



AAWC

The right to a better life for Women
and Children in red light areas.



**ANNUAL REPORT
2011-2012**



2011 has been an exciting year at AAWC. From our initial days in a one room drop-in centre in 1998 we have grown organically over the years in response to the needs of the community. For over 10 years we have run programs for the children of sex workers and other children in the area vulnerable to being trafficked into the sex trade. For many of these girls it was not safe to go home at night and often there would be a waiting list for good shelter home placements for our most vulnerable girls. There emerged a desperate need for a night shelter in the area. With the generosity of our donors, including Sahachari Foundation and CRY, and with the tireless efforts of our staff we have been able to start a night shelter in the heart of the Kamathipura red light district. This has been a monumental achievement for our organization and will have a huge impact on the girls we serve.

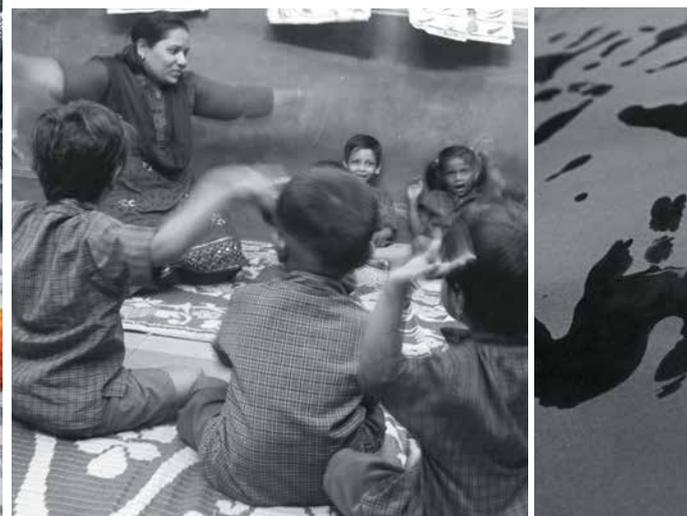
Another new venture this year is our “Friends of AAWC” committee which is comprised of our active well-wishers and volunteers. Each person will head a specific task aimed at achieving our Collective’s goal. We are enthusiastic to have the support of this committee and eager to see the ideas and input they will bring to AAWC.

We have continued strong with all of our programs and to date have supported more than 1300 women, 600 girls and 350 young children. Our greatest success has been seeing women gain dignity and respect and see a future for themselves and their children. Furthermore, for the daughters it can be difficult to avoid a future in the sex trade but we have managed to help the vast majority of girls who join our programs escape just that fate. Specific success stories of our beneficiaries are highlighted in this annual report and are part of a broader impact AAWC has been able to make in the lives of women and children in the red light district.

On behalf of AAWC we pay our heartfelt homage to Mrs. Yoshiko Haga, Chairman, CESA, Japan, who has been a long-time well-wisher and a very good friend of AAWC. Also to Mr. Udayan Patel, who gave so much of himself to those in need and believed in AAWC’s work. We dedicate this Annual Report to their memories.

All of our developments this year have been possible due to the dedication of our staff and the kind support of our donors. Our utmost thanks to each and every one who has been part of AAWC and for those who see the value in our work and would like to join in our efforts we wholeheartedly welcome you.

Manju Vyas (Director) and the AAWC Board of Trustees.





ABOUT AAWC

AAWC was established in 1998 in order to work with one of the most underprivileged and isolated sections of Mumbai's society- women in brothel-based prostitution and their children. AAWC began as a one room drop in centre, and soon developed into a resource centre with professional counseling services, medical care, micro-savings and other services. Today AAWC operates two centres, one in Khetwadi and the other in Kamathipura, two communities which reside in the largest red light district in Asia.

VISION AND MISSION

AAWC's mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of these marginalized women and children by accepting them and the circumstances of their means of survival. AAWC aims to prevent the entry of daughters into sex work as they are extremely vulnerable to being trafficked. AAWC's vision is to give the lives of these daughters a new meaning by helping them to secure a better and dignified future by providing them with better options in life.



