

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

a banner first year

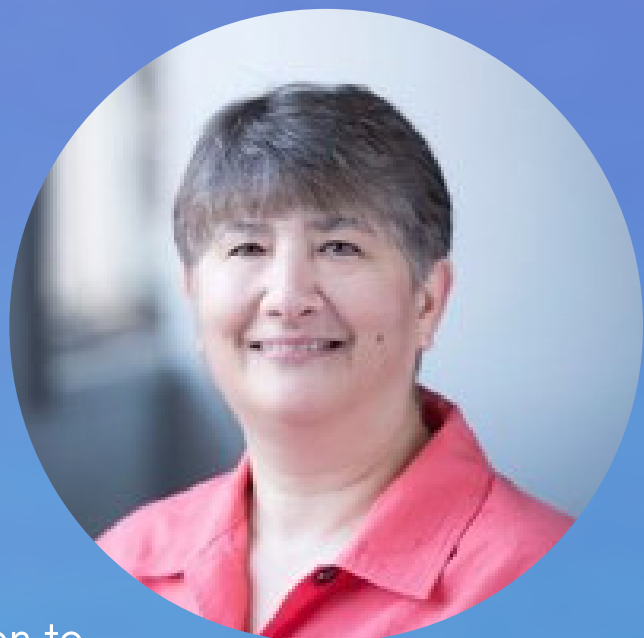
Friends of Aseema

# FOA

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

What a great first full year you have made it for Friends of Aseema!



This year began with local press coverage on our beginnings and our exclusive mission to support Aseema Charitable Trust. Aseema provides high-quality, value-based education and medical care to thousands of extremely marginalized slum children in Mumbai, and in a remote tribal region called Igatpuri.

In February, Board Member Robin Tom and I went to Mumbai to visit the schools run by Aseema. During our visit, we not only had the opportunity to strengthen connections with staff and leadership, but also spoke with Aseema students and alumni. You can find some of these videos on the [testimonials page](#) of our website.

We officially obtained our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS in March, affirming that donations may be tax deductible. On top of that, our creative and hardworking volunteer team began to grow our presence on social media to help broaden awareness efforts.

**Then came COVID-19...**

FOA


## In Mumbai,

things grew dire. The Indian government, on short notice, ordered a lockdown to slow the viral spread, which cut off students from school meals and their families from daily wages. And, when they needed us most, I worried that our organization's efforts would be impaired by economic uncertainty and the inability to meet with donors.

But I needn't have worried because YOU helped Aseema distribute several rounds of emergency food rations to nearly 10,000 people!

How? We operate through a grantmaking process. Aseema makes grant requests that are reviewed by our independent board of directors. This means that, while we cannot take earmarked donations, it gives us a special strength: your donations address Aseema's greatest needs.

Running schools requires students, equipment, buildings, staff, and administration. We are able to provide financial support for items like smart phones for remote learning but also for teacher and staff salaries, classically difficult expenses to raise funds for but expenses that are vital.



Your influx of generosity toward year's end gave us a jumpstart on bolstering Aseema as they head into another year of uncertainties. Take a look below to see where your donations went. We hope you will be proud of your role in supporting Aseema's core functions.

Sincerely,  
**Christine Biancheria**

# 2020 FINANCES AT A GLANCE



**\$131,000\***  
**NET DONATIONS\*\***

**\$65,000**  
**GRANTS ISSUED TO ASEEMA\*\*\***

## MARCH

- \$12,000: emergency COVID-19 food support
- \$9,500: salaries for staff
- \$8,500: weatherproofing at Igatpuri

## JULY

- \$25,000: COVID relief package for food and salary support

## NOVEMBER

- \$10,000: Technology for study-at-home, salary support

The official registration and financial information of Friends of Aseema may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

\*All figures approximated for convenience  
\*\*Less than 4% of donations went to expenses  
\*\*\*As of Dec. 31, 2020

# DONATIONS SUPPORTED: COVID-19 RESPONSE



Before **education**, there  
must be basic **survival**.

