



## 2023 SPRING NEWSLETTER

### HAPPY SPRING!

This year, for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to bring together our licensees from around the world for our annual PRASAD International meeting in India. It was wonderful to be reunited with the global PRASAD family and to see PRASAD Chikitsa programs in action!

We had the pleasure of visiting many program sites and meeting beneficiaries and hearing their stories of challenge and achievement. We heard first-hand how our programs are changing their lives for the better and what they still need. In our interactions we experienced their hope, gratitude, and strength.

Some of our sweetest moments were visits to our children's programs. From the start, we were touched by the joyful welcome songs of the children at the Kelthan Village Primary School, where PRASAD recently built new toilets and handwashing stations for boys and girls, where previously there was only one toilet for all. We also saw the appreciation in the eyes of the children in the nutrition program. This program was closed during the pandemic but is now open with plans to double the number of children participating this year.

One day we celebrated the power of women at a colorful event hosted by PRASAD Chikitsa and Self-Help Group (SHGs) participants. More than 300 women and children were gathered. Women performed songs and dances that celebrated their culture and later shared stories of how they are working together to strengthen their communities .

We visited a Mobile Hospital stop in a remote village of the Palghar District, where people lined up for routine care and diagnosis. The doctor explained that for some patients this is their only access to healthcare, and, without it, their illnesses could persist to a critical condition. We also learned that the TB Program was awarded "Best NGO for work in the field of TB diagnosis and treatment" by the Bhiwandi District, Maharashtra state!

At the core of PRASAD, our work exists to encourage and empower people to become self-reliant by providing opportunity: for women to flourish, for children to receive adequate nutrition, for farmers, like Nagesh Sarde (read his story) to practice sustainable agriculture, and for all to have access to vital healthcare and contribute to restoring and preserving the natural environment.

Visiting PRASAD Chikitsa reminds us that giving is a gift. To see the lives changed that your support has made possible is heart-warming and empowering. Read on to learn more.

Sincerely,

Thomas Korula  
Board Co-Chair

Dr. Vivek Panchapakesan  
Board Co-Chair

Dr. M. Cecilia Escarra  
Executive Director

# PROGRAM UPDATES



## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO THRIVE

The SHGs provide training and opportunity for women to come into their own and succeed. We have expanded the opportunities for tribal women to thrive, adding cultivation and manufacture of bamboo products, pulse and jasmine cultivation, and honey beekeeping. There are 3,000 women participating in Self-Help Groups today, and more than 16,000 women have received training over the years. This year, PRASAD Chikitsa plans to launch 22 new SHGs.



## PROMOTING HEALTHY FAMILIES

The Reproductive & Child Health Program educates adolescent girls, pregnant women, and mothers about nutrition, hygiene, and other important childcare topics. This year, the program will focus on conducting health talks and anemia screening and treatment camps in villages and schools. The Nutrition Program, which provides nutritional support to children with severe and moderate acute malnutrition, aims to expand services from 500 to 1,000 children in the coming year.



## EMBRACING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

PRASAD Chikitsa provides training and technical support to farmers to improve food security and create alternative sources of income through the Fruit Orchard and Forestry, Floriculture, Indigenous Seed Bank, and Kitchen Garden programs. In the coming year, PRASAD Chikitsa plans to distribute 20,000 fruit saplings, 1,000 kg of indigenous rice seeds, and 5,000 Jasmine and Golden Champa saplings, and help 300 families start Kitchen Gardens.



## SUCCESSFUL FARMING IMPROVES LIVES



We met Nagesh Shridhar Sarde and his family of six in the Sarpada hamlet, just 3 km from Ganeshpuri. Rice paddy farming was the Sarde family's main source of income. They only earned \$50 annually selling rice and straw, which wasn't enough. But, Nagesh had fertile land, so he joined PRASAD Chikitsa's Fruit Orchard Program in 2009 and received 20 mango saplings in the hopes of increasing his income.

The mango trees flourished, inspiring Nagesh to expand. In 2016 he added 300 jasmine saplings, and in 2020, he added another 40 saplings: mango, jamun, sapota, guava, custard apple, cashew, tamarind, and bamboo. His family also wanted to cultivate a Kitchen Garden, but there wasn't an adequate, sustainable water supply. So, Nagesh partnered with PRASAD Chikitsa to build a farm well. Nagesh also received seeds to start a Kitchen Garden.



In the last 5 years, Nagesh has earned \$100 annually from selling fruit and \$400 from Jasmine flowers. Combine this with what he earns selling rice and straw, and he is making 8 times more than before and 10 times more than the average Tansa Valley farmer's annual income, all because he has multiple income sources.

With the money he's earned, the family opened a small grocery shop near their home; yet another income stream. Nagesh said, *"My life has changed for the better due to the support from PRASAD Chikitsa's various projects. My financial situation was very bad before, but now my family and I are living comfortably."*

## PRASAD CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE!

PRASAD CDHP provided dental health education and care to more than 93,000 children in Sullivan County, New York. *To celebrate our 25th anniversary we are replacing our Mobile Dental Clinic, thanks to a generous grant from the Mother Cabrini Foundation.* We are also expanding our outreach to benefit more children, and we are adding healthy eating information to our dental health education classes.



## PRASAD DE MEXICO

PRASAD de México has remained active by helping people access free eye surgeries.

Since its inception in 1996, PRASAD de México has held 210 eye camps and performed free eye surgery on nearly 34,000 adults and children. This year, the PRASAD de Mexico volunteer team is planning eight eye camps in Guanajuato and Durango States.



# PRASAD

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## WHAT'S NEXT FOR PRASAD

We continue to focus on growth and sustainability as an organization and for our programs across the globe, so that we can meet the evolving needs of the people we serve while preserving and restoring the natural environment. We are doing this by continuing to improve our capability by updating facilities and technologies, hiring the right people, expanding programs, and assessing community needs and program impact. To achieve this, we need to raise an additional \$100,000 this year.

## WE COUNT ON YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

The word PRASAD has its origins in the Sanskrit language. Among its meanings is “a transformative gift.” Your gifts have a transformative power not only for the recipient... but also for you, the one making the gift.

And our gifts keep on giving. The people who receive services pass along the skills they've learned and share the benefits of their improved lives with family and community.

Supporting PRASAD's mission not only improves the lives of these vulnerable populations but can also have a deep and meaningful impact on yours as well. Please consider giving a spring gift of rejuvenation now or becoming a PRASAD Partner (monthly donor) if you're not already.

Please mail your gift to the address provided or visit [www.prasad.org](http://www.prasad.org) today to donate online!



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