

## **FRIENDS OF INDIA NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 28 Number 1 November 2014

Website: [ganga633](http://ganga633)

---

### **News from FOI Charity Number 4 – South Asia Pure Water Initiative – SAPWII**

Mike Lipmans India trip

South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc.  
11 Wadsworth Lane  
Wallingford, CT 06492 USA  
[www.sapwii.org](http://www.sapwii.org)

September 30, 2014

Dear Friends,

I left the States on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September for India. It's now the 30<sup>th</sup> and this is the first opportunity that allowed me 30 minutes to jot down some of the happenings with the BioSand water filter project.

Our team has been on hyper drive since our arrival. There have been dozens of meetings, site visits to our network of trained organizations, meetings with individuals and spiritual leaders, press conferences and interviews and village visits to see the BioSand filters in action and hear the testimony of the villagers. We have been in mountain villages in the Himalayas and steamy jungle villages in Mysore. Everywhere we go, the feedback we are getting from the filter users is extremely positive. The filters are making a great impact on people's health and well-being.

Our team is led by Shivani Kumar, our India Country Representative. American born from LA she epitomizes our love of efficiency and technology. With the aid of her iPhone, she can do more on a two hour car ride than I can accomplish in two days! She has made up our itinerary and it's fast-paced with little time for sleep and no time for leisure.

We are also traveling with RamaChandre Gowda, our managing director who has run our Kolar workshop for the past 9 years and has been instrumental in our success. We are also joined by Lalit Wadher, our newly appointed Director of Resource Management and Partnerships. Lalit is from Chhattisgarh, a State in Northern India famous for rice and mosquitos according to Lalit. Lalit is a retired banker who teaches finance and banking at the post-graduate level at private institution in Chhattisgarh.

Our team is focused on taking the BioSand filter technology country-wide by training organizations that already have rural development projects and are looking for a low cost and effective clean water technology. The government has been pushing reverse osmosis (RO) technology as the answer to the water contamination plaguing the country. However, RO has some drawbacks. Fundamentally, reverse osmosis is the process of pushing contaminated water under pressure through a very fine membrane to remove all the contaminants. The process requires large amounts of electricity to force the water through the membrane. In the rural areas, electricity is a scarce commodity and they have barely enough juice to pump water from bore wells for drinking and irrigation.

Another issue with reverse osmosis is that it wastes about 40 percent of the water that stays on the contaminated side of the membrane. The water goes "down the drain" as waste water from the process. The problem is that the contamination is concentrated in that waste water and further pollutes the ground water as it is flushed from the filter. RO does remove mineral contamination like fluoride which is highly concentrated in some areas of the country with deep bore wells and causes severe health problems, corroding teeth and bones. Our filter can use surface water instead of the mineral contaminated bore well water and avoid the fluoride problem altogether.

With all the work we are accomplishing, we keep our spirits up with good humor. Lalit loves to tell jokes like "I am the King of my household; (my wife gave me permission to say that!)" RamaChandre has an iPhone full of funny videos that he passes around for our amusement. We make fun of each other with due respect and tell stories of our lives and travels to pass the time while in the car.



Of course the most fun is to go into the villages. The villagers we meet are gracious and friendly, a bit shy and curious but willing to share their stories of heartache and joys. These are the people most affected by contaminated drinking water and are truly grateful for our efforts to solve this problem for them. That is the payoff of all our hard work and efforts. To save just one life and to improve just one person's well-being makes all our inconveniences of the difficult travel vanish immediately.

Mike

October 2014

Dear Friends,

I am now in Kolar where all of our clean water efforts began more than 9 years ago, reflecting upon my experiences over the years. At that time I was 58 years old and wondered what a person of that age could do to solve the severe water contamination issues in India. I had many doubts and the challenges seemed enormous. There is a saying that if you want to eat an elephant, you merely have to take one small bite at a time. That image is not attractive but the lesson of taking on an enormous task one step at a time is a lesson hard earned in this country. We have faced many challenges and setbacks over the years but we have persisted and endured.

Through our efforts and the generous support of our filter friends, Rotary initiatives and a few special donors we have affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in India. All of you have played a part in saving lives and improving the well-being of the poorest people in India. Cathy and I are forever grateful for the support you have given us. Some of you have just given us a few words of encouragement which at times has been enough to see us through some difficult situations. We just wanted you to know how much it means to us to have your support.