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Life in the brothel

WHO WE SERVE

It is estimated that 5000-10000 women in the Kamathipura area are commercial sex workers. Some of the predominant causes for entrance into the sex trade are economic deprivation, forcible entry by a relative, deception, religious tradition and trafficking. For many women, especially for those in rural areas, there is a dearth of income-generating opportunities so out of desperation they enter the sex trade. Family members often force women and girls into the sex trade by selling them to a trafficker or pimp. Many women are lured into the city with the promise of employment or marriage, only to be forced into the sex trade. There are traditions such as Devadasi which is a form of religious prostitution where women are 'married' and dedicated to a temple or deity. Many of the women who enter the sex trade for the aforementioned reasons have been trafficked into sex work. Women are trafficked not only from other states but from neighbouring countries, especially Nepal and Bangladesh. AAWC serves those that find themselves in the sex trade, including transgendered sex workers and other marginalized women who are not sex workers but work in the brothels.

LIFE IN THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT

The red light district is an unhealthy environment for those that reside there. There are problems with electricity and water and open gutters that are breeding grounds for contagious diseases. Unlicensed medical practitioners run rampant in the area and advertise 'special treatments' to cure sexually transmitted infections (STI). The cinema houses and video parlours openly play X-rated movies at all times of the day and the inner lanes have a constant flow of illegal activities such as gambling dens and narcotic joints. The life of the district is centred on the brothels. Each brothel is approximately 200 square feet and divided into 'rooms' measuring 20 square feet that are just big enough for a bed and resemble a cubicle rather than an actual room. Anywhere from 4-15 sex workers take turns using the available rooms to service their customers, which are only separated with a thin plywood sheet or cloth. Often young children will sleep under the bed or are

left unattended when their mothers are with clients. As the brothels are exclusively used for sexual activities women must find alternate housing when they are not soliciting sex. The difficulty in finding affordable housing leads many women and their children to live on the streets and it is estimated that over 40% of the sex workers are homeless. The majority of customers that solicit sex fall into several categories: business men, tourists, migrant labourers and the local community. These customers are prone to myths like sex with children will cure STIs and HIV/AIDS or that sex without a condom increases sexual potency. Due to this mentality and the absence of appropriate health care, there is a prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the community and the large majority of women will have at least one STI during their lifetime. Furthermore, there are myths that sex with a virgin will restore one's masculinity and it is this type of mindset that puts girls at risk of being forced into the sex trade.



A Girl's Drawing Of Her Community

Umeed meaning 'hope', is a program that aims to give women in the red light district a better quality of life by addressing their basic rights and needs. AAWC provides women with care and support and the means to restore their mental and physical health.

OUTREACH

"I was often caught in police raids and would be harassed by the police which made me not trust others. When AAWC outreach workers started to come into my area I started to trust them and gave them my money to deposit into my "APNI BACHAT" savings account and whenever I needed the money they gave it to me right away and I knew I could trust them. AAWC knows where my children reside and if anything happens to me I know that my children will receive my money and property, I am in safe hands with AAWC." - Umeed Beneficiary

Outreach is an integral part of AAWC's programs and acts as the first point of contact between the organization and the women. Outreach is conducted daily by outreach workers who visit beneficiaries' homes to disseminate information, raise awareness and provide other necessary support the women may need.

Outreach work faces numerous challenges. Outreach can conflict with the sex trade and women often feel the time spent with outreach workers interferes with their work. Brothel owners 'gharwali's' and pimps 'dalal's' do not want outreach workers to speak to the women. Outreach workers also face harassment from male members in the community. Outreach workers mitigate these risks by visiting in the mornings when work is slow, and taking the time to build relationships within the community and gain their trust. Regardless of the challenges to the work it is an extremely fulfilling endeavor when women and their children become a part of AAWC programs and begin to thrive and succeed in their lives.

