to build. In January, sSTEP joined forces with several new partners: Dr. Partha Borah and Dr. Monmoyuri Dutta at Pratiksha Hospital to teach child care and elderly care courses; Upasana Borah Sinha, a chemistry professor at Nagaland University who has studied the obstacles faced by female scientists, and is driven by the women she has known who gave up their careers due to domestic responsibilities; and Chef Atul Lakhar who began teaching cooking and nutrition courses. sSTEP is focusing on building strong training programs which excite employers and inspire domestic workers to learn skills important to work and their own homes. sSTEP is still in search of a consistent training location, donations of appliances and training materials, a strong team of established cooks to consistently teach, and experts in hospitality and hotel management to teach basic housekeeping.

sSTEP is also trying to build a strong foundation for placement: recruitment, screening, establishment of expectations, contract negotiation, and quality control are developing slowly but steadily. The recruitment of domestic workers cannot keep pace with demand from employers, and sSTEP continues to search for rural contacts to market services.



The domestic worker project depends on the support of the community, and sSTEP invites advisors, trainers, interns, and spectators to be a part of its great potential. Learn more about the steps, the progress, and how you can be involved at [www.boldsteps.org](http://www.boldsteps.org).

***Smita Das** of Boston, USA has been involved with sSTEP for the last few years. Ms. Smita visited Guwahati several times and has been working closely with sSTEP volunteers. AFNA is supporting this project financially and we are proud to be associated with Smita's work. We will appeal to our community and well-wishers to support this project.*

## AFNA initiative to support the students in higher educations

AFNA has been collaborating with Santa Clara, California based Foundation For Excellence ( FFE ) and North South Foundation ( NSF) for providing scholarships to undergraduate students studying engineering, technology and medicine. AFNA volunteers Krishanu Kaushik , Pallav Saikia, Satyajit Nath,



Chandan Talukdar and Ankur Bora have been working closely with Mrinal Talukdar of Nanda Talukdar Foundation and Suresh Ranjan Goduka of Jeevan Initiative to identify deserving students. We are pleased to announce that several students of Assam and Jorhat Engineering College and Assam Medical college have been selected and offered the scholarships.

Deepjyoti Barua (Assam Engineering College), Sanjib Barman (Gauhati Medical College) and Himangshu Prasad (Jorhat Engineering College) after receiving their first cheques as part of Foundation For Excellence (FFE) Scholarship, facilitated by JEEVAN INITIATIVE and AFNA.

## The USA chapter of Jorhat Engineering College Alumni

The USA chapter of JEC alumni in association with AFNA donated a digital projector and a digital screen to Jorhat Engineering College. The projector was presented to Mr. Paban Kumar Sarma, HOD Electrical Engineering on 25th December 2009 by Ankur bora on behalf of alumni and AFNA.

### Letter from Diganta Baishya , JEC Placement cell

The projector gifted by AFNA and JEC alumni has proved to be very lucky for the pre- placement talks in



Ankur Bora with Paban Kumar Sarma, HoD, Electrical Engg, JEC

our Training and Placement Cell. You will be happy to know that more than 80% of our students are already placed in esteemed organizations like TCS, CAPGEMINI, HPCL, GAMMON INDIA, ONGC, OIL, BCPL, L & T etc with a record Placement of 200 students this year till now with four more months of activities in hand for this session. We are hoping for a 100% placement this year.

In its Golden Jubilee Year of our college is really at its best in all aspects. With a new Academic Building, an NRL sponsored Training and Placement Cell Building, Internal Roads Repairing and Hostel renovations and all such activities has really boosted the moral of entire JEC community. I am also pleased to inform you that Jorhat Engineering College is ranked among Top 100 Engineering Institutions of India in a Survey conducted by Dalal Street Investment Journal in 2009-2010.

### **AFNA cares for Japan – Response to the recent earthquake**

We have been awed, numbed and made speechless to witness the mammoth proportion of destruction and devastation caused by sudden nature's wrath on the island of Japan when it got hit with its worst earthquake ever, a tsunami, and a subsequent nuclear crisis, the human and physical toll has been enormous. The disaster is also sending ripples through the world and would perhaps affect us all one way or another.