Now we are entering a new phase of our project development. We are trying to roll out our BioSand filter technology country-wide by training like-minded organizations in India to do what we have been doing for years. After all of our experience facing the severe water quality issues here, we are more convinced than ever that the BioSand water filter technology is a cost effective and appropriate water quality intervention for a large segment of the Indian population. We are appealing to the largest companies here to devote some of their corporate charity to our cause. We are meeting with and trying to set appointments with industry leaders, spiritual leaders, government officials, Bollywood stars and even the office of the Prime Minister to gain support for this technology.

Traveling the width and breadth of this country is not an easy task especially with all the equipment we carry that a normal person wouldn't even think of taking. Along with all the communication gear – smartphones, computers and iPads, there is a demonstration filter, full of sand and gravel, water testing equipment, pamphlets and brochures as well as personal items not normally carried. A pillow case, sheet, wash cloth, oil mosquito lamp, enough medications to stock a medium sized pharmacy and of course a roll of toilet paper because...well, you can imagine!

Although we can get through check-in on the international flights, domestic flights limit baggage to 35 pounds. The excess baggage charges then have to be negotiated and paid for, not at the ticket counter but in a bursar's office some distance from the counter. After paying the fee and waiting for the 20 minute transaction to complete, we still have to retrieve our boarding passes back at the counter, fighting our way through the crowds one more time. Now it's on to security! Let me tell you it is not easy to explain a demonstration water filter to a Hindi speaking security official. I think we finally wear them down with explanations, presentation of our business cards and the threat that if they confiscate our demo, India will never have clean water!



After all of that, air travel is our easiest form of transportation! Driving is a grueling, slow process over bad roads, bumper to bumper traffic, diversions, dust, and mud with no facilities to stop at to get refreshed. At our hotel in Patna, in the state of Bihar, we arranged for the hotel taxi to drop us off at the airport for an early morning flight from Bihar to Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh state with a three hour layover in New Delhi. There are three of us traveling on this leg so the luggage makes it challenging for small cars. We happened to have an SUV for this leg and three of the hotel employees packed the automobile with our stuff. Fully loaded and ready to go to the airport, the vehicle wouldn't start! After recruiting more hotel employees, six guys pushed the SUV down the driveway and into the street to jump start the car. No luck. Now they decided to push it up the street and that worked. Off we went to the airport laughing, just another morning in India!

Every day is an adventure here and there are so many stories to tell but so little time to tell them!

Your Friend,

Mike

## News

**News from Forgotten Children , FOI charity #2. Francoise Remington. Founder, is retiring from Forgotten Children and is closing Forgotten Children as of Feb. 1, 2015. It has finished its 20<sup>th</sup> year and has provided an opportunity for a better life to the very poor children and their families in the Kodaikanal area of Tamil Nadu.**

**Van Schuler, our oldest living returned Peace Corps Volunteer had turned 108 back in July. At age 60, Van and her husband Gard served as PCV's in India from 1967-69. They were to help with village nutrition programs. They had served in India for one year when Gard suddenly dies of meningitis. Van completed her 27 month commitment to India, then independently explored the South Pacific for two and a half months.**

**Van died August 17, 2014 in her home in Jacksonville, Florida. Her obituary says, "Van was one-of-a-kind, an inspiration. She had a natural humanitarian spirit; was inclusive, with a willing heart for community service. Van lived simply, remained humble and gracious, embracing life as she experienced places, cultures and friends throughout all seven continents."**



Van Schuler surrounded by family and friends: left to right, Lynn Chalmers (daughter), Ty Chalmers (grandson), Robyn Hoopes (granddaughter), Jim Harp, Gardner Chalmers (grandson), Carol Kennelly, Doris Crosson, Sunny Reinhardt, BJ O'Quinn, Vanessa Brosnan (granddaughter)



### SHULER

Evangeline "Van" Wallace Shuler, 108  
Our sweet Van passed away as gently as she had lived, on August 17, 2014 in her Avondale home in Jacksonville FL. Van was an enigma, a one-of-a-kind, an inspiration. She had a natural humanitarian and pioneer spirit; was inclusive, with a willing heart for community service. Van lived simply, remained humble and gracious, embracing life as she experienced places, cultures and friends

throughout all 7 continents.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Legacy and Archives

Fall 2014

Dear India RPCVs, our families, our India families and all others who share our love for India. I believe it is time that we revisit what we did in India as Volunteers and how that influenced our lives, careers, and families. I believe we have rich legacy of experiences and a place to share it...our website.

