



Annual Report 2016–2017



DIVINE SHAKTI
FOUNDATION



Our Mission

The Divine Shakti Foundation is dedicated to providing for the holistic well-being of women, their children, orphaned and abandoned children, and all of Mother Earth. DSF is working to identify needs and design and implement programs to support women and children (especially orphaned and abandoned children) to be socially and financially self-sustaining, as well as raise awareness of the problems facing women and children through education and mass communication. DSF is also engaged in activities for the preservation of Mother Earth, especially protecting the Holy Ganga River and providing a safe and natural environment for India's revered cows. Further, DSF supports and promotes cooperation and association among the people who are interested in these divine goals.

Our Purpose



PROVIDING BASIC NEEDS

- Provide comprehensive needs of poor and widowed women and orphaned/abandoned children.
- Establish homes for unwanted children.
- Establish programs and infrastructure to meet the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of expectant mothers who have little or no family or social support.
- Provide immediate and long term needs of women and children affected by natural disasters.
- Support other organizations involved with similar goals and objectives as this Trust.



SPIRITUAL & CULTURAL

- Plan activities and instructional programs designed for spiritual development and growth.
- Teach and promote effective parenting skills. Establish parenting training centers for mothers and expectant mothers.
- Design programs to preserve cultural and family values.



SKILLS & VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Promote vocational training and provide equipment for general training centers, cottage industry training, day care centers, etc.
- Promote and support rural developmental training for women.



EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

- Provide and promote educational advancement with children's schools, adult educational services, computer training, scholarship funds, etc.
- Sponsoring the renovation and the rebuilding of schools and education centers that have been devastated or destroyed by natural disasters
- Running and supporting schools in Uttarakhand to provide basic necessities to their students so that children can not only survive but truly thrive.
- Enhancing educational curricula to include messages of wellness, green living and improved water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Sponsor over 20 poor children to get quality education.



HEALTH

- Provide programs for holistic healthcare. Support research intended for advancement of women and children's healthcare concerns, particularly debilitating diseases such as HIV, AIDS, breast cancer, etc. Support other organizations involved with holistic healthcare and research designed primarily for women and children.
- Support programs for public health maintenance including preventative holistic health, basic hygiene instruction, nutritional counseling, Ayurvedic cooking instruction, etc.



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & PROTECTION

- Raising mass awareness, especially among women and children, so that they can be the Green Ambassadors in their communities
- Promoting green and eco-friendly mass pledges and commitments to reduce our individual and collective carbon and water footprint.
- Advocating about the significant and prominent environmental impact of living a Vegetarian lifestyle.



ANIMAL CARE

- Protection and preservation of all life including animals with a commitment to prevent animal killing and cruelty wherever possible.
- Promoting a Vegetarian lifestyle as the single greatest and most powerful choice one can make to protect all animals.

Events June 2016–August 2017



AUGUST 2017

tGELF's LIFE 2017 Summit: Interfaith Conversations

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of Divine Shakti Festival (DSF), was a keynote speaker at the 2-day tGELF LIFE conference, giving a beautiful session on the importance of spirituality in innovation and entrepreneurship. She also spoke on an interfaith panel moderated by Chair-

man of tGELF Shiv Khemkaji with faith leaders Salvatore Martinez, President of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and Syed Salman Chishtyji, Gaddi Nashin of the Dargah Ajmer Sharif for a session on "World Wisdom Traditions: An Interfaith Conversations."

DSF President meets with Secretary General, DSG and USG of the United Nations

Religious leaders gathered at the United Nations (UN) to launch the plan of action to prevent incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes in the ECOSOC chambers. The event was organized by the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect in association with the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID). The event was inaugurated by Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres, Under Secretary General, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng and Secretary General of the KAICIID Dialogue Centre Faisal Bin Muammer. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, was an honorable speaker on the valedictory panel on the implementation of the plan of action and the way forward.

The Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Amina Mohammad, addressed the conference and personally thanked the religious leaders for their dedication and the commitment to this vital task. Sadhvi met with the Secretary General of the UN as well as the DSG and USG and deeply appreciated their leadership, and also warmly invited them to DSF headquarters in Rishikesh, India. Plans were made to host the next conference with the UN Office on Genocide Prevention in collaboration with DSF soon.



Meeting with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji in Washington DC

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji were invited to a high-level, special community reception, hosted by the Hon'ble Ambassador of India in Washington DC, Dr Navtej Sarnaji in honour of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi ji's visit to the United States. Sadhvi Bhagawati briefly shared with Re-

spected Modiji the great success of the International Yoga Day celebrations at the United Nations this summer. During the reception, in addition to meeting Shri Narendra Modia Modiji, Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji also met with the Hon'ble Ambassador of India, Shri Navtej Sarnaji and other diplomats and cordially invited them home to Rishikesh, the international secretariat of the Divine Shakti Foundation.