Highlights

- Total members in the Umeed program: 203
- Total number of home visits in the past year: Approximately 900
- All outreach work is conducted by 3 outreach workers and 1 health outreach worker

FINANCE

"The Apni Bachat program motivated me to save money and to think about my children's future. Whatever money I save is going to be used for my children's education." - Umeed Beneficiary

Savings culture amongst the women in the red light district is lacking and many women spend everything they earn, or their earnings are taken by boyfriends or pimps. AAWC aims to help women save money via the Apni Bachat program. Apni Bachat meaning 'our savings', is a micro saving system that operates through a self-help group that is jointly run by AAWC staff and beneficiaries. Women can deposit as little as 1 rupee into their savings which outreach workers can collect during home visits or women can make deposits at the centre. This program provides the women with a safe place to save their money and creates a culture of saving. Once savings exceed Rs. 500, the women are eligible to open a savings account at Bank of Maharashtra. AAWC staff assists them in obtaining the required documents and accompanying the women to set up the account and for subsequent visits until they are comfortable with the process.

Highlights

- Total number of Apni Bachat Accounts (Umeed and Udaan): 192
- Total number of Bank of Maharashtra accounts opened: 11



EMPOWERMENT

“An outreach worker used to go in my area and tell the women to come to the office if they wanted to prepare a ration or pan card. I did not know anything about the ration card but from it I have been able to get kerosene and grains.” - Umeed Beneficiary

Women are empowered to become independent through basic literacy, awareness programs and through acquiring various forms of government assistance and important identification documents. Vocational training is also provided to the women and it helps to supplement their income.

- Number of applications for PAN cards (Permanent account card- mandatory to open a bank account or receive taxable salary): 14
- Number of applications for Ration Cards: 50

RECREATION

Recreational activities and events are conducted to provide women with much needed respite and enjoyment in their lives and to strengthen the bond of the women with AAWC. As a secular organization AAWC respects the beliefs of its beneficiaries, therefore festivals and holidays of all religions are celebrated. In the past year there were celebrations for Eid, Diwali and Christmas. Additionally, field trips are organized throughout the year.

Highlights

- Makarsankranti (kite festival) celebrated with kite flying
- One day picnic organised with 42 beneficiaries in attendance
- International Women’s Day observed along with Holi and Friendship Day with 86 women in attendance

HEALTH

Women in the red-light district are prone to disease due to the nature of their work, lack of proper nutrition, addictions and lack of hygiene. AAWC helps women obtain proper medical services. Preventive care awareness is provided regarding STI's, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and family planning. AAWC assists women with medical referrals and escorts women to hospitals in order to ensure that the women get adequate treatment.

Mental and socio-emotional health is addressed with practical counseling. Through group and individual counseling, areas are explored which include relationships (with partners, children and other brothel inmates), addictions, parenting, issues involved with facing a serious illness and other concerns that the women have in their daily lives.