#### Legacy

For India RPCVs, our legacy was first shaped by Dr. Charles Houston, India's first Peace Corps Country Director. It was perfect for him given all his adventures: Among them world-recognized mountain climber (K2 and Nanda Devi in India), teacher, physician, scientist (e.g., invention of a mechanical heart). A call from founding PC Director Sargent Shriver in 1961 persuaded Dr. Houston to take on India's first Country Peace Director. The assignment in Houston's words: "It was unbelievable. Every day there was some crisis, something different and exciting, or dangerous or frightening." He oversaw 6 Volunteers, then 250 and then another 900 on their way. Programs included: nursing, farming, English language instruction, production of farm implements, raising chickens...almost anything under the sun.

The Peace Corps' greatest benefit, he believed, was to the Volunteers themselves and to America. He said "*They've become a very distinguished sensitized segment of society*" citing career diplomats and college presidents among former volunteers.

Dr. Houston started the ball rolling for us in India by establishing the beginning of our Peace Corps legacy. We have been moved by our experiences to take on life and work in a way we would have never dreamed possible.

\*\*\*\*\*

As Peace Corps Volunteers we were trained to be agents of change. Yes, we contributed in some small way to the economic development of India but equally important we bonded with India, her families and her rich culture. When we finished our service we brought back our experience to the United States. We saw the world differently, influenced by India's thriving cultures of ancient traditions and world views. Wherever we lived



and worked we brought our enriched lives to our work places, families, educational intuitions and to our government, e.g., USAID, State, Senate, Congress, and state institutions.<sup>1</sup>

### An Archive

We have the beginning of an archive on the FOI website. Given our aging RPCV group (youngest of us mid-60s to mid-70s), it is important to do more now...and to include our children, grandchildren and our Indian families and friends. I should also note here that the oldest living RPCV in the world was 108. Van Shuler served in India with her husband Wallace. Van spoke to us at the India Embassy during our PC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.<sup>2</sup> She will be missed by us all. But she got her story out and was encouraging us to do the same. And perhaps our stories, photos, experiences may just stimulate others, especially the next generation, to take a journey like ours.

### Here are some thoughts:

For all of us RPCVs and those who knew us:

- (1) Let's have *your memories and stories* of India.
- (2) Let's *establish more India groups* which number 1-123 (maybe its 125) on the our website [Ganga633](#). Or, If you already have a group website elsewhere, it can be hyperlinked to [Ganga633](#) ). All group websites will have a link on the FOI home page. So far only India 3, 13 and 14 are there now. Set it up any way you wish through our webmaster Maureen Nichols ([mnichols@austin.rr.com](mailto:mnichols@austin.rr.com)).
- (3) **Photos:** Keep them coming they are a fun part of the record on the website, especially trying to recognize ourselves 50 years later.
- (4) **Obituaries:** Keep these coming as they are precious and tell so much about what India RPCVs, their counterparts and friends have done.
- (5) **Establish an archival home**, for digital, electronic and hard copy of relevant books, manuals, etc. We actually have a possibility (more in next newsletter).

We will expand [Ganga633](#) website to accommodate all these changes and further suggestions that you may have. Finally, PLEASE email your thoughts and suggestions about the website to ([FOISlattery@aol.com](mailto:FOISlattery@aol.com)) and [mnichols@austin.rr.com](mailto:mnichols@austin.rr.com)). MANY THANKS.

