



Children's Home

Yearly Overview

Avani works towards the prevention of child labor, the protection of school dropouts, the protection of child trafficking victims and against female infanticide by providing exploited, abandoned and the poorest children in Kolhapur district of India with proper nutrition, clothes, safe housing and a quality education. It is our purpose to work alongside children from the homeless, migrant and nomadic communities. We do this by conducting surveys to identify children at risk, rescue those children in need and provide them with food, clothes, shelter, healthcare, rehabilitation and education up to standard 10 and beyond. They are given every opportunity to succeed so that they can be rehabilitated into healthy and productive members of the society.

Avani is a voluntary organization which devotes itself to the realization of the rights of deprived children. A community of students, teachers and families insure each child has access to daily support and

encouragement. The Avani Children's Home allows student's to develop interests and relationships.

Over time, the children will develop a love of learning and a desire to become socially, emotionally and intellectually prepared to succeed. Most importantly, they will finally have access to the childhood they deserve.



Avani Children's Home Project Details



Education

At present, Avani accommodates 40 children. The children are provided food, clothing, shelter and learning material. These children are regularized into government schools. They are given special coaching by the two registered teachers appointed by Avani. The teachers look into their academic progress. Every 6 months, meetings are conducted with the parents to update them on their progress.



The parents of these children are not educated but they want to educate their children. This year, the children performed well and were promoted to the next class. A volunteer, Ms. Sheetal who is an Engineering student played an important role in

teaching mathematics and science to the students on every Saturday.

For the third year in a row, all three of our eligible students passed their 10th standard, which is one of the important milestones in their education.



Skype Call with Students in Singapore



Sports

Sports are an important aspect in the development of the children. The children of Avani participate in Yoga and exercises each morning before school and have time for play after school. They play various games like cricket, football, skipping and some indoor games. This year, the children participated in various events in their Sports Day and won prizes.



Field Trips

Each year, the children of Avani are invited to the Dream World Water Park. One of our local donors sponsored a day at the water park for all our students. The group of local donors who sponsored the visit also accompanied them.

Summer Camps and Workshops

In the Summer vacation, after the final examinations, a ten day summer camp is organized by Avani for the students. This year even the students from other schools and our neighborhood were also invited for the summer camps. This year apart from the other activities, emphasis was on imparting information on the National heroes and Social leaders and their contribution towards the society. The children were instructed on how to organize, write and deliver speeches in front of their classmates or in front of a crowd or gathering.



A field trip was organized to the Market Yard by Avani. The main purpose behind this visit was to introduce children to the produce trading market process. The vegetable and fruit vendors were kind enough to share the information with the children about trading and the process involved.



A hobbies development workshop was conducted to introduce the children to different types of craft and vocational skills. They were given training on how to

prepare different types of show pieces. This year, a Taekwondo Martial Art trainer was here for 10 days during the camp and taught the children self defense techniques. The children were also involved in different competitions on speech delivery, essay writing, hand writing, and sports.

One of our regular donors who owns a restaurant organized a workshop for the children of Avani regarding the opportunities in the Hotel Industry. He also offered to train any of students interested in the industry.

This year, students of Avani attended a workshop for three days at 'Manashakti Kendra', Lonavala. The children were taught different skills on how to study, how to enhance their concentration, what games to play, how to remember what they have studied and how to overcome problems. The children were also taken for hikes. Later, the children visited the tribal area near Lonavala. The children interacted with the other children in the tribal community and played different types of games with them.

Value Education

Mrs. Anuradha Bhosale conducted value education classes each Sunday afternoon with the children of Avani. The topics covered during the sessions were truth, non-violence, politeness, and respect.



Women's Day Celebrations

Women's Day was celebrated at Avani with all the children. It was explained to the children the importance of the day with the help of role playing and followed by discussions. The neighborhood women were invited and many games were organized for them. The ladies participated with a lot of enthusiasm and thanked Avani for providing them such a platform and expressed that they should meet more often.



Celebrations of Festivals

In India we celebrate a lot of festivals. These events can be segregated into both national and religious Festivals. This year we celebrated national festivals like Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi

Jayanti. Distinguished personalities from various fields were invited to participate during the occasion. The children were taught the importance of each of these days and how we should acknowledge and be grateful to our freedom fighters and national leaders. A tree plantation was done to commemorate the day and make our environment green by growing as many trees as possible.

Religious festivals were also celebrated. Birth anniversaries of famous social reformers and thinkers are included in this group. Holi is an Indian festival where the Avani staff creates awareness and encourages the local community not to burn their sweet chapati (an Indian delicacy) in the fire. Instead we ask them to donate it to our children of Avani and brickyard schools.

Diwali and Raksha Bandhan are the occasions where the children with the help of the craft teacher prepare eco friendly Rakhis (Bands). This year we organized stalls in many schools and colleges to sell Rakhis. Other than the greeting cards and lanterns, this year we prepared Diyas and Uptan. This is an effort to raise funds for the children in a small way.

The Earn and Learn Initiative team helped in the preparation of the items for the festivals. The children of Avani tied Rakhi bands to the trees. This festival is bond of love between brothers and sisters.