Stardust Awards: Fashion, Passion & Compassion

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder of DSF, and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of DSF, were invited to bless and grace the Stardust Global Icon Award Ceremony at the Plaza Hotel in New York. This year the awards show was also held in support of the Save the Girl Child campaign: Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, a social campaign that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls. Launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modiji in 2015, the campaign focuses on eradication of female foeticide in India. Ministry of Women and Child Development, headed by Smt Maneka Gandhiji in effect began and developed this movement. Plans to launch a special calendar highlighting prominent female personalities from various professions including acting, music, healthcare, education, fashion and others is also underway to increase awareness on this issue.



Sadhvi Bhagawatiji said, "The time has come for fashion, passion and compassion to join together to protect all forms of the divine feminine and divine Shakti whether in the form of the girl child or in the form of Mother Earth and Mother Nature because fashion to me is not merely about what you wear but really about who you are."

JUNE 2017

Association Of Physicians Of Indian Origin (AAPI) Convention

Atlantic City, USA

To convene and participate in the scholarly exchange of medical advances, to develop health policy agendas, and to

encourage legislative priorities professionals in the field of medicine were brought together for the 35th Convention of the prestigious body of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in New Jersey, USA. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati Ji gave a keynote where she emphasized the important and critical connection between mind and body by saying "As the Bhagavad Gita reminds us: the mind is the cause of all problems and the mind is, therefore, the solution." She also invited everyone to their Himalayan home, the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) headquarters in Rishikesh, India and to offer their medical services to the underserved communities in the Himalayan region.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/association-of-physicians-of-indian-origin-aapi-convention/>

International Yoga Day 2017 at the United Nations

New York City, USA

On the occasion of the 3rd International Day of Yoga, a two day event was organized by the United Nations in which the first day a large event entitled "Yoga with Yoga Masters" was led by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder and Chairman of Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF), and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, President of DSF, and brought together diplomats and dignitaries, organized by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations and hosted by the Ambassador to the United Nations, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji - Muniji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati led a historic International Yoga Day event with top yoga teachers Seane Corn, Sharon Gannon and also Prince Ea, and Jai Uttal.

The second day, at the ECOSOC Chambers at the United Nations with a distinguished panel of speakers held an inspiring conversation on Yoga for Health, led by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, at the ECOSOC Chambers at the United Nations. During the end Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi led a beautiful pledge of oneness, inspiring everyone, including Anupam Kherji, Dr Nata Menabde, Executive Director of the World Health Organization, and the Ambassador of India to the UN, Mr Syed Akbaruddin, to take Yoga from global to local, starting in their own lives and with their own self. All of those present in the prestigious ECOSOC chamber, including heads of state, ambassadors, heads of various government and non-government organizations, all raised their hands to join in the pledge

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/conversation-on-yoga-for-health-iyd-2017/>



MAY 2017

Humanitarian Aid International Conference at India Habitat Centre

India Habitat Center, India

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji addressed a conference by Humanitarian Aid International on the important role of faith based organizations and civil society organizations in Disaster Risk Reduction. Her high level panel was chaired by eminent journalist Shri Vir Sanghvi and also included Dr. V. Thiruppagazh, Joint Secretary National Disaster Management Authority, Govt of India, Shefali Chaturdevi, CEO, CII Foundation and Jagadananda, co-founder CYSD and former Odisha State Information Commissioner. Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor and many other top representatives from Civil Society and NGOs were also present. She represented the faith sector, sharing the incredible work of the Divine Shakti Foundation and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/humanitarian-aid-international-conference-at-india-habitat-centre/>

MAY 2017

Women Economic Forum

Delhi, India

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji lauded the Women Economic Forum for honoring, respecting and celebrating the divine feminine, leading the way towards more holistic development and economic growth. Women leaders from around the world, from business, politics, entrepreneurship to entertainment came together in the theme of creativity in leadership and in entrepreneurship.



Sadhvi beautifully shared that in order to be creative we must have our hearts open. She emphasized that women must stay connected to their Divine Shakti/Divine Feminine core and heart because that is really the leadership needed in the world. Sadhvi was also awarded the Iconic Woman of the Decade by the Women Economic Forum.

Pujya Swamiji graced and blessed the event during the mega summit in which He shared that honoring the divine feminine, in every form and in every moment of life, is vital. He also encouraged everyone to take this opportunity to pledge to protect the divine feminine in the form of Mother Earth and Mother Nature.

<http://www.sadhviji.org/women-economic-forum/>

APRIL 2017

Meeting of Faith-Based Organizations at The World Bank

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji participated at a high level roundtable held by Jim Yong Kim at the World Bank during their Spring Meetings, on the role of faith, faith leaders and faith based organizations in eliminating extreme poverty. In an incredibly compelling, nearly five hour discussion, they discussed issues ranging from water, sanitation, stunting and open defecation to hunger and violence against women and children.

The exciting work of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) in these areas was shared and discussed.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/meeting-on-faith-based-organizations-at-the-world-bank/>

APRIL 2017

2017 Win Conference: Creating The Future

Mumbai

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji spoke at the 2017 Women's International Networking (WIN), an independent global leadership organization, Conference entitled Creating the Future. Sadhviji was joined by Manisha Giotra, CEO, Moelis, Namrita Jhangiani, Consultant, Egon Zehnder, and Malika Bajaj, Director/CMO, MIXILION/Little Yellow Beetle Media on a panel at one of the main plenary sessions entitled "Women with Vision & the Future Career."