Namaste and Shukaria,  
Jack Slattery, President FOI

<sup>1</sup> Though not an India PCV, Ethiopia RPCV Paul Tsongas was a potential presidential candidate in 1992

<sup>2</sup> See more about Van at FOI website <http://ganga633.squarespace.com/in-fond-remembrance/>

## FOI Charity "Lucky Dozen" Reaches Milestone

The charity began in 2008 by George Nepert (India – 26 group) and Sr. Mary Therese, belonging to the Society of the Sisters of Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Tamil Nadu, working for the empowerment of the poor, operating since 1933. Sr. Mary, past principal of an all girls school of 2200 students, identifies deserving impoverished students who meet the academic requirements for further studies. Sponsorships are given through Lucky Dozen funds from donors. Sr. Mary has commented: "Any support to the student who has financial difficulty, is like lighting a candle in the darkness of uncertainty & helplessness, and making a difference to her." Most girls do not pursue college education because of financial restraints. This also results in early marriage.

Lucky Dozen has no overhead costs. The donor sponsorship money is 100% for the students' educational needs. Deserving students are helped without regard to religious beliefs. There are 4 levels of student sponsorship: (1) elementary student at \$50/yr. (2) high school student at \$100/yr. (3) college level commitment at any level you can give ... for example: co-sponsorship a diploma nursing student at \$600/yr. (total cost is \$1200/yr. all inclusive. (4) full sponsorship of college student range from \$1,000 to 2,000/yr. all inclusive. George's role is to collect sponsorship monies on state side, give IRS tax deduction receipts (Friends of India has 501(C)(3) status) to the donors, and to electronically transfer funds of Lucky Dozen from FOI account to the registered society No.5 Lucky Dozen account at State Bank of India, Theni, Tamil Nadu, India. Sr. Mary Therese manages Lucky Dozen there and disperses student funds to the institution the student is attending.

The first Lucky Dozen group was 8 students in 2008. They now have jobs and some are married and are able to help their families financially and now some students now donate back to Lucky Dozen. In 6 years, 2014, **Lucky Dozen has reached 100 student milestone**, actually now 101. Many generous sponsors have made this charity so successful. Thank you all!

George Nepert & Sr. Mary Therese

God Bless the Hearts that touched the life of the needy students in India

We thank God for the care, love and support we received from our dear sponsors: George, Brenda, Skip, Charlotte, Members of Kings Church, Edith, Claudia, Patty, Betty, Robert, Ruth, Members of Friends of India, Jerrel, Cynthia Rogers, Tom Roschke, Dale Nepert, John W. Gula, Roger's Group, Anne, Stacy, Judy, Tom Robb, Matthew Sexton, John Hammond, Barbara Spangenberg, Merele, Kay, Claire, Karen Loos, David Garms, Gary G., Mary Clay, James Hagan, Deepa, Archana, Shashipathi, Fred, Janet, Sallie, Davis F., Joe M., Linda L., Margaret B., Laly Thomas, Dorothy Harlow, Jack Slattery, Barbara Tull and Roger Olson.





## The Sanjeevini Trust ..... Friends of India charity #1

Sirwar, Karnataka State, India

The Sanjeevini Trust is a grass roots charitable foundation in Sirwar, Karnataka State founded by Gnanmithra Jettappa, a poor villager with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education. The programs of the Sanjeevini Trust include a preschool and hot lunch program for young children, young ladies sewing classes, medical help for poor villagers with major health problems, eye camps, and an ambulance service to bring sick and injured from small villages to the District Hospital.

To learn more about the work of the Sanjeevini Trust, please view this video on the work of the Sanjeevini Trust, created by Gnanmithra's 18 year old son, Vijay.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luqm47LDNAY>

Tax deductible contributions to the Sanjeevini Trust can be made through the Ecological Development Foundation, Inc, a 501c3 non-profit foundation, founded by Joe Emerson, a former Peace Corps Volunteer, and his wife, Ann.

*All contributions go directly to Sanjeevini Trust programs that support poor villagers, as The Ecological Development Foundation, Inc has no overhead. Contributions can be sent to: The Ecological Development Foundation, Inc 839 NW John Fremont Street, Bend, Oregon, 97701*

Gouramma heart operation



Critical Eye operation patient



Bus accident taken to hospital



3 goats for them leaving





### 2013 Friends of India – Charity Donations Report

Friends of India “givers” in 2013 gave a total of \$50,567 for FOI charity work. Since 1995, when it began charity work, FOI has given a total of \$242,057.