This year staff of HDFC Bank of Kolhapur came to Avani to celebrate Christmas with the children.

Birthdays

Many visitors visit Avani to celebrate birthdays of their family members. Avani children wish a happy birthday by singing birthday song in chorus, give them a birthday card and an hand made, cloth flower (eco friendly) which they prepare. We at

Avani believe ever visitor and Donor is important to us.



Common Birthday

Most of the Avani children do not have birth certificates as they were born at home in their village. Every year, all the Avani children celebrate their birthday on the same day, January 5th. This day is significant as it is also the birthday of the prominent female social reformer 'Savitri Bai Phule'. She fought for the rights of girl child to attend the school back in 16th century.

This year, 'Friends Power Group', a youth groups in Kolhapur showed interest in organizing the birthday. The group celebrated the birthday of the children by providing a huge cake, refreshments and gifts for each child. Cultural programs were also organized for the children.

Children's Day Celebrations

We at Avani wanted to make this years Children's Day special for our children. The entire week was celebrated as children's week in which we had various programs for the children. On children's day, we showed a children's movie and had lunch in a hotel. The brickyard school children and rag picking community children were also invited.

Around 225 children participated in the program. Many well wishers of Avani contributed in organizing the event. In that week, we had the official inauguration of Earn and Learn Initiative, demand letters were given to government officials regarding the problems faced by children and we organized a program on 'Parenting' by Mr. Chandrakant Page, Counselor from Mumbai.

Earn and Learn Initiative

Earn and learn initiative was officially inaugurated during the Children's week. Mr. Sohan Shirgaokar, (Jt.MD S.B.Reshellers) accepted our invitation to host the occasion. The earn and learn initiative is an work program where in the children 18 years of age and older work three hours a day at Avani after attending the college.

We assist the children who are interested in their studies in college. Students earn extra money for school and college. This will help cover their costs for housing and food. The children prepare paper bags for medical shops, Diwali items and Rakhi's during festivals.



Fund Raising

Avani Sandhya: This year we at Avani organized a get together for our Donors in the month of August. The program was organized at Hotel Pavilion. We

know that it is only because of our donors that Avani can function properly. A musical evening was arranged for the guests. Many in attendance expressed their desire to continue their support of Avani.



Mr. Page's Program: Avani organized a fund raising program in the form of a counseling stage show of Mr. Chandrakant Page, a renowned counselor from Mumbai. His topic was, 'How to Overcome Stress during Exams'. This was intended for teachers, students and parents. We felt it was important to organize a program where that would benefit the people of Kolhapur. The staff put in a lot of effort into the program in order to raise funds for our new children's home.



Health

Physical: Twice every year, Avani conducts a health checkup camp for all the children. Local government doctors volunteer their time, services and vaccinations free of charge. Every month we document the height and weight of the children. Eye exams, dental checkups were conducted by the concerned doctors. Health records of all the children are maintained by Avani. Hemoglobin levels are monitored and medicine is given as needed.

Psychological: Most of the children come from broken homes and have experienced tremendous turmoil in their short lives. Counseling sessions are conducted in regular intervals. During the sessions we realized that 2 to 3 children have Attention Deficit Disorder, aggressive, and also attention seeking tendencies. These children were taken to the Psychiatrist. Continuous Medication is being given to these children. Ashwini was a new entrant this year whose IQ had not been tested. She was referred to a psychiatrist for the IQ test. On the basis of the results, we understood she needs to be rehabilitated in a place where she would be comfortable. She is rehabilitated at Chetana Vikas Mandir (a school for mentally retarded children). She feels comfortable going to Chetana and is very happy.



Aruna was diagnosed with Schizophrenia. She was hospitalized for some days and proper medicine was given to her regularly. At present, she is stable and stays with her family.

Due to the Counseling sessions we have seen improvements in temperament and concentration in most of the children. The children have also commented on how being able to talk freely and discuss their problems help them to better understand and cope with the issues that have been bothering them.



Schools for Migrant Children

Since 2001, our brickyard schools have educated around 9,100 children. This year Avani had 13 Anganwadi schools (Kindergarten) for the 3-6 year old age group in Karveer and Shirol Taluka. The teachers teach these children the basics of education in a play method. The children are provided a nutritious meal each day along with educational material. This year, we had many activities in the Brickyard school. Some of the activities are :

- A 5 day workshop for the teachers.
- Distribution of clothes, sweaters and caps to the children.
- Health check-up camp for children and their parents.
- Organized educational tour to Panhala and Khidrapur.
- Spreading Awareness of Right to Education Act through brochures and flyers.
- Donation of 10,000 bricks by brickyard owners.
- Pitambari Products Pvt. Ltd donated 35 Copper pots to the schools.
- Performance assessments of each child were distributed at the end of the session.

In the future, Avani is planning to expand its work of schools for migrant children to other districts.