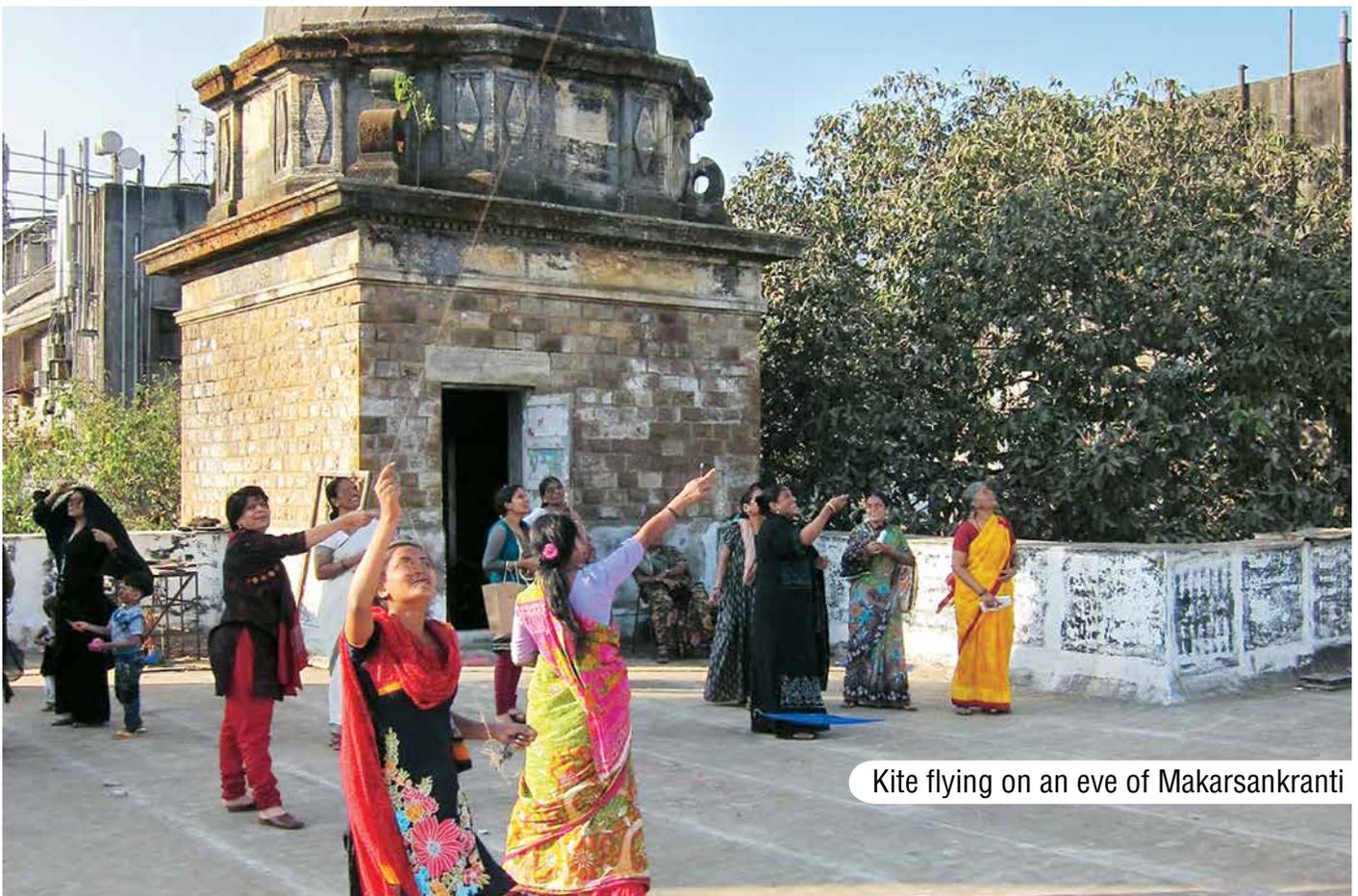
Highlights

- Conducted “Superstitions in Medicine” workshop in order to dispel myths and misconceptions about health so that women are better informed and are not exploited by quacks.
- Workshop on the practices of Directly Observed (DOT) Therapy and ART Therapy was held and beneficiaries learned how both therapies could improve health and well-being
- Number of medical referrals: 261

SUCCESS STORY - EXITING THE TRADE

Growing up in Nepal, Rita* had aspirations of becoming an army officer but due to her family's limited means she was unable to do so. At a young age she was trafficked into Mumbai from her native Nepal. Rita first came in contact with AAWC when an outreach worker came to the area where she lived and discussed the Apni Bachat scheme. She felt that AAWC was doing something good for the community so she decided to take part in the scheme. She began to come to the centre where she engaged in discussions on various topics from education to health. Through these discussions and support from AAWC and other beneficiaries Rita, for the first time in years, started thinking positively about her life and the life of her children. The money she was able to save in Apni Bachat has been used for her children's education and to secure their future. With the help of AAWC she was able to find boarding placements for both her children. She feels that both her children are getting a very good education and are living in safe and enriching environments. She hopes that her son will one day return to Nepal and take up the career of army officer that she was never able to pursue. Knowing that her children have the chance at a better future has motivated Rita to finally leave the sex trade and find another means of livelihood.