In a crisis of this magnitude, it automatically draws the human nature to be kind, helpful, supportive, compassionate and sympathetic from every corner. We in AFNA, being a philanthropic organization, are also planning to chip-in, no matter how humble our help may be. At the present time we are planning to send US funds through organizations such as Red Cross. Our fund drive name is "AFNA cares for Japan" and the fund drive is extended to ALL members of the community, neighbors, friends of AFNA members and donors. There is no upper or lower amount, but our goal is to send a minimum of \$3,000. Please spread the word, every donation thru AFNA is tax-exempt. Fund drive time is from March 20th to April 20th. Please use the Bihu gatherings to raise funds. All checks need to be written to AFNA with memo "Japan fund drive", and mailed to AFNA Treasurer:

Pallav Saikia,  
5991 Corte Cerritos,  
Pleasanton, CA 94566.

Thanks a lot,  
With best wishes  
Debojit Bora  
(AFNA Volunteer and Fund drive Coordinator) "

## **AFNA congratulates Nikita Bhuyan: the Youngest Teen Co-Host in Arizona's Live Television Cooking Show**



Can you imagine a 13-year old girl co-hosting a television cooking show confidently, which is aired live? Nikita Bhuyan, from Phoenix, Arizona USA, has been featured as one of the co-hosts for KPNX –TV Channel 12 News for “Live Valley Dish cooking show” ([www.valleydish.azcentral.com](http://www.valleydish.azcentral.com)) in Phoenix at the age of 13, last year. This TV station is the local affiliate of NBC News of USA, and one of the most popular and largest TV stations in Arizona State.

Valley Dish show is a half an hour program, which has been increasingly popular amongst Arizona’s families. This program shows how to cook with creative recipes which are simple, affordable, and tasty, featured by local chefs and celebrities. This show is aired live, which leaves no room for making errors during the presentation.

Nikita has been passionate about food and cooking since she was just 10 years old. Last year, she was pleasantly surprised to get a call from Ms. Tram Mai, one of the most popular news anchors and host for this show. Tram asked Nikita to come to TV studio for auditioning, after her online submitted recipe was selected by the Valley Dish team. She was reported to be the youngest teen co-host for this show. In the first show, Nikita showed how to prepare one of her most likable recipes for Chipotle Shrimp Burger with a side dish of Summer Bean Salad.

Nikita is the daughter of Samar and Rashmi Bhuyan, Phoenix, Arizona.



## My visit to India, by Loni Bordoloi Pazich



Loni Bordoloi Pazich served as the teaching assistant for a graduate course organized by NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development titled "Global Perspectives in Higher Education: India". The course was designed to introduce students to the Indian higher education system. Twenty-two master's and doctoral students participated in the program. Students spent two weeks in India visiting a range of institutional types in and around Delhi and Mumbai - undergraduate and graduate, central and state, autonomous and affiliated, public, private, and for-profit. The list of institutions visited included Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, GLA Institute of Technology and Management, St. Xavier's College, Sophia College, and Birla College. NYU students used the campus visits as opportunities to interact with senior leadership, faculty, and students from Indian colleges, as well as collect data for research papers that covered a wide range of topics, such as access to higher education, the reservation system, residential life, faculty development, minority-serving institutions, and English language learners. The NYU students also spent some time sightseeing, and particularly enjoyed visiting the Taj Mahal in Agra. Loni is daughter of Binoy and Bani Bordoloi of New Jersey.

## Second issue of the magazine “Friends” Released on 11th January 2011 at Guwahati Press club.

This print magazine is being published under the aegis of Assam Foundation of North America (AFNA) and Friends of Assam and Seven Sisters (FASS).



AFNA volunteer Chandan Talukdar, Los Angeles spoke about the Foundation For Excellence (FFE) and AFNA Support A Child Program.

The function was graced by Dr.Kulendu pathak, EX Vice Chancellor, Dibrugarh university , Haider Hussain, Chief Editor, Asomiya Protidin. Shantikam Hazarika, president-FASS India Chapter, Praboth Bora, College of Veterinary Science and magazine resident editors Jayanta Barman and Mafruja Hassan

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*For more information about all our projects and about our organization, please visit our website at [www.assamfoundation.net](http://www.assamfoundation.net).*

*We always welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions. Please email us at [assamfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:assamfoundation@yahoo.com). To make a donation to AFNA, please write your check to 'Assam Foundation of North America' and mail it to:*

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The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action. --Herbert Spencer