Sadhviji stated, "That equality doesn't have to mean the same as being a man." She further emphasized, "...the importance of empowering ALL aspects of the feminine, including Mother Nature and Mother Earth." She said, "That in the push for equality, it's important that we aren't creating a breaking of all the traditional molds. It's important to encourage and honor strength, power, and respect in every role." Finally she spoke about the importance of respecting individual choices, "Just as all women shouldn't have to stay at home, all women shouldn't have to work outside the home." Women were deeply touched by her words and looked forward to welcoming her back soon.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/2017-win-conference-creating-the-future/>

Women Heroes For A Swachh Bharat Converge For World Water Day

Rishikesh

A unique World Water Day celebration brought together and honoured Sanitation Ambassadors and Heroes from nearby villages and urban slums who have worked towards making their local communities and water bodies free from open defecation and pollution.



The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), under the inspiration and guidance of its co-founder HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji has been training people in slums and villages on how to lead their own communities towards a Swachhta Kranti or Clean Revolution. GIWA has been doing so through its array of courses, offered through its World Toilet College, as well as outreach, through its WASH on Wheels programme and Women for WASH initiative. The Divine Shakti Foundation has been supporting this work by GIWA closely and providing its grassroots networks to strengthen these efforts.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of DSF said: "Water is Life — life for our bodies, life for our planet and life for all of creation with whom we share this beautiful planet. Water has always been linked to the divine feminine- the Shakti- life-giving element, hence why we call our River Ganga as Mother Ganga. However, today tragically in India water

is becoming a source of death and disease rather than a source of life, due in large part to rampant open defecation. That is why on World Water Day we are celebrating the work being done to build toilets and empower local communities in sanitation and hygiene." Pujya Swamiji also emphasized, "Now is the time for all of us to become Swachhta Krantikaris (Clean Revolutionaries), so that, together, we can realize a vision for clean and green Mother India and Mother Ganga".

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/women-heroes-for-a-swachh-bharat-converge-for-world-water-day/>

Christmas Eve Celebrated by Giving Back to School Children

Rishikesh

On the auspicious occasion of Christmas Eve, a beautiful program at the Parmarth Vidya Mandir School, Prakash Bharti, a project of the Divine Shakti Foundation, was held where warm sweaters and fruits were given to all children.

His Excellency Haris Silajdzic, Former President and Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina and his wife Selma Muhedinovic-Silajdzic joined Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji as well as divine souls Dr Ramanbhai Patel and his wife Shakuntalaben and volunteers and members of the Parmarth family from all over the world. The special Guest of Honour was Premchand Aggarwal MLA Rishikesh who was welcomed by all and honoured for his leadership.

Just after the event, plans to improve the DSF vocational training centre and sewing centre already running in the afternoon after school hours were also made. The skills centre provides skills training and a source of livelihood for mothers and older sisters of the children going to school there .

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/christmas-eve-celebrated-by-giving-back-to-school-children/>



DECEMBER 2016

Interfaith Leaders Give Keys to Clean & Green India to Students

Rishikesh

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Ganga Action Parivar and Divine Shakti Foundation came together with interfaith leaders of the American Jewish Committee to hand over the newly built bio-toilets and recently launched school herbal garden to the students of the Kendriya Vidyalaya school.



A symbolic key, prepared by the students, was handed over by the respected faith leaders to the children as a symbol that with this green technology and curriculum, focused on preservation and protection of our environment and natural resources, they too can have the keys to unlock a cleaner and greener world.

Sadhvi Bhagawati led a mass pledge for Swachh Bharat, Swachh Vidyalaya (Clean India, Clean School) that brought all of the school children to their feet. She emphasized the critical importance of sanitation facilities to ensure that every child, especially every girl child, has the ability to thrive in school.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/interfaith-leaders-give-keys-to-clean-green-india-to-students/>

NOVEMBER 2016

Pujya Swamiji & Sadhvi Bhagawati meet with Pope Francis in Rome

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati met with Pope Francis at the Vatican in Rome as part of a two day International Symposium on Interreligious Sharing and Witnessing about Mercy for Peace and Reconciliation organized by KAICIID and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The Symposium brought together

top leaders of the world's major religions to reflect upon the concept on Mercy in the world's religions, and the crucial role it can and must play in peace and reconciliation.

Pujya Swamiji presented His Holiness Pope Francis with an elaichimala (mala made of fresh cardamom pods), and explained to the Pope that it was a green mala, both in color and also an eco-friendly, organic, "green" mala for a "green" Pope!

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati shared the work that the Divine Shakti Foundation is doing to ensure women and the divine feminine in all its forms is protected and empowered. She shared about DSF's work in schools, vocational training centres, healthcare as well as its efforts to raise awareness for environmental preservation by mass tree plantations and promoting living more conscious and green lifestyles.

