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## ABOUT CALCUTTA KIDS INC.

Calcutta Kids Inc. (formerly known as the Ashalayam Mobile Health Clinic) is a not-for-profit organization, a recognized 501c3 under the United States Internal Revenue Service, committed to the healthcare needs of the poorest children in and around Kolkata. This healthcare is quite comprehensive and includes monthly checkups, free medicines, follow-up treatment, referrals, and hospitalization when necessary. Beyond that, however, Calcutta Kids is devoted to the complete rehabilitation of each and every child we encounter and act as a resource to help these children find vocational training, education, proper nutrition and lodging as is necessary.

Dear Friends,

Greetings from India.



I have some very very exciting news to share with you. The Ashalayam Mobile Health Clinic has turned from a small project, under the auspices of another organization, into a tax exempt organization recognized by the United States Internal Revenue Service and called Calcutta Kids Inc. Thanks go to Mr. Jeremy Schuster, a lawyer and friend from California, who donated his services to help make this happen. This is exciting news on a number of fronts. First, it is a turning point for us — a transition from a successful small project into an organization with a long term commitment to the provision of health care and medical services to needy children in and around Kolkata. Second, it means that we are autonomous and no longer limited by the organizational requirements

of the Salesian Mission or Ashalayam Don Bosco. Third, it means that when donors send money for the mobile clinic, the money can be sent directly to Calcutta Kids Inc., without the involvement of the Salesian Mission as an intermediary. And fourth, it means that we will be able to apply for grants which had earlier been unavailable to us without this tax exempt status.

You may be asking yourselves, why is the name of the organization Calcutta Kids, when the new name of Calcutta is Kolkata. We chose to use the word Calcutta because it is much better known throughout the world. I asked a number of people in Kolkata if this would be appropriate, and they all agreed that Calcutta is the name to use.

This summer, while working on the project, I also am trying desperately to finish my undergraduate thesis for Marlboro College. I will graduate from Marlboro in December 2004 and will then be able to focus yet more of my energies where my heart is—on Calcutta Kids Inc. The thesis, for those of you who might be interested, is a study of the major changes which have taken place in Indian public health from 1946 (a year before India gained her independence) to the present. It is a fascinating topic which is teaching me a great deal about why poor families and their children face the health problems with which we've been wrestling in Kolkata. I'm finding this broader public health context useful indeed as we begin to think through ways in which Calcutta Kids can have the greatest impact both immediately for these children, and in the long run.

Meanwhile the mobile health clinic itself continues to thrive. The pictures in this newsletter were taken by Jennifer McArthur, a friend of Calcutta Kids, who came to see the mobile clinic in action and contributed both words of praise as well as a roll of fantastic pictures.

Many thanks to you all for your continued support in this endeavor for the street children in India.

With kindest regards and blessings,

Noah Levinson



## IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Fred Rogers was dear to so many of us. Not only was Mr. Roger's Neighborhood my favorite television program growing up, but Fred Rogers also was a friend of the family. He was my grandfather Aaron's swimming partner and dear friend, and he had been a student of my other grandfather, G. Mason Cochran at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. I have the fondest memories of the Rogers coming over

to the Levinson house on Forbes Street to play music with me as a child. And there was the story, now legendary in our family, of my older sister Mira meeting Mr. Rogers for the first time and asking him, "Why don't you answer me when I talk to you on the TV".

Mr. Rogers was a supporter of the mobile health clinic from its inception. When my grandfather Aaron died, Mr. Rogers sent along another contribution together with a note saying he was sure Aaron was in heaven watching out for me and continuing to take pride in "your wonderful project." Now Mr. Rogers is there keeping my grandfather company, and they're swimming laps together.

Mr. Roger's medium for bringing magic and hope to children was television. Of course only a small proportion of Indian children have access to television. But it still may be possible for some of these children to benefit from Mr. Rogers great legacy. Through Calcutta Kids, my extended family agreed to commission 100 cardigan sweaters using the Mr. Rogers sweater pattern, to be knitted and distributed to poor children in West Bengal for the cold months (which, sadly, take a greater toll in child death than the summer heat.)

We worked with a wonderful charity organization called Nari Seva Sangha (NSS) in Kolkata to help with this venture. NSS provides services for battered women and children which include housing, education, and vocational training. The vocational training center teaches knitting, tailoring, computer training, block printing, weaving, book binding, and secretarial skills. We commissioned the knitting team at NSS to produce 100 sweaters for presentation to two sets of children: 50 to children in the NSS school, and 50 to tribal children living in Kalimpong, a hill station in northern West Bengal.

The women at NSS were most excited to do this work, and the children of course were ecstatic to receive brand new sweaters knitted just for them. The day of delivery was one I will never forget. Mr. Rogers was surely there with us, and his smile was reflected in their faces. (See photo below)

Particular thanks must be given to Mrs. Shwasti Chaudhuri and Mrs. Bunny Gupta for their help in organizing this effort.

Photographs (counterclockwise) from top left: Noah Levinson playing duets with Mr. Rogers; some recipients of the sweaters presented in honor of Mr. Rogers; kids waiting for medical treatment (photo taken by Jennifer McArthur); mother and child at the Mobile Health Clinic (photo taken by Jennifer McArthur); women from NSS who knitted the sweaters (center).

## SALESIAN SEX SCANDAL

Some of you may have heard the recent news about Salesian priests involved in child molestation in various developing countries. This news is deeply troubling and we send our prayers out to those children who have been harmed by these sick individuals. To make the situation worse, there is some evidence that the Salesian Mission has tried to cover up the scandal and has, in fact, relocated problem priests to other countries where they are again working with children. Those of you who have contributed to the Mobile Health Clinic in the past have sent money through the Salesian Mission which has then directly deposited that money into the Mobile Health Clinic fund. This of course was done so that our donors could receive a tax-deduction. Calcutta Kids Inc. is grateful for the help individuals at the New York office of the Salesian Mission have given us in allowing our money to be channeled through their 501C3, but, of course we are deeply upset by these recent revelations.

Please note that none of the money Mobile Health Clinic donors have sent through the Salesian Mission has ever gone to any Salesian project or activity per se. Every dollar has gone directly to the mobile clinic. Now that we have our own 501C3 and are legally registered with the IRS, under the name of Calcutta Kids Inc., our relationship with the Salesian Mission has come to an end. We wish the organization well in its efforts to provide healing to the victims of such abuse. More importantly we offer our prayers for those children themselves, and deepen our resolve to do all we can for children in Kolkata and everywhere who are vulnerable.

## ARE YOU RECEIVING UNWANTED SOLICITATIONS FROM THE SALESIAN MISSION?

It has come to our attention that some of our donors have been placed on the official mailing list of the Salesian Mission. While we specifically asked that none of our donors be placed on their mailing list, a mistake was made and some of you are receiving regular unwanted mailings from them. If you are one of the few who have made it on to the Salesian mailing list, it is easy to get off. Please visit [www.salesianmissions.org](http://www.salesianmissions.org), click on "Contact us" then click on "Removal From Mailing List" and follow the provided instructions. If you do not have Internet access, please phone the office of Calcutta Kids or send us a note and we will have you taken off the Salesian mailing list. We are sorry for this technical mistake and are indeed committed to the privacy of our donors.

