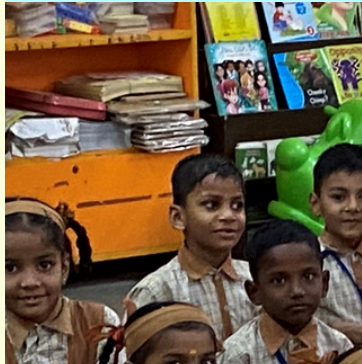


2024 Annual Report



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Learn more about Friends of Aseema, or contact us, at friendsofaseema.org

Friends of Aseema is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized under Pennsylvania law. The official registration and financial information of Friends of Aseema, Inc., may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Letter from the President

“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.” – Oscar Wilde

Thank you for helping us make 2024 a successful year despite all odds! I was worried that the U.S. elections would completely consume attention and resources, but you came through.



In this report, you will find some of the highlights from 2024.

Several board members visited Aseema this year, and Friends of Aseema is proud to announce the recent addition of early supporter Madhuri Murlikrishnan to the board in the beginning of 2025.

For over 27 years, the Aseema Charitable Trust has been dedicated to providing secular, high-quality, value-based education and medical care to thousands of marginalized children living in Mumbai's slums and a remote tribal area near Igatpuri.



We offer a way to make high-impact donations to help transform these children's lives.

Donations are quick and easy at www.friendsofaseema.org.

Christine Biancheria
President, Friends of Aseema

2024

Financials at a Glance

Donations to Friends of Aseema:

\$109,000

Grants to Aseema:

\$139,000

These grants sponsored educational materials, field trips, classroom equipment, teacher salary, and more.

Expenses:

Approximately 10.5% of our budget was applied to necessary expenses and purchases of products from the separate Aseema Foundation for resale here. None of our funding was used for board members or their site visits. We are an all-volunteer organization.



Grants By Year	Total Amount
2019	\$6,787.19
2020	\$65,140.00
2021	\$133,873.00
2022	\$69,938.56
2023	\$92,999.00
2024	\$139,116.18
	\$507,853.93



Visit to Aseema: Aruna & Manasa Ravi

The year began with a visit to Aseema by Board Members
Christine, Aruna, and Manasa.



Rekha from Donor Relations greeted them!



Student Welcome Committee

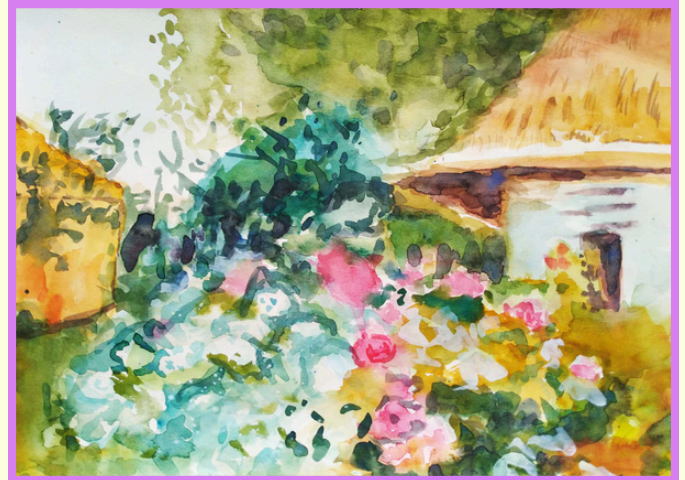
After a warm reception from staff and students,
they toured two of Aseema's Mumbai schools.



Aruna and Manasa at an Aseema counseling center

Alumni Feature: A Life Transformed

Shraddha Singh is a brilliant artist and dedicated student whose talents have taken her across the world. At just 10 years old, she painted *The Cottage*, a stunning portrayal of spring's beauty, wreathed in flowers.



A standout student at Aseema, Shraddha completed Standard X (Grade 10) in 2024. She was a prize winner in the K-ART 2023 International Teenage Design competition, for which she traveled to Busan, South Korea.



Shraddha was selected to attend United World College in China, where she is now studying Integrated Business Planning. Shraddha's hard work took her on this journey from home in a Mumbai slum called Danpada.

We are incredibly proud of Shraddha and wish her the very best. Her artwork, including *The Cottage*, is available in our [Etsy shop](#).



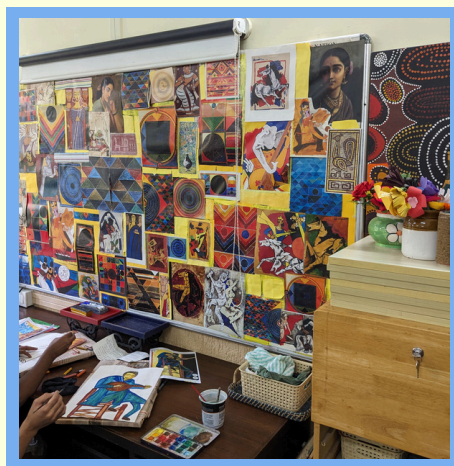
Visit to Aseema: Rohit

Board Member Rohit re-visited Aseema schools, and this time, also met with parents. Rohit says that he was “deeply impressed by the dedication of the teachers towards education, physical well-being, mental health, and nutrition.”