ASEEMA ALUMNUS  
SHAHNAWAZ SHAIKH

FOA

# DONATIONS SUPPORTED: COVID-19 RESPONSE



Beginning in March, a government-ordered lockdown closed schools and businesses. Many students rely on Aseema's mid-day meals for nutrition and now their families were unable to earn even their meager day-labor wages. Aseema immediately moved to master the logistics of distributing ration kits to its children and their families—it would not be an easy OR inexpensive task. While Aseema social workers first identified 600 people with the most urgent needs, they soon realized that all of the families would quickly go hungry. With its first round of food distribution, Aseema reached more than 9,980 people. Aseema has conducted four additional rounds of food distribution since then.

**Special thank you to Raaghwari Loomba, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Nick Jonas for raising awareness of our food distribution efforts on social media!**

# DONATIONS SUPPORTED: REMOTE LEARNING



"I was very excited to hear my teacher and my classmates on the WhatsApp group and was happy to start classes online. But I do miss learning with my friends in groups, which we used to do in school. But ... now I can do my homework whenever the phone is free as per my convenience. I can also watch the videos that the teacher sends again and again to understand the concepts. Still if I have doubts, my teachers are very kind, and they allow us to message or call them when we have doubts and they clear them."

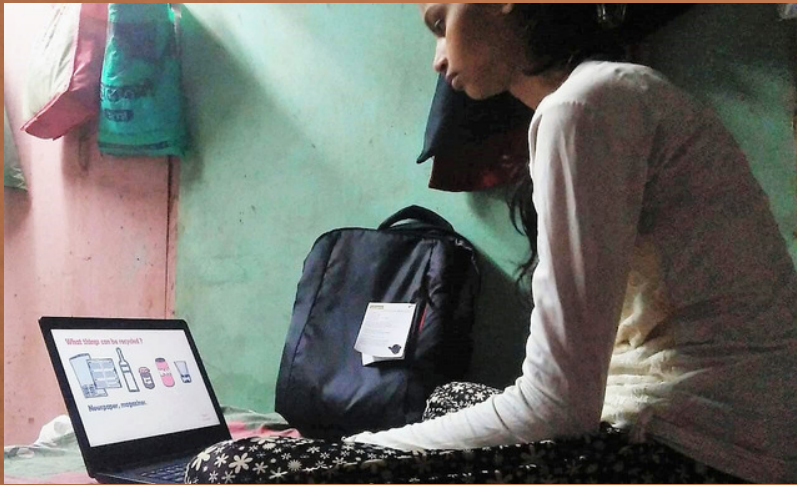
**EAMAN ARUNDATHY, STANDARD IV  
PALI CHIMBAI MUNICIPAL SCHOOL**

# DONATIONS SUPPORTED: REMOTE LEARNING



Aseema broke new ground this year when it was rapidly forced to determine how to engage in distance learning when all of their children live in slum communities and rural Igatpuri. This required funds to support teachers and staff preparing to teach, distribute learning materials, and provide children with smart phones and data plans. Many teachers who needed to soon lead remote classes did not have laptops, nor did older students studying for the SSC tests, India's notoriously difficult school exit exams.

# DONATIONS SUPPORTED: EDUCATION



In India, when a child finishes the 10th standard (roughly 10th grade), the child must take the **SSC exams**. It is difficult and can be life-determining. This year, when the results came in from the last round of exams, **ALL of the Aseema students had passed!**

This would be an achievement for any school but is all the more impressive because Aseema's students had been living all the while in extreme poverty.



# DONATIONS SUPPORTED: TEACHERS & STAFF



Your donations supported salaries and supplies for Aseema staff and teachers, like Mamta, left, who was also one of the very first Aseema students in 1997. Today, she teaches preprimary students.

Learn more about her experiences as a student and teacher at Aseema by [clicking here](#).

# INAUGURAL EVENT: ART AUCTION

Room 13, Aseema's stunning art program, allows children to engage with their creativity, gain self-esteem, learn about art and artists from around the world, and produce amazing work.

This October, Friends of Aseema, in collaboration with Aseema Charitable Trust and Artpreneur, held their inaugural online art auction, "Beauty Without Boundaries 2020," featuring 21 original works of art by Aseema students.

We hope this will be the start of a new tradition!

Limited edition prints of the auctioned items—and more—are still available.