**Note: Names have been changed to protect privacy*



Kite flying on an eve of Makarsankranti



FINANCE

“The savings program is nice for young people because before we would spend our money on ice cream and chocolates but now we save it for the future.” – Udaan Beneficiary

The girls residing in the red light district often replicate the behaviour of those around them by spending or wasting their money. Therefore, an Apni Bachat program specifically for the girls has been created to encourage them to save pocket money or other earnings with the aim to make them financially secure.

- Total number of Apni Bachat Accounts (Umeed and Udaan): 192

HEALTH

The objective of the health program is to create awareness about health and sanitation, improve overall physical and mental health and support the girls to become advocates for their own health. AAWC provides girls with support in maintaining personal hygiene by providing hygiene products such as toothpaste, toothbrushes and sanitary pads as well as providing de-worming and lice treatments. In consultation with a doctor, AAWC prepares nutritious snacks and lunch for the girls along with multivitamins to ensure they are receiving adequate nutrition and combating incidences of undernourishment. General health, dental and eye check-ups are conducted throughout the year. AAWC also assists with medical referrals to ensure the girls get timely medical help from trusted practitioners. Additionally, staff members accompany the beneficiaries to the appointments if necessary and ensure that they complete any prescribed treatment.

Highlights

- Proctor and Gamble conducted a workshop on “Reproductive Health and Personal Hygiene” for teenagers
- Health camps conducted: General-2, Eye-2, Dental-2 and Vitamin C Syrup-1
- 85 Immunizations given for Udaan and Umang
- Approximately 90,000 vitamins dispensed
- Approximately 20,000 snacks dispensed



Dental camp by Smiles32

Udaan which means ‘flight’ is a program for the daughters of women in prostitution as well as other young vulnerable girls between 6-21 years. This program aims to equip the girls with education, job skills and support to enable them to pursue a dignified life and choose a career and future away from a life in the brothels.

Total members in the Udaan program: 61

EDUCATION

“Earlier I was not good in studies, I had less interest in studying. As I started coming to AAWC the teachers there started motivating me and showing me that I was intelligent and that I am capable of getting good marks. Now I am good in my studies and want to go into medicine.” – Udaan Beneficiary

Education is crucial to prevent the entrance of girls into the sex trade and offers a non-controversial means of reaching women and their daughters. AAWC assists girls in their pursuit for education in various ways. AAWC helps families with the school admission process by acting as mediators between parents and school officials. Staff visits the school to speak with school administrators and aid with admission forms when parents are unable to do so. AAWC also aids weak students or former drop outs with non-formal coaching until they can be mainstreamed back into the formal school system. After-school tutoring and educational counseling are provided free to Udaan beneficiaries. AAWC offers support in the application process for those looking to pursue higher education whether it is for a diploma, degree program or junior college. Throughout the educational process, AAWC works alongside parents to ensure the success and well-being of their daughters. Education is not seen as a priority by all parents, therefore AAWC conducts home visits to encourage parents to allow their children to stay in school and help them understand the benefits that a good education provides. Once children are enrolled, AAWC staff holds meetings to discuss the educational progress of students with their parents. If students begin to miss school, AAWC staff goes to their homes to enquire as to the reasons why, creating an additional safety net to ensure the girls complete their education.