Child Rescue Program

The Avani organization works towards the prevention of child beggars and child labor under the age of 14. We conduct our own private surveys of child beggars and child labor as well as assist government surveys too. Our Surveys take us to railway stations, bus stands and traffic signals. We provide counseling to the parents and the women who use children for begging. We submit demand letters to all police stations for the prevention of child beggars and child laborers. Since 2005, we have rescued 5,700 child laborers under the age of 14 from different occupations of Kolhapur district.



Rag Pickers Community Development Program

Since 2013, we have regularized 220 children from the 10 rag picking communities of Kolhapur into government schools. 39 children have been given pre-metric scholarships from the local municipal corporation through Avani's support. Avani conducts its own surveys in the 10 Rag picking community slums and identifies the number of children under the age group of 14 not currently attending school. We then set up makeshift schools for approximately 220 children. The parents are educated on the RTE Act's provision of free and compulsory Education.

Staff and Avani Board of Directors

Our staff of plays an important role in the day to day activities of Avani. Anuradha Bhosale meets monthly with the staff and reviews their activities. Avani organized a 'Communication and Skill Training' workshop in the month of August for all the Staff members. Mr. Adrian Rosario was the Resource person who conducted a two day workshop with the help of role plays and games.



In the month of April, Avani organized another workshop on 'Team Building' for the Staff. This workshop focused on Increasing collaboration skills, developing interpersonal relationships and the importance of healthy communication and how to improve overall productivity.

Team building expert Mr. Jagdish Patil conducted different games and activities throughout the workshop. Through these activities, the Asvani staff learned how to provide high impact learning and respect for other staff members.



Anuradha Bhosale and other Avani Board members have regular meetings to discuss and implement issues relating to the children's home. The topics discussed regarded the children and their activities, the new site, donations and appointment of the new staff.

Visitors

Many Visitors from India as well as from outside India visit the organization. This year, we have noticed that many youth groups have showed an interest in organizing cultural programs in addition to donations, food material and educational supplies. Industrialists, politicians, a district judge, social workers from other NGO's, students and colleges were in the list of people who visited Avani this year.



Spreading Awareness

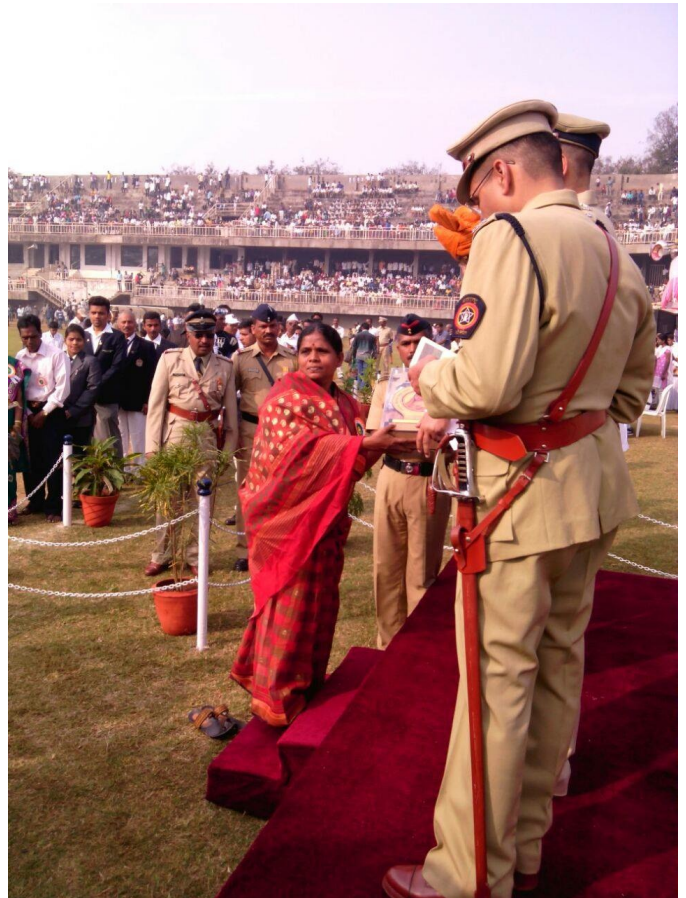
Many demand and request letters were given to the Government officials for various causes related to the children. The changes in the legislation of Child Labor Act was one such cause where the children from various schools and Avani had written over 1,000 letters and posted them to the Prime Minister. Under the Swabhimani Bal Hakka Abhiyaan, which works for the protection of child rights, submitted many letters for the protection of child rights.

Awards and Recognition

This year Anuradha Bhosale received many awards for her work. To date, she has received 54 awards. Some of the awards of this year were:

- Sahyadri Hirkani Puraskar
- Kedari Redekar Puraskar
- Mahila Bhagini Puraskar
- Ahilya Bai Holkar Puraskar-Government of Maharashtra
- Chatrapati Shahu Puraskar

This year, a team from the Dehi Doordarshan, a national news station, came to Kolhapur to film an entire episode on her work. The program was later telecast in the month of June.



Future Goals

A New Children's Home is being constructed at our new site near Hanberwadi village.

Day Care Centre for the children of Rag Picking Community.

Expanding the work of Brickyard and Migration projects to other Districts.