# INAUGURAL EVENT: ART AUCTION



An amazing number of celebrities from India and beyond committed time to meet virtually with the highest bidders. Among them were:

- **Joanne Rogers**, the now late wife of the late Fred Rogers, the U.S.'s beloved children's TV personality
- **Terry Virts**, former commander of the International Space Station
- **Nick Jonas**, Golden Globe and Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter
- **Priyanka Chopra Jonas**, actor, producer and activist
- **Danny Boyle**, Academy-Award winning director of *Slumdog Millionaire*
- **Kate Johnson**, president of Microsoft U.S.
- **Aamir Khan**, famed Indian actor and producer
- **Vanessa German**, Pittsburgh-based multimedia artist
- **Dr. Shashi Tharoor**, former Undersecretary General to the United Nations and Indian M.P.

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

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## FOUNDATIONS, \$20,000+

S&P Global Foundation  
Moez & Marissa Kassam Foundation

## COUNT ON ME, \$2,500+

Pauline Alimchandani & Michael Missaghie  
Nancy Bernstein  
Christine Biancheria  
Alan and Janet Moon  
Anonymous Donors (1)

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

## BEST FRIENDS \$1,000-\$2,499

Kathleen Azar

Lynne Brown

Susan Hunt

Helene B. Lee-Manela

Steven & Linda Pedlow

Richard A. Pollack & Gabriela Vizcaino

Ravi Sundaram

Sukhmani Singh

Veronica Richards

Matthew Thornton

*Patricia Garber in memory of Phil Pillar and in honor of Claire Pillar*

*Anne Kirchmier in honor of Chris Biancheria and in memory of Ruth Kirchmier*

*Anonymous Donors (4)*

*one in honor of the vision and dedication of Chris Biancheria*

*one in memory of Dada Gyanchand Gangwani*

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

## FAST FRIENDS \$250-\$999

John Biancheria  
Erica Cahill  
Gaurav Chauhan  
John Chirapurath  
Barbara Ginn  
Monica Groover

Debra Hamilton  
Andrea London  
Rima Mutreja  
Rachel Myers  
Claiborne Newlin  
Deval (Reshma)  
Paranjpe

Achint Parekh  
Tanvi Pisolkar  
Leila Richards  
Hetal Sangvhi  
Charles F. Singer III  
Anonymous Donors (1)

*Judith Benstein in honor of Chris Biancheria*  
*Margarita Rosenthal Clagett in honor of Christine Biancheria*  
*Susan J. Frietsche in memory of Florence Frietsche*  
*Beverly Harris-Schenz in honor of Mary M. Insowy*  
*Ginny Hildebrand in honor of Chris Biancheria*  
*and in memory of Virginia & Bill Hildebrand*  
*Shenu Lawrence Gupta in memory of Rana Rani Gupta*  
*John J. O'Reilly in memory of Deborah S. Maliver*

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

## FRIENDS IN NEED UP TO \$249

Nishat A	Vandita Bothra	Ramona Fararo
Susan Abramowich	Andrew Brenner	Kathleen Ferraro
Smitha Agadi	Nancy Burkoff	Erin Fiscus
Howard Aikens	Kathryn Cain-Bell	Josiah Fiscus
David Al	Teresa Candori	Lydia Foster
Ethar Al Aasami	Margaret Cassidy	Donald Furness
Qudoos Amatul	Amy Cavender	Francois Furstenberg
Erik Arneson	Vijay Char	Dharamveer Gajaria
Mansi Arora	Shalini Chawala	Helen Gallagher
Farzana Attaullah	Bhakti Chheda	Peeyush Gandhi
Linda Bacher	Amy Coco	Sharad Gandhi
Madhubanti Basu	James Cole	Rachel Gay
Pritha Bhattacharya	Stephanie Cooper	Ken Giglio
Martha Begley	Enza Costa	John Gillett
Mark Belz	Kipp Dawson	M. Tyler Gillett
Mary Ann Benkoski	Melanie DeStefano	Jacob Ginn
Rebecca Bentley	Jill Diskin	Leon Ginn
Connie Berg	Kenneth M. Drake	Sonia Goraya
John Blanck	Karen Edwards	Sakshi Govil
	Karen Engro	Satish Gupta
	Kathleen Esquibel-Baca	Vincent Gutierrez
	Roland Falcioni	Nate & Jess Hirshberg