Rohit visits Aseema students' homes

“The school's holistic approach ensures that children receive not just academic knowledge but also proper nourishment and care. Parents from low-income communities greatly appreciate the school's efforts, including medical assistance and quality education.”



Rohit tours Aseema art programs

“Aseema is making a significant difference in uplifting children and their families.”

Aseema: A Journey Beyond Boundaries

International Book Launch

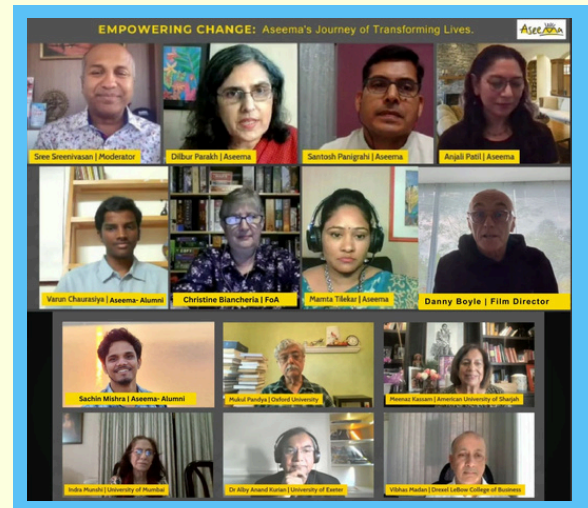
This year, Aseema's longtime chairperson, Dilbur Parakh, wrote a remarkable book. It chronicles Aseema's journey from its humble beginnings as a small group of volunteers to its current success in running four schools and conducting teacher training programs. The book even includes a chapter on Friends of Aseema and our impact!



The online launch of the book was graciously hosted by the esteemed journalist Sree Sreenivasan, co-founder of Digimentors. Priyanka Chopra Jonas shared her support on social media. Academy Award-winning filmmaker Danny Boyle appeared via recorded message.

We encourage everyone to buy a copy of the book. You can see outtakes from the launch on our [YouTube channel](#). One particularly touching segment was a testimonial from Mamta Tilekar, a student in Aseema's first class who is now an Aseema Montessori teacher. [Watch for yourself here!](#)

[The entire show is available to watch online!](#)



Our First Meenaz Kassam Fellow: Jane Windsheimer



Meenaz Kassam, a retired professor, dedicated her teaching and research to the nonprofit sector, volunteering, philanthropy, and women's empowerment. She has co-authored books and journal articles on these topics and, beyond academia, is a committed philanthropist with a long-standing relationship with Aseema. After personally vetting the organization, she chose Aseema as her nongovernmental organization, or NGO, of choice, [a decision she shared during an online book launch](#). In every sense, Meenaz exemplifies thoughtful generosity.

Jane Windsheimer made for an ideal choice as our first fellow. A self-starter, Jane has actively pursued volunteer and internship opportunities from a young age, driven by her passion for advocating for the underserved. Currently, she is earning her bachelor's degree in communications, with a focus on advocacy, social change, and women's studies.



Photo by Greg Sciulli

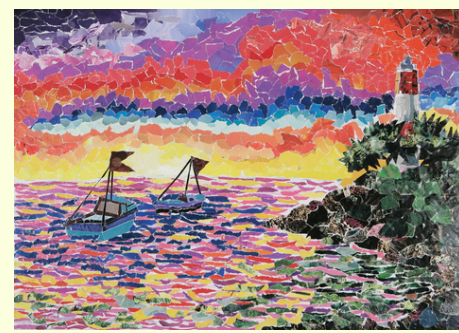
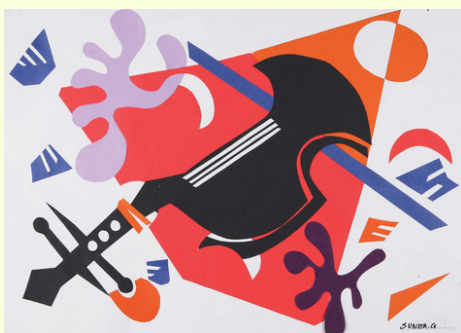
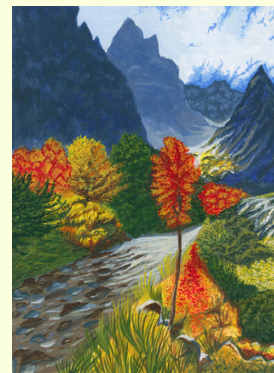
Through Jane's experience with numerous organizations, we, too, gained valuable insights.

Buy Aseema Art!

Friends of Aseema sells high-quality art prints made from the original works of Aseema students. While the art comes from India, the prints are produced locally.

[Read](#) about how your purchases from our [Etsy shop](#) or at markets support global community and a small, U.S., veteran-owned business at the same time!