**Charity #1 : Sanjeevini Trust.** Founded by Joe Emerson, India 38. Located in Sirwar, Karnataka. The Trust is managed by Gamithra Jettappa where there is promotion of AIDS education, preventive health care, free dental & eye clinics, medical treatment cost assistance, promotes ecological agriculture, pre school hot lunch program, and operates a medical transport vehicle to remote areas to Raichur hospital. FOI has donated a total of \$29,028 since 1995.

**Charity #2 : Forgotten Children.** Founded by Francoise Remington. It provides basic education for around 50 working children in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu area. A substitute income is offered by providing a dairy cow as an incentive for the poor families to send their children to evening school, the cow providing compensation while the children are studying. The goal is to break the cycle of poverty and child labor and to educate the children. FOI has donated a total of \$29,753 since 1997.

**Charity #3 : Father Fleming Foundation.** Founded by PCV's Tom Brayak & Gerry Nelson. Helping 3 leper colonies in the Bargarth area of Orissa. The goal is to empower the lepers to become self reliant. FFF operates a revolving loan program, a handicap children's training center, has water wells and pump program, operates commercial fish ponds, and constructs new leper housing. FOI has donated a total of \$19,815 since 2005.

**Charity #4 : South Asia Pure Water Initiative (SAPWII).** Founded by Michael Lipman, India 89, and Kathy Forsberg. Managed by Rama Chandra in Kolar, Karnataka. It successfully produces low cost home bio-sand filter systems at a low cost of \$35/unit, supplying clean, safe water in the family unit. Immediate goal is to place 15,000 water filter systems in the area, supplying a potential of 225,000 people with clean drinking water. FOI has donated a total of \$13,471 since 2007.

**Charity #5 : George's "Lucky Dozen" Student Sponsorship.** Founded by George Nepert, India 26. The goal is to change a life by getting sponsorships for very poor deserving girls, touching a life one girl at a time. Luck Dozen has now provided 75 deserving students being sponsored for high school and college level studies. The program is run under strict guidance by Sr. Mary Therese, Headmistress of Presentation Convent higher secondary school in Theni, Tamil Nadu. About 60% of her students come from extremely poor families. FOI has donated a total of \$111,283 since 2008.

**Charity #6 : Hassan Homes of Hope.** Founded by Jack Slattery, India 3, & Paul Wilkes. Located in Hassan, Karnataka, it is a boarding school of 90 girls who come from broken homes with financial problems and from places that are unsafe for girls. The ages are 6 to 16 living together receiving academic opportunities. The Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco and lay teachers provide education and life skills. The funds go for school supplies, desks & benches, matriculation fees & uniforms. FOI donated \$3,643 since 2012.

---

#### 2013 FOI Report of Deposits and Expenditures

Income	Expenses	
\$46,740 donations	\$666 charity #1	\$375 webmaster
<u>870 FOI memberships</u>	\$800 charity #2	\$80 NPCA affiliation fee
\$47,610 total income	\$2,135 charity #3	\$630 NPCA memberships forwarded
	\$2,228 charity #4	\$1440 newsletters & postage
	\$41,978 charity #5	\$70 bank money wire fees
	\$2,760 charity #6	
	-----	
	\$53,162 total expenses	



## "Friends of India" non profit 501(C)(3) exists because of your support

Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

optional: ( ) \$35 NPCA dues included

Five wonderful FOI causes for the needy: check your preference

1. **Sanjeevini Trust** in Karnataka: medical care, ambulance, AIDS care, self help projects
2. **Father Fleming Foundation** in Orissa: assistance to 3 leper colonies, self help projects
3. **Pure Water Initiative** in Karnataka: making affordable house water filter units for needy
4. **Lucky Dozen** in Tamil Nadu/Kerala: education sponsorships for deserving impoverished girls
5. **Hassan Home of Hope** in Karnataka: assist very poor orphan girls at boarding school, ages 6-16

**Contribute by check: Friends of India** Address: George Nepert, FOI treasurer  
34915 Gordy Rd., Laurel, DE 19956

Your name:

Email:

PCV group no.