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

## FRIENDS IN NEED UP TO \$249, CONT'D

Ryan Hopkins  
TaMara Howard  
Amanda Huang  
Nancy A. Hubley  
Rajeev Jain  
Sangita Jain  
Pooja Jalal  
Andrew James  
Jill Jeffrey  
Alison Julien  
Krishna K  
Sadrija Kalezic  
Becky Kaufman  
Karen Kelso  
Sangeeta Kewal  
Gaurav Khanna  
Kovil Khanna  
Shaina Kher  
Pooja Konjier  
Mansi Kothari

Carol Krupski  
Sabhya Kumar  
Shilpa Lad  
Virginia & David Lambeth  
Francine Larson  
Brian Leet  
Candice Leit  
Uttara Limaye  
Sharon Madden  
Diana Magera  
Kait McIntyre  
Ridhima Mehra  
Sakshi Mehra  
Saadique Merchant  
Darin Metzger  
Jeffrey Micher  
Erin Miller  
James Miller  
Seana Miller  
Anoushka Mitra  
Laurie & Victor Mizrahi  
Patricia Mooneyham  
Madhuri Murli

Meenal Nagar  
Ankita Narayan  
Susan Nernberg  
Akiko Norton  
Michael O'Toole &  
Rosemary Alley  
Ameya Padhye  
Ami Parikh  
Tara Pfeifer  
Matthew Pickens  
Phyllis Ellis Popper  
Lori Pozzuto  
Richard Pozzuto  
Ravindra Prasad  
Deepak Ramachandran  
Catherine Raphael  
Nancy Reese  
Katherine Repage  
Meg Robertson  
Maria Rodrigues  
Monica Rodrigues  
Karesa Rovnan

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

## FRIENDS IN NEED UP TO \$249, CONT'D

Susan Royer	Sowmya Singh
Reshma Salian	Tajinder Pal Singh
Anand Sangam	Ramya Sivaraman
Anagha Satav	Susan Smith
Ric Scott	Anusha Sodani
Kathleen Schneider	Anthony Soltis
Anthony Jithu Sebastion	Samiratu Sore
Heidi Semmer	Srivats Srinivasan
Amit Shah	Lisa Stein
Miti Shah	Chris Tandlmayer
Sandhya Shah	Robin Tom
Kavya Shankar	Lakshmi Venkataiah
Vibha Shetiya	Christopher Weeks
Steven Sherman	Sharon Whealy
Alan Shuckrow	Julie Worthington-McGee
Jose & Heloisa Silva	Michelle Zentis

United Methodist Women of Mt. Lebanon Methodist Church

# THANK YOU: LIST OF DONORS

## FRIENDS IN NEED UP TO \$249, CONT'D

Beverly Curtis *in honor of Chris Biancheria*  
Faina Geberovich *in honor of Hetal Sanghvi*  
Spoorthi Hiremath *in honor of Every Child*  
Surabhi Kabra *in memory of Vijayalaxmi Kabra*  
Kamal Kapadia *in honor of Armeen Kapadia*  
Michael Khoury *in honor of Chris Biancheria*  
Jagdish Konjier *in memory of Jagdish Konjier*  
Joel Poholsky *in honor of my friend Zia Parakh*  
Nithya Vaidyanathan *in honor of Sri C.M. Bhimsimha*  
Sandy Waters *in memory of Logan Renshaw*  
Linda Wharton *in honor of Eileen Conran-Folks*

Anonymous Donors (43)  
one *in honor of Yasamin Foroug*  
one *in memory of Dad*  
one *in honor of Viji Sagar*  
one *in honor of Patrick Bower*

# THANK YOU

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

ANNE FRANK

## Thank you

for supporting Friends of Aseema in its first year. For us, Aseema is an inspiring model for change in which people of all backgrounds can come together to transform the lives of some of the world's poorest children. We look forward to growing as an organization and continuing to build relationships with supporters like you.

**Stay up to date with Friends of Aseema:** *Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit our evolving website, [friendsofaseema.org](http://friendsofaseema.org); or contact us at [info@friendsofaseema.org](mailto:info@friendsofaseema.org)!*



Pittsburgh, PA 15217