<http://www.sadhviji.org/pujya-swamiji-sadhvi-bhagawati-ji-meet-with-pope-francis-in-rome/>

Union Textile Minister For State Comes Home to Parmarth

Respected Union Textile Minister for State Mr Ajay Tamta BJP met with with Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) where they discussed several ways in which textiles could help provide jobs to many women in the Himalayan region. Pujya Swamiji shared with him about the vocational training centres that the Divine Shakti Foundation has rebuilt after the floods and several centres DSF is running and supporting in the Himalayan region as well as a host of innovative ways whereby Himalayan women and children could be provided a safe, secure and sustainable future.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/union-textile-minister-for-state-comes-home-to-parmarth/>



OCTOBER 2016

Serving Mayakund Slum Children

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji graced and inspired hundreds of children at the Mayakund slum during a free health and hygiene camp, where children were given health examinations, received Vitamin A and albendazole. She emphasized that vaccinations and sanitation must go hand in hand.

Sadhvi Bhagawati shared, "Health does not only come from these pills or drops. Health comes from how you live, every day. The way we treat each other and our nearby environment is all ways to measure our health." She encouraged GIWA and DSF volunteers to continue once a month camps to follow-up on the pledge taken and help ensure that basic facilities and necessities were available to the children living in the slum. She shared that she looked forward to holding the camp again next year and encouraging even more children to come.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/its-possible-to-end-poverty-serving-mayakund-slum-children/>

Global Handwashing Day Celebrated

On Global Handwashing Day, we celebrate the power of washing our hands with soap to prevent diarrhoea, pneumonia and other waterborne illnesses, which take so many innocent lives every day. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Bharat Mitra, President-Founder of Organic India, and many others visited Prakash Bharati (one of DSF's schools) to inspire children to pledge to be Sanitation Ambassadors and encourage their communities and families to wash their hands with soap.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/global-handwash->

[ing-day-celebrated/](#)

SEPTEMBER 2016

Teacher's Day & Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrated

A special Teacher's Day/Ganesh Chaturthi programme took place bringing together three Divine Shakti Foundation sponsored schools in Rishikesh and surrounding areas at one big event in the Government Junior School Rishikesh.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati graced the occasion, inspired the children by sharing the example of Hon'ble Former President of India, Dr S Radhakrishnanji, in whose honour India celebrate's Teacher's Day, and encouraged everyone to be of selfless service to the nation that they too would be leaders whose birthday's could be national holidays, celebrated nationwide with great honour and respect.

The children performed many colourful and beautiful programmes, including several skits to raise awareness on Swachh Bharat, Namami Gange!, Saraswati Vandana, Ganesh Vandan, Ganga Avtaran, amongst others.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/teachers-day-ganesh-chaturthi-celebrated/>



SEPTEMBER 2016

The Resurgence Trust 50th Anniversary Event in Oxford

Sadhvi Bhagawati was warmly invited to The Resurgence Trust 50th Anniversary Event, in honor of 50 years of Resurgence & Ecologist magazine by Satish Kumar at Oxford University and was asked to speak in a panel organized by Uplift Connect with Bruce H. Lipton, Ph.D, Prince Ea, Bharat Mitra, Chip Richards, Cathy Burke and Satish Kumar, head

of Schumacher College and of Resurgence Magazine.

This event in celebration of Resurgence's 50th year featured an inspiring array of speakers, thinkers, artists, activists and pioneers. For the last 50 years, Resurgence has been publishing articles which explore how humanity can live in harmony with the Earth and create a future where generations to come can celebrate a sustainable life for all.

Sadhvi and Satish Kumarji discussed the various articles and inspiring pieces that the Divine Shakti Foundation had contributed to the magazine and how they could work together for a resurgent future for the planet and all of Mother Nature.

<http://www.sadhviji.org/the-resurgence-trust-50th-anniversary-event-in-oxford/>

United Nations Events in New York

In New York, Sadhvi Bhagawati took part in two events organized by the United Nations. In the morning was an Interfaith Prayer Breakfast hosted by UNAIDS, World Council of Churches, The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and United Nations Inter-agency Task force where Sadhvi gave the blessing of sharing Vedic prayers and mantras for health, peace and illumination.

In the afternoon, Sadhvi Bhagawati spoke on a panel moderated by Azza Karam, Senior Advisor to UNFPA and head of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on "Keeping the Faith in Development: Gender, Religions & Health", organized by UNWOMEN, UNFPA, UNAIDS, World Council of Churches and other organizations. They spoke about issues relating to the role of faith in aspects of healthcare, sanitation, education, AIDS and many other issues, and Sadhvi was able to share the work that our Divine Shakti Foundation is doing to empower women, their children and to protect Mother Earth.

<http://www.sadhviji.org/un-events-new-york/>

AUGUST 2016

Providing Facilities to Nuns and Girls in Ladakh

During the Worship for WASH Summit in Ladakh, DSF's President visited the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre with interfaith leaders and the Hon'ble Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhanji to inaugurate a special Interfaith Peace Garden and ceremoniously perform the ground breaking of a toilet structure near the centre's Meditation Hall, which previously lacked access to nearby sanitation facilities.