Below are examples of prints. You can click on them to follow to their page.



A Brunch of Goodness in Hard Times

Thanks to the hard work of Ginny Hildebrand, Karen Engro, and Jamini Davies, we held an in-person brunch to introduce people to Friends of Aseema.



The dynamic trio served up a fun time. Our guests donated generously and bought beautiful art prints and household items adorned with Aseema children's art.



Two guests were inspired to host a similar event in 2025!



100% Pass Rate!

As in so many prior years, Aseema students achieved a 100% pass rate on their board exams (SSC). Aseema students Varun Chaurasiya and Aditya Wankhede scored 2nd and 3rd, respectively, out of 16,140 students in their Mumbai school system.

Aseema students regularly outscore their state's average, which includes scores of children from well resourced backgrounds.

Through your donations, you can help these children fulfill their limitless potential. Thank you!



THANK YOU DONORS!

COUNT ON ME, \$2,500+

Nancy Bernstein and Rocky Schoen

Susan Frietsche

Erin & Seana Miller

Rio Grande Games

Tony & Celia Soltis

Neetu Watumull

Christine Biancheria in honor of The Old Gate Road Gang

Patricia Garber in honor of Ginger Pillar

Grambrindi Davies Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation

in honor of Christine Biancheria & Sue Frietsche

Anonymous Donors (2)



BEST FRIENDS, \$1,000 to \$2,499

Lynne Brown & Elizabeth Stokes

Ramona Fararo

M. Tyler Gillett

Rachel Myers

Femida Handy in honor of Meenaz Kassam

John J. O'Reilly in memory of Deborah S. Maliver

Ms. Dena Willmore & Ms. Martha Thurber in honor of Mary Ashton

Anonymous in honor of Janaki Iyer

Anonymous in memory of James Marshall Miller

Steven & Linda Pedlow

Rohit Vaidya

Sundar Vedantham

Richard & Sandy Waters



FAST FRIENDS, \$250 to \$999

Suzanne Badoux
Mark Belz
Margaret Cassidy
James B. Cole
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Ginny Hildebrand in memory of Jan Neffke
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Andrea London & Kenneth Boas
John Paul MacDuffie in memory of Marilyn Goldsmith MacDuffie
Gary Taylor in honor of The Old Gate Road Gang
Anonymous Donors (3)





FRIENDS IN NEED

UP TO \$250

Arundhati Annegiri
Christine M. Bacher
Louanne Baily
Madhubanti Basu
Trudy Bayer
Kim Berg
Erica Cahill
Amy Coco
Stephanie Cooper
Matthew Diaddigo
Sharon DiPaolo
Ken M. Drake
Karen A. Eriksen

Francois Furstenberg
Brittany Green
Alexandra Gruskos
Neha Hajela
John Jacobs
Priscilla Johnson
Alison Julien
Rebecca Kaufman
Karen Kelso
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Gabriele Kirsch
James B. Lieber
Holly Maurer-Klein

Nikita Mehta
Deval Paranjpe
Cathy Raphael
Manasa Ravi
Sasha Shapiro
Kunal Sharma
Jacob Matthew Simon
Janet Simon
Susan Smerd
Rob Stephens
Mackenzie Takus
Robin Tom
Alison Wolfson



Erik & Beth Arneson
Kipp Dawson & Eileen Yacknin
Ljiljana Duraskovic & Sadrija Kalezic
Karen Engro & Jules Lobel
Josiah & Erin Fiscus

Kathryn & William Karns
Warren & Sharon Madden
Plummer Slade, Inc.
William M. Robinson & Sharon Semenza
Anonymous Donors (39)

John Biancheria in memory of Anteo Biancheria
Dennis Clagett in memory of Margarita Rosenthal
Beverly Curtis in honor of Christine Biancheria
Anne Kirchmier in honor of The Old Gate Road Gang
Nancy Reese in honor of Sue Frietsche
Rhonda Wasserman in honor of Deborah & Marvin Wasserman
Anonymous in memory of Bryan Johnson & Kory Heath



Friends of Aseema wishes to extend a special thanks to the many [Microsoft Employees](#) who participated in a matching campaign, most of whom are listed anonymously.

We also thank [Ginny Hildebrand, Karen Engro, and Jamini Davies](#) for their extraordinary efforts to introduce people to Friends of Aseema. We learned a lot from you in the process, and you came through in difficult times!

Our president would like to give an Above-and-Beyond shoutout to [Seana and Erin Miller](#) for supporting our organization as generous donors and for their support in so many other ways.

If anyone is curious, [The Old Gate Road Gang](#) refers, not to a real gang, but to a group of childhood friends who grew up on the same street and who were made better for having had the good fortune to shape each other's lives then and now.

A big thanks to [Madhuri Murlikrishnan](#) and [Rohit Vaidya](#) for their generosity of spirit, heart, and resources and for making time to visit Aseema's schools.

We are grateful for all of you. [We could write a tribute to each of you.](#) Thank you all so much for caring about this wonderful cause.