



a new home in the world for young adults

◆◆◆◆◆ shuktara ◆◆◆◆◆

43b/5 Narayan Roy Road P.S. Thakurpukur Kolkata 700008 West Bengal INDIA

Contact no: - 91 33 2496 0051

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In October I will have been in India for 15 years and I would never have believed 15 years ago that today I would still be here, and that I would be able to look around and see the lives of a few children and young people having been changed forever, through the hard work of the staff here and the generous donations that people around the world have given to help us achieve all we have.

Through your donations we have been able to purchase a beautiful house for the boys. We also have the space to take more children whenever we are asked, or when we find any that fit our criteria, that they have a disability and have no family to care for them. There are many of these children and young people on the streets, not only here in Calcutta, but around India. According to a report I recently read, there are 11 million homeless children on the streets in India. I wonder how many of them have a disability and are trying to cope on the streets, like some of ours did before they came to shuktara. It is such a shame, it makes me feel so sad when I see them struggling to survive – we cannot help all of them, but for a few we have been able to make an enormous difference.

With your support we have been able to buy the boys' house and we have enough money to purchase the house for girls to be named Lula Bari in memory of our lovely friend Lula Gibson, who died last year and was so keen to do something for the girls of shuktara. We have been let down once on a property we loved, but it does look like something is there and we are hoping that by the end of this year the girls will be moved into their new permanent home.



The girls with Pappu's wife Deepika and their new baby Navika

When we have purchased the home for the girls, we will still need about 12,000gbp per annum for the running of the two homes. We are always so amazed with the generosity of people who send us one-off donations, which somehow always come at the right time and mean we can pay all the bills. However, if we never received any more one-off donations from any of you, we would be short of this amount each year.

To this end, the Shuktara Trust UK are looking to try and boost our giving, particularly with regular donations such as standing orders. I know a lot of you are already giving regularly and generously to shuktara, but if you know of anyone that could help – or you do not presently give and would like to - please join together with us to help to try to make up this small shortfall. A regular gift of just 5gbp a month would make a huge difference – this is 60gbp a year that we could rely on to keep the homes running.

If you would like some shuktara leaflets to give out to your friends, please contact Sue Tungay at suetungay@gmail.com and help us to spread the word. Or call her on 02087483151 – in London.

In order to save on mailing costs, we are also thinking of introducing a monthly mail-shot by email, to keep supporters up to date with our news. It could be instead of this letter that I write three times a year from India. Alternatively, I can send you my 'letter-from-India' as an attachment to an email instead. Of course, I am sure some of you would prefer to continue receiving my newsletter by post and that will continue for those of you that wish to receive it. Please let us know your thoughts. You can respond to Sue Tungay at suetungay@gmail.com or to me at earp_david@hotmail.com with your preferred choice.

In the 14 years of shuktara I have never had to ask for money – it has always miraculously come to help us and I am so grateful. But as I said, with the UK Trustees now (as their name implies – being entrusted with the money) trying to boost our income to cover the running costs of the two homes, it seems natural that they will want to ask for help.

The most important thing now is to try and increase the level of regular donations to shuktara, as this provides a predictable and sustainable income for the homes. However, they are looking at many options to try to get this extra money –if you know of any way that you can help, please let us know.