At the ground-breaking, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati said, "This toilet structure symbolizes the union of Meditation and Sanitation, which is the need of the hour. No longer can our worship and our prayers be only in our places of worship, it is time that they come out to the streets and reach out to the people."

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati emphasized the need for toilets for women and girls by saying, "Nearly 595 million peo-

ple lack toilets in India. Millions of girls and women fall prey to violence, threat of wild animals and basic indignity on a daily basis due to open defecation. In India we are emphasizing education for the girl child. This is a wonderful initiative, but if we don't simultaneously emphasize provision of proper toilet facilities, these same girls will drop out of school when they reach puberty. A tragically large percentage of girls' education ends when they start menstruating due simply to the lack of hygienic, private toilet facilities where they can keep themselves clean."

She also visited the nunnery for the Buddhist Nuns and toured the school on campus. She pledged to provide any necessary furniture and requirements for the women saints and the girls there.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/march-for-peace-and-wash-in-ladakh/>



International Green Raksha Bandhan Celebrations

The first ever International Green Raksha Bandhan was held at Talkatora Stadium, Delhi. It was conceived and led by Mananiya Indresh Kumarji, National Executive Member of RSS, and HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji. The theme of the celebration was World Peace & Preservation and Protection of the Environment, organized jointly by DSF and FANS. More than 100 groups with participants from more than 40 countries participated.

Pujya Swamiji said "There can be no protection of our sisters, our mothers and our daughters without simultaneously ensuring that they have adequate, safe and clean sanitation facilities. This is why the motto for this Raksha Bandhan should be to every brother 'Tilak Lagao, Toilet Banao.' If his sister already has a toilet then a toilet in her name should be built for another sister, another women, who doesn't

have this basic facility. Therefore, let our mantra be: Raksha Bandhan Manaye Lekhen Sauchalaya Bhi Banaye."

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji emphasized the importance of understanding what actions could truly protect our sisters and mothers in modern times and she shared that adequate WASH is definitely the first and most important. She shared that nearly 600 million people in India are forced to defecate out in the open and nearly half of them must be women. She shared that when women are forced to risk the dark of night to defecate out in the open she is subject to threats to her dignity and her well being, hence safe and sufficient WASH for every women is vital.

All leaders also emphasised that Raksha Bandhan is a celebration of our ties to each other, as one world family, and with Mother Nature. By tying a sacred Rakhi or "Safety Band" over the wrist of someone, we are tied together in a divine bond of love and compassion.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/international-green-raksha-bandhan-celebrations/>



JULY 2016

Puppet Show Raises Awareness & Catalyzes Behaviour Change

As part of the Mela with a Message, Swachh Kanwad Mela initiative, blessed, inspired and led by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, carried out with the dedication of GIWA, GAP and DSF volunteers coming together, there were regular puppet and street theatre shows being performed to raise awareness on keeping our sacred pilgrimage sites, our villages and our communities free from open defecation and pollution. DSF offered regular medical camps and treated hundreds of yatri along the yatra route with basic medical counseling, treatment and care. DSF also offered many messages on public health such as the use of toilets, washing hands, cutting our finger nails, adequate personal dental care, etc to spread and share the message of public health and hygiene with the masses of yatri, a vast majority who travel from remote and rural parts of Northern India to offer sacred Ganga water to Lord Shiva at the famous Neelkanth temple. DSF also inspired pledges for tree plan-

tation and watershed creation, such as ponds and lakes, so that each pilgrim was reminded that if they had come to Nature, the beautiful, lush forests of the Himalayas, and the banks of Mother Ganga, they should ensure they do their part to protect and preserve it.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/puppet-show-raises-awareness-catalyzes-behaviour-change/>



Manashakti Two Day Workshop Organized by DSF & Parmarth

A two day Manashakti conference on keys and tips to empower our youth, children as well as engage parents and teachers to effectively plant seeds of success, spiritual growth and progress in our future generation was completed at Parmarth Niketan.



The programme was organized and hosted by the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) and Parmarth Niketan Ashram in association with Manashakti Research Centre, Lonavla. Manashakti is based in Pune, Maharashtra and members from the institute came to offer the workshop. They were eager to work together with DSF to offer their empowerment workshops and stress management classes, especial-

ly to serve under HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji's guidance and leadership, with the dedicated efforts of Sadhvi Abha Saraswatiji, to offer tools and techniques to our future generation to be strong and stable, grounded in spirituality and science, thereby ready to lead the world towards a more sustainable future.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/manashakti-two-day-workshop-organized-by-dsf-parmarth/>

JUNE 2016

Sewing Threads Of Hope: DSF Gives Sewing Machine to Rural Women

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati and Sadhvi Abha Saraswati, Head of the Parmarth Yoga Department, recently joined volunteers and members of DSF to hand over sewing machines to rural Himalayan women from the Smt Shailputri Jankalyan Mahila Samiti, 14 Bigha Rishikesh, under their initiative of skill development and vocational training.