After School study classes

Highlights

- Two day summer education camp
- Pre-exam stress and time management workshop conducted
- Number of girls completed 10th class:3
- Number of girls completed 12th class:1
- Number of girls entered into College: 6
- Number of girls participating in after school tutoring: 65

REHABILITATION

Girls in the red light district are at high risk of being influenced or forced into the sex trade and are often witness to the negative behaviour in the area. Although there is a need to provide a safe and secure shelter to all the girls in the community, it is not possible due to shortage of resources. Those girls who are extremely vulnerable in the community are referred to shelter homes. Referral is purely based on need and done after a thorough home visits and needs assessment. After the girls are placed, follow-up visits are routinely conducted at the shelter with the young woman and her family.

Highlights

- Number of girls placed in shelter homes: 18

KAMATHIPURA NIGHT SHELTER

“This shelter provides the girls with everything they are lacking at home. A safe place to study, play and make friends. It is like a Family.” – Kamathipura Night Shelter Worker

AAWC opened a night shelter at the Kamathipura centre in August 2011 to serve girls from age 6-18 to confront the issue of shelter shortage in the area. Enormous challenges were faced in the creation of this shelter. AAWC had to combat rising Mumbai rent prices and limited space availability to procure a space for the shelter. In addition, they had to face social stigma from housing societies who did not want children of commercial sex workers to be housed in their complexes. Finally, finding and retaining staff to run the night shelter has been difficult. Despite all these obstacles, AAWC was able to secure a space and staff and currently is at capacity for the shelter, which is 15 girls. The shelter is open from 6pm-10am, Monday through Saturday, and serves the most marginalized girls in the community, providing them with a safe environment to spend the night. But the shelter is much more than just a place to sleep, educational activities, workshops and tutoring are also conducted at the night shelter. The shelter helps to limit the girls exposure to the unhealthy environment and makes them less vulnerable to being forced into the sex trade.

RECREATION AND CREATIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

“We went on a recreational trip to Gujarat and we stayed at a resort with a swimming pool, it was the first time I have ever gone outside Maharashtra!”

– Udaan Beneficiary

As the girls spend most of their time at school, AAWC aims to provide them with a chance for recreation. Workshops are conducted on creative skills to broaden the minds of the girls and give them an opportunity to creatively express themselves, something they often do not have the chance to do.

Highlights

- Workshop highlights: calligraphy, candle making, chocolate making, glass painting.
- Recreation highlights: Celebrated the Raksha Bandhan festival with Marathi and Hindi actor Atul Kulkarni. Independence day festivities with flag decoration competition. Annual picnic held at the Khanvel five-star resort in Silvassa. Attended “Ektava”, a live dance/drama musical organised by Manav Sadhna and performed by 16 slum children in Ahmedabad.



Glass Painting workshop

CAREER READINESS

“Every Saturday we used to have a psychologist come to AAWC and tell us how the brain works and how people become mentally unwell. I was very interested in this and now as a career I want to specialize in psychology and become a counselor.” – Udaan Beneficiary

Career readiness is a key component of the Udaan program to aid the girls in choosing a life outside the sex trade. Workshops are conducted by in-house staff and outside organizations on basic interview skills and understanding the job recruitment process. Career guidance on exploring and choosing the right career path is provided for senior students. Exposure field trips are planned in order to expose the girls to various careers and vocations they may not be aware of or have knowledge of. When girls express interest in pursuing a specific career, AAWC helps to enroll them in specific vocational training programs that will help expose them to their potential career and gain valuable experience in the field.



Highlights

- Exposure visit to V.P. Marg Police, Thane to learn about police administration, the responsibilities of various departments and held a question session with police staff
- Association of Image Consulting India held a basic interview skills and understanding the recruitment process workshop
- Number of vocational workshops conducted: 25