India location

FOI contacts: Jack Slattery [slattery33@aol.com](mailto:slattery33@aol.com), Merele Kinsey [merele.kinsey@att.net](mailto:merele.kinsey@att.net) .  
George Nepert [gnepert@hotmail.com](mailto:gnepert@hotmail.com)

---

### List of Contributors Since November Newsletter

Abhilash, Deepa	Day, Vivian	Hardy, William	Nelson, David	Stone, John
Albritton, Jane	Dendy, Larry	Harlow, Dorothy	Nepert, Dale	Thomas, Laly
Allender, Pam	Dholakia, Ruby & Nikhilesh	Hartman, Pete	Nepert, George	Thomas, Woody
Anderson, Claire	Dixon, Gordon	Heintz, Frank	O'Toole, Neil	Tucker, John
Anderson, Donna	Ehwald, Kathryne	Hexom, Paul	Olson, Roger	Tullmann, Sigmar
Andrews, Mary	Elliott, David	Herbert, Winifred	Pannwitz, Michael	Vrieling, Larry
Auletta, Carol	Erickson, Edmund	Holmes, Grace	Pathy, Shashi	Webb, Linda
Alsop, Denny	Ernst, Roger	Hughes, Claudia	Perkins, Brewster	White, Charles
Bancroft, Nick & Margaret	Fabian, Georgene	Jablonowski, Adam	Petersen, Ernie	Williams, Anne
Baxter, Randy	Fields, Robert	Jackson, Roger	Phelps, Nick	Wolf, Tom
Beckman, Sharon	Fisher, George	Jaudon, Brenda	Pidduck, Richard	Zentil, Dennis
Beizer, Rick	Fleischer, Richard	Johnson, Peter	Porter, Ann & Chip	Zimmerman, Paul & Margot
Behles, Margaret	Fontenot, Davis	Jolivet, David	Psota, Ron	
Berkowitz, Daniel	Forbes-Gray, Debra	Kessler, Ed	Rainwater, Dorothy	
Bobo, Robert	Frettem, Elsa	Killam, Ed	Rajendren, Viola	
Bochee, Jerr	Frankel, Ed	Lawrence, Demetra	Reidinger, Richard	
Boggess, Sam	Furlong, Beth	Leinen, Gary	Rieffel, Lex	
Bonneman, Fred	Goetzinger, Linda	Lemunyon, Jerry	Robb, Tom	
Bowers, Frank	Gordon, Judith	Leonetti, Stephen	Rogers, Cynthia	
Berkowitz, Daniel	Garms, David	Lonsdale, Linda	Roschke, Tom	
Bradshaw, Lois	Gauthier, Gary	Loos, Karen	Ross, Gabriel	
Brown, Larry	Gefroerer, Charles	McCormick, James	Rublee, Lawrence	
Brown, Lauren	Gillespie, Tondalaya	McDougall, Janet	Rugh, Jim	
Breyer, Peter	Gingras, Ed	McFarlan, Joe	Sangamanaray, Archana	
Burgemeister, Arnold	Glass, Martia	McKibbon, Michael	Sawyer, Warren	
Carlson, Brigid	Gray, Don	McKoon, Bob	Schafer, Sheldon	
Carter, Tom	Gray, Lewis	Mead, Terry	Schneider, Lois	
Chandler, Geoffrey	Greig, Janet	Meinke, Gary	Sexton, Matt	
Choldrin, Earl	Griggs, Katherine	Merritt, Richard	Shapiro-Skrobe, Frances	
Conklin, Michael	Gauger, John	Miller, Don & Gail	Singh, Gail	
Connelly, Patty	Guard, Robert	Moore, Bill	Slattery, Jack Thomas, Woody	
Counsellor, Bonnie	Gula, John	Morrison, Dennis	Sonderland, Gary	
Clay, Mary	Guedenet, Robert	Muktoyuk, Nancy	Spangenberg, Barbara	
Croucher, John	Hagan, Jim	Nardy, Henry	Stepien, Ruth	
Curtis, Don	Hammond, John & Linda			
Day, Wm & Margaret	Harcum, Edith			

**Friends of India**

c/o George Nepert, treasurer  
34915 Gordy Road  
Laurel, DE 19956

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MERRIFIELD, VA  
PERMIT NO. 2333

**South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc. (SAPWII)**  
See FOI Charity #4

