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Get Involved:

Monthly volunteer call:

First Sunday, every month,
10am - 11am PT

Dial in: 641-7153272

Access Code - 457920#

Volunteer Email DL:

afna-vols@freelists.org

Subscribe here:

freelists.org/list/afna-vols

Donate:

By check (Pay to: AFNA)

Mailing address:

SARFARAZ TAHER,

TREASURER, AFNA

4391 MCMENEMY ST

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Online using [Paypal](#)

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**** We need active volunteers to run our projects. Please reach out to us (contacts above) or join our monthly volunteer meetings to know more. ****

[Learn about AFNA projects](#)



2016 Calendar is here!

Order your copy of 2016 Calendar by completing the order form [here](#)

Assam Foundation of North America

Newsletter: December, 2015

AFNA wishes everyone a Happy New Year! We look forward to your continued support for 2016.

Remembering Kaushik Das

Kaushik Das or Kaushik da, as most of us knew him, was the founder of Atma Nirbhar - ek Challenge. After spending 22 years in the Assam tea industry as an industry expert and successful executive, he gathered a few of his like-minded friends in May 1996 to start Atma Nirbhar ek Challenge. Atma Nirbhar is an economic rehabilitation and empowerment project for the disabled, giving them an opportunity to work with dignity and to become self-reliant. It runs out of what was Kaushik da's own home in the heart of Guwahati, employing some 40 people with special abilities to engage them in meaningful work and earn a living. Kaushik da had a great heart, was always full of ideas, and had the capability to execute them. He kicked off additional projects like Spreading Sunshine & Pragati. AFNA was honored to work with him on many occasions, supporting Atma Nirbhar and supporting the network of NGOs in Assam who shared our vision.



The inspiring Kaushik Das

Kaushik da passed away early in his life on Jan 17th, 2013. He is no more with us, but for the AFNA volunteers who interacted with him, he made a big impact on our lives. AFNA is happy to continue his work on Atma Nirbhar and also commemorates him through our AKADAMICS scholarships. You can read more about him in our [website](#).



With other volunteers



At Atma Nirbhar

Project of The Month: Shishu Sarathi

Shishu Sarathi, Centre for Rehabilitation & Training for Multiple Disability, Guwahati, engages in providing services in various aspects of the disability sector-training, livelihood, advocacy, early intervention and rehabilitation, and education. AFNA has supported Shishu Sarathi since 1987. Shishu Sarathi, as with other not for profit organisations, has found that funds to sustain their core activities have always been an uphill task. This centre for special education provides all-round special education and therapeutic inputs to children with disabilities. The chief objective of the project is to empower children with disability by providing avenues for holistic development in cognitive, physical and socio-emotional domains.

As far as their future strategies are concerned, they are contemplating to set up a Composite Regional Centre for Disability Studies and Action. This will take shape in the next five year plan. The idea is to have a centre of excellence for disability studies. You can read about their proposal here - [Xakham Pariyal: Inclusion through home intervention](#). They intend to work on transforming lives of people with developmental disabilities through intervention at home and the neighborhood.

AFNA Membership

Become an AFNA member today by clicking [here!](#) Your membership is what pays for our administrative expenses. As member, you will have the opportunity to be a voting member of the organization. You also become one of the insiders who help to make 0% overhead to our donors possible.

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Engage in new projects

AFNA volunteers are engaging in various new ideas and exploring project opportunities in Assam. For example we are looking at school rehabilitation from flood damage to long term tree plantation initiative to control erosion. We need more volunteers to take lead on these and help with getting these new initiative started. If you are interested in engaging contact [Lipika Deka](#) or [Email AFNA](#) for more information.

Shishu Sarothi's core services include running the Centre for Special Education and Early Intervention Unit. They are looking for more support from all sectors and volunteers for their projects. To learn about their general activities please read the [Annual Activity Report 2014-2015](#).



Children celebrating diversity



A Therapy session



Children celebrating Diwali

A visit report to Atma Nirbhar by Sarfaraz Taher

On the 10th day of November, 2015, I made my much anticipated visit to the Atma Nirbhar – Ek Challenge campus. It was a visit I had looked forward to for a long time and I have been feeling pretty amiss for not having made it for this long. The word that comes to mind after my visit is “inspiring”. It is truly humbling to see a number of energetic self-sufficient young men and women going about their work with smiles on their faces with no sign of any strain or discomfort. These are the men and women who have overcome major disadvantages and have been able to stand up to what life has thrown at them with some able support from the wonderful family called Atma Nirbhar – Ek Challenge. Urmila Baruah, Michelle and Mr. Ashok Jha welcomed me to their office with a cup of tea for a brief chat. It was about the progress being made and pragmatic challenges facing this gem of an organization. What was important for me was to hear and understand the grassroots challenges and the ground realities, and how things were done to diversify and expand in spite of the odds. The organization was kind enough to spare a few minutes with me as I walked around the buildings and they patiently answered all my questions about the goings on within their walls. I took a few pictures with them, see attached, and jumped back into my car with a sense of deep philanthropic respect for Atma Nirbhar.



Women working at Atma Nirbhar



2016 Calendar Update

We are happy to let you know that our new year calendar is in distribution now. AFNA volunteers are working hard to get the calendars to your door before the new year arrives. If you haven't ordered the calendar yet, but would like a copy, please email [Lipika Deka](#).

Visiting AFNA supported projects in Assam

AFNA would like to encourage our volunteers to visit our project sites in Assam. This could help you understand the importance of those projects and the visit might inspire you to get involved with our work there. If you are interested in visiting one of our project sites, please complete the request form below. We will send you more information about how to plan a productive visit.

<http://goo.gl/forms/0ocKN5tSrC>

Special thanks to AFNA volunteers for providing the photos and reports for this newsletter.