Sadhvi said, "There is such a great opportunity for all of us to empower every women in every spectrum of their lives. I am so glad that through offering these sewing machines, through planning and giving a variety of skill development and vocational training courses and classes, ranging from sewing, knitting to toilet and water filter building, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Divine Shakti Foundation are working to put the power back into the hands of our shakti-our women."



Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati provided His blessings for the project by saying, "These sewing machines are not merely just a onetime contribution but I believe they are truly a gift that keeps on giving. The sewing machine will not only sew clothe and fabric, earning livelihoods for these women and their families, but will sew the whole family and the whole community together with the threads of empowerment, hope and with the spirit of entrepreneurship and that is truly the need of the hour."

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/sewing-threads-of-hope-dsf-gives-sewing-machine-to-rural-women/>

Vocational Training



- **RURAL UTTARAKHAND** – In rural Uttarakhand, where 40% of the population already lives below the poverty line, survivors of the disastrous floods of 2013 are sinking into despair. Many have lost their jobs, businesses, farms, homes and precious loved ones. Now, they yearn to simply earn a wage, so that they can put food on the table.

Without work or economic opportunity, many people are feeling forced, out of necessity, to migrate to distant cities. Sadly, in some cases, such migrant families may find themselves living in the claustrophobic squalor of urban slums, in even deeper poverty.

- **CENTRES IN RISHIKESH, THE HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS & ACROSS INDIA** – Divine Shakti Foundation runs vocational training centers in Rishikesh, where more than 1000 young girls and women receive free training in such fields as sewing, handicrafts, tailoring and fashion design. Additionally, we sponsor a computer center in Uttarkashi where more than 1000 boys, girls and ladies receive free computer education.

Additionally, Divine Shakti Foundation has built and sponsored the construction of vocational training centers for impoverished women and girls in Tamil Nadu, South India, Gaya, Lucknow, and villages in the Himalayan foothills.

- **REBUILDING SCHOOLS IN DISASTER STRUCK AREAS** – Divine Shakti Foundation is rebuilding schools that were damaged or destroyed during the June 2013 floods in Uttarakhand. The Brightland International School in Rudra Prayag was rebuilt and inaugurated in May 2015 and now provides English Medium education to over 100 boys and girls. A hostel and meditation centre were also recently inaugurated, as a joint initiative between DSF and the Swaminarayan Sansthan, this year. An intercollege in Uttarkashi is also being constructed and nearly ready for inauguration

- **NECTAR OF HOPE PROGRAMME** – Through the Nectar of Hope Programme, impoverished survivors have been taught skills so that they may learn how to also earn a living from their new animals, such as how to produce and market natural medicine and improved milk.

They will also learn organic gardening techniques that will be accentuated by the fertilizer naturally provided by their cows. In such a way, family incomes can be earned and healthy food can be put on the table for growing children.

Sanitation training



WOMEN, STUDENTS & MANY OTHERS ARE TRAINED AS SANITATION AMBASSADORS

DSF and GIWA are working together to bring together Asha health workers, women from the local communities, villages and students to train them as Sanitation Ambassadors in several courses year round. DSF is engaging and involving its established and strong school and community networks to invite them to receive vital training that will help them become Sanitation Ambassadors in their communities. GIWA through its expert trainers and professionals realizing the dream of a Swachh Bharat (Clean India).

ASHA WORKERS AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN ENGAGED

During the training with the students, they were divided into groups, which were assigned the tasks of going to classrooms, playgrounds, toilets, hand washing stations and drinking water sources and writing down their observations on the WASH-related problems found there, with their likely solutions. The students, from Rishikesh's Government Intermediate College in Laxman Jhula, took a very active part in the group work and presented their findings along with proposed action plans in front of all assembled. They also expressed a demand for another such class in the near future.

DSF is working with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) to educate schools and communities alike on the importance of proper hygiene and sanitation.

<https://divineshaktifoundation.org/students-trained-as-sanitation-ambassadors/>



Medical camps

over
1500
examined
individuals



33
camps



FREE WEEKLY MEDICAL CAMPS

The Divine Shakti Foundation organises free weekly medical camps every Sunday in which compassionate and loving doctors, health practitioners and volunteers venture off to remote villages to care and provide for basic medical care to populations who are often underserved.

This year our team, led by Dr Priya Singhji, held 33 camps, seeing over 1,300 individuals, and visited the following villages in and around Pauri Garhwal and Dehradun districts. Some villages necessitated multiple follow-up visits:

1. Kali Ki Dhal
2. Kunao (Rajaji National Forest)
3. Kodia
4. Nail (Pav Ki Devi)
5. Ramjiwhala
6. Naudkhal
7. Mala Sera, Yamkeshwar
8. Mala Kundi, Yamkeshwar
9. Mala Kota, Yamkeshwar
10. Virpur Khurd
11. Toli

DSF's dedicated team offered free medical services during the Kanwad Mela, caring for more than 700 patients throughout the month long festival season.

Free and quality medical services and comprehensive checkups were provided to each of the over 100 Rishikumaras at the Parmarth Gurukul multiple times a year.

The camps treat and offer free medicine for everything from the common cold to skin disease, from ear infection to gynecological problem and so much more. In addition to providing medicines the camps are used as opportunities to spread greater awareness on sanitation and hygiene, teach healthy WASH habits and provide other basic and essential public health messages.

The lack of availability of proper medical facilities, health practitioners and health education in the Himalayan regions fuels and motivates Divine Shakti Foundation volunteers to serve tirelessly in improving the overall well-being of the Himalayan people, as well as serving the under-served and needy population.

Unfortunately for many, quality medical care is simply not available. People living in Himalayan villages often have to walk kilometres just to reach the main road, then must travel by shared jeep long distances to visit doctors or get medicine. All this while suffering from illness, wounds or even broken bones.

As a part of an ongoing "Project Give Back" Initiative, Divine Shakti Founda-

tion and Parmarth Niketan host free medical camps weekly in the surrounding villages where they travel for diagnosis, treatment and preventative care. Dedicated doctors provide primary healthcare services and distribute much-needed medicines to those who would otherwise not have access and/or availability of these services. These teams of doctors are often joined by other health professionals, such as physiotherapists, Ayurvedic practitioners, and more.

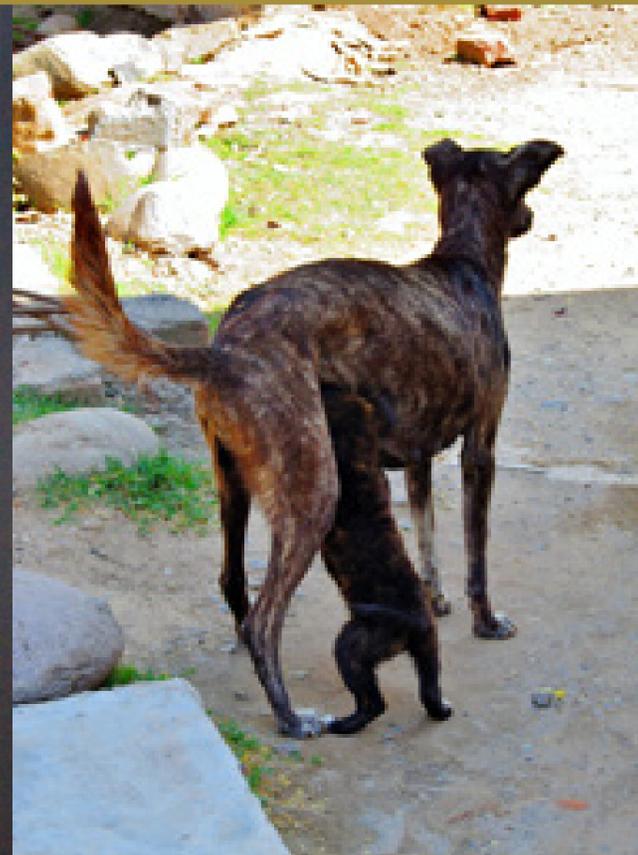
The doctors and volunteers inform villagers of the various and regular specialty camps held and organized at the Swami Shukdevanand Trust (Parmarth Niketan) Charitable Clinic so that they can receive quality secondary care. They also educate and empower the villagers on how to inculcate better

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene habits, as well as take steps to prevent illness and live healthier, happier lives.

These medical camps have already had positive effects on the villages, as DSF is now being requested by Gram Panchayats and Pradhans from villages near and far.

Some of the villages DSF is working in are only accessible by foot, and often there are no proper rooms to examine patients, electricity is unavailable, and there are no toilets. When facilities are not available, medical camps are held under the shades of a tree or near the river bank. Yet, even with these conditions, hundreds of people come from all around to receive quality medical care.

Dog camps and animal care



RISHIKESH ANIMAL RESCUE PROJECT

A two-three month Animal Rescue Camp is organized every year for the last three years by the Divine Shakti Foundation- Parmarth Niketan Ashram and Karma Animal Trust, led by our beautiful and dedicated volunteer Sofi Osochenko from Siberia.

Russian vets and technicians join to offer their time, talent and technical expertise primarily for the street dogs of Rishikesh. Sterilization of primarily male dogs, vaccination and treatment for street dogs and cats is all provided free. As most street puppies and kittens die from significant diseases, motorbike accidents or hunger, it is very important

to control the population so that they are healthy and happy. This year 109 surgeries were conducted:

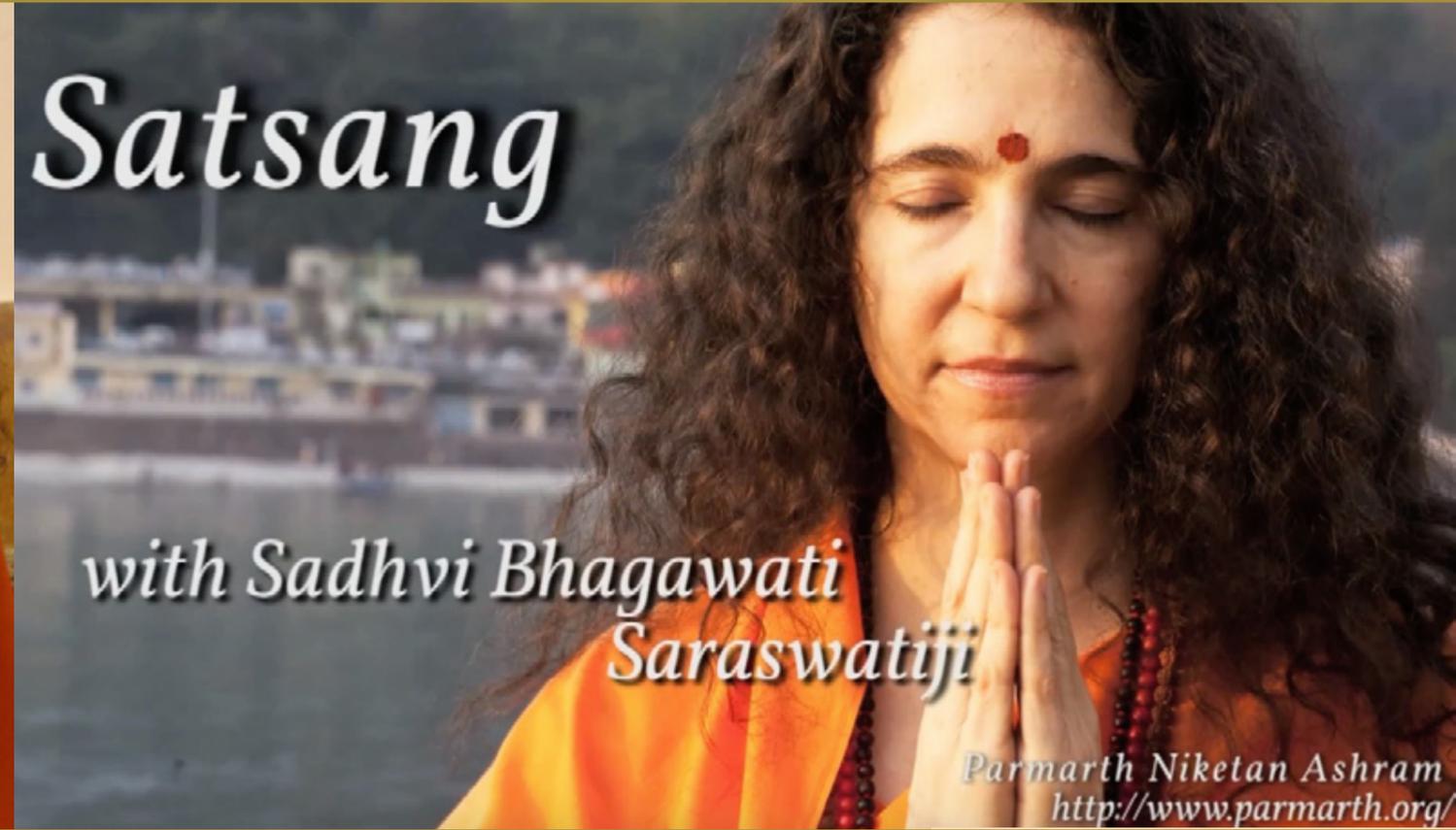
- 92 surgeries of homeless female dogs.
- 2 surgeries of homeless female dogs.
- 11 castrations of homeless male dogs.
- 4 castrations of homeless male cats.

All of the operations were done by Russian doctors. Roman Tomilenko and Victoria Chursina served as operating surgeons and Katerina Polyakova and Olga Ivanova were surgical assistants. A special mention for Lena Musatova, who came all by herself from Siberia just to be able to participate in the Project and assist. Also, volunteers from France, Argentina, Australia, US, Canada, Taiwan, Ukraine and other countries assisted with the project.

Besides being sterilized, all dogs of Rishikesh have changed beyond recognition. Dogs are healthy and fit, there are no dogs with mange and one won't see hundreds of sick stray puppies starving to death.

His Excellency Haris Silajdzic, Former President and Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina and his wife Selma Muhedinovic-Silajdzic, joined Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati especially honoured the volunteers and the core team for their beautiful services to make the Rishikesh Animal Rescue project a great success in its third season.

Spiritual upliftment



An integral part of Upliftment occurs many evenings during the year at Parmarth Niketan Ashram during Satsang led by Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, the President of the Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF). Satsang literally means in the presence of truth and Sadhvi's straight forward, insightful and often humorous responses are one of the highlights for people who are either staying at Parmarth Niketan or just visiting for the day.

She fields a variety of questions about what it means to be human. Usually it is within a religious or spiritual context but she is never preachy and is able to weave in her vast knowledge about Hinduism in a way that is appreciated by Hindu's and non-Hindu's, Indians and non-Indians alike. All of the satsangs are made available on our social media channels free and available for everyone.

In addition, her satsangs are also broadcasted once a week on Om-Times radio channel and aired every evening on Sanskara TV Channel. Her clear and compassionate light and wisdom provides much hope and happiness to so many who experience this divine interaction with her and sets them on a path of deeper introspection, insight and inspiration, bringing a greater sense of peace and happiness in their life.





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