SUCCESS STORY - BEATING THE ODDS

Geeta* first came to the attention of AAWC in 1999 when she was a child in the Umang program. She was a shy girl who was reluctant to participate in the educational programs. Outreach workers feared for her future as she was at high risk of being forced into sex work as her mother was becoming physically weak due to HIV. Through the encouragement and counseling of AAWC, she eventually came to the centre and began participating in the activities and becoming confident. Eventually she completed her 10th standard and at her request was enrolled in a personality development program and English speaking course by AAWC because she wanted to earn her own money. After completing her 12th standard she became employed by a pizza chain and in 2008 was enrolled in an arduous three year course of Hotel Management Apprentice Program from a reputed five star hotel. The admission

process involved five rigorous rounds of interviews and only 14 out of 120 who applied were accepted. Of these 14 students who enrolled in the program only three completed it, Geeta being one of them. Subsequently, she was employed as Assistant Chef at the same hotel. Every year Griffith Laboratories Private Limited, London, a global food manufacturer, organizes an all-India level chef competition for apprentice staff at five star hotels. Geeta represented her hotel and went through several rounds of competition and ultimately made it to the national competition where she was the winner. Now Geeta acts as an inspiration and role model for other girls in the Udaan program by sharing her story and motivating the girls to become successful in their lives.

**Note: Names have been changed to protect privacy*



Nutrition Programme for the toddlers

Umang, meaning joy, is a program for children in the red light district between 2.5-5 years. The 'balwadi' provides a physically and emotionally safe environment that promotes healthy growth and prevents children from being neglected.



Puppet show by the young toddler

EDUCATION

“Many of the children come to the ‘balwadi’ using bad words and fighting with each other but with our activities they begin to improve in behaviour and get along with one another.”

–Balwadi Teacher

To prepare the children for mainstream education and develop their social and communication skills, preparatory classes are conducted at the AAWC centres. Many of the children in the ‘balwadi’ exhibit violent behavior and abusive language, as that is what they have been exposed to at home. The daily classes at the ‘balwadi’ provide a structured environment that teaches discipline and appropriate behavior, helping negate the effects of the home environment. The education program is run by qualified teachers trained in early childhood care and education. Once the children reach the age of six, AAWC assists with their admission process into nearby municipal and government schools.

Highlights

- Number of children enrolled in the balwadi program: 85

HEALTH

AAWC conducts a health program to help the children understand the importance of good health and habits and to improve the overall physical health of the children. AAWC teaches the children proper hygiene by having them brush their teeth daily at the centre as well as checking their nails for cleanliness and instructing them on taking daily baths. Immunizations and testing for diseases is also done during medical camps for the children. The children are provided with a daily nutritional breakfast and lunch which they might not otherwise receive.

Highlights

- Three children this year found positive for malaria and treated.
- Over 60,000 breakfast and lunch meals served this year.
- 6 Health camps conducted: General-2, Eye-2, Dental-2 and Vitamin C Syrup-1
- 85 Immunizations given for Udaan and Umang
- Number of Birth Certificates issued: 33

SHELTER HOME PLACEMENT

The beneficiaries of the Umang program often live in less than ideal situations where they are exposed to violence and other undesirable circumstances. Some children spend their days and nights loitering in the streets as their parents are working or otherwise unable to care for them. For the most marginalized of the children, AAWC seeks shelter home placements so the children have a safe place to reside.

Highlights

- Number of girls placed in shelter homes: 1

RECREATION

Living in harsh circumstances can cause children to ‘grow up’ early and miss out on their childhood. AAWC aims to give Umang children the opportunity to be children and have fun. Throughout the year educational and entertainment outings are planned such as sports days and trips to the zoo. Fun workshops are also conducted such as puppet making and drawing which encourage art in the children and provides a holistic learning and discovery process for them.

Highlights

- Field trips this past year: Happy Planet Zoo, Prince of Wales Museum, Traffic Park
- Activities and events this past year: Annual sports day for Umang and Udaan, fireworks display for Diwali and henna painting for Holi.



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Health checkup by Dr. Jyoti Blencowe

VOLUNTEERS

“Overall my experience at AAWC was an extremely rewarding one. I felt overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems on many occasions, but always felt well supported, cared for and safe. And the many moments of joy- both large and small, balanced the intensity of each day.”

-Dr. Jyoti Blencowe

AAWC is very grateful to the various volunteers who have generously given their time this past year:

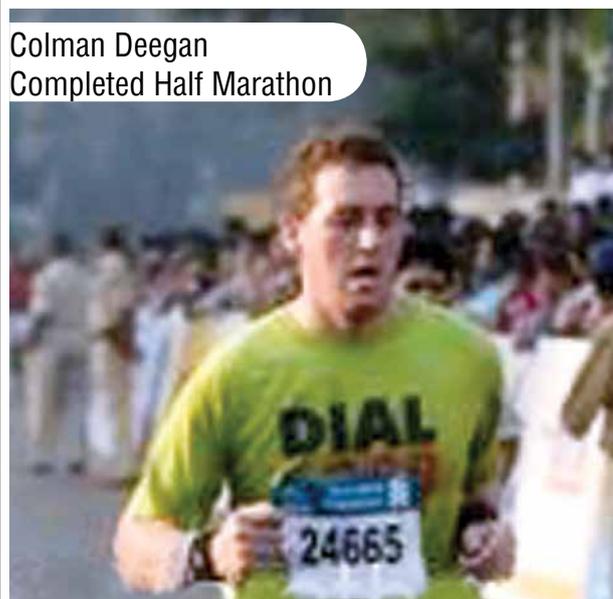
- Dr. Fadnis from Sai Sanstha held a workshop on Directly Observed Therapy and Art Therapy and their role in improving health
- Dr. Jyoti Blencowe- volunteered for one month from Australia and held sessions on HIV/AIDS, TB, skin diseases, STI for the staff and did health check-ups on children
- K.B. Bacchuali from Charitable Eye Hospital, Parel conducted eye check-ups
- Ms. Ramona and Ms. Nadia from DSB International

- School conducted English classes
- Ishaan Pohoomul- conducted English classes
- Arshiya Mittal- conducted educational and interactive games
- Smiles 32 and Dr. Mansi Bhargave, Dr. Riddhi, Dr. Madhulika conducted a free dental checkup for the Udaan and Umang beneficiaries.
- Ms. Antoinette McLachlan made yearly visit to AAWC for her “Calendar Project” and conducted workshop on painting with water colours and

Very special thanks to the runners who participated in the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2012 representing AAWC and supporting the cause with their unique contribution:

Mr. Bjorn Eklund (Sweden) who ran the full marathon.

Mr. Coleman Deegan (Vodafone India Foundation) and Mr. Pratik Agarwal (India) who both ran the half-marathon.



Colman Deegan Completed Half Marathon



Bjorn Eklund Completed Full Marathon

DONORS

AAWC could not operate without the generosity and support of various corporations, trusts and individuals from India and around the world.

54 donors (4 Corporate, 13 Trust, 37 Individuals) donated between INR 100-100,000

13 donors (5 Corporate, 5 Trust, 3 Individuals) donated between INR 100,000-500,000

1 donor (Individual) donated between 500,000-1,000,000

1 donor (Trust) donated between 10, 00,000 & above

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President	: Mr. Sudarshan V. Loyalka- managing director of a limited company
Vice-President	: Adm. Vishnu Bhagwat- Former chief of naval staff
General Secretary	: Ms. Ashika Mehta- Psychotherapist
Treasurer	: Mr. Maneck Davar- Chairman and Managing Director for several Private sector companies
Member	: Mrs. Saeeda Khan- Child guidance and family welfare specialist
Member	: Mr. Ramchandra T. Patil- Manager of a public limited company
Member	: Mr. Dhruv Redkar- Labour activist and organizer

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Registered address:

1st lane khetwadi, 1st floor, Municipal school,
Near Alankar cinema, Mumbai-400 004

Contact: 022-23819721

E-mail: apneaap@gmail.com / aawc98@gmail.com

Website: www.aawc.in

Kamathipura address:

Shop no.2, Ground Floor, Orchid Tower A/B, Shuklaji Street,
Near Mumbai Central, Kamathipura, Mumbai – 400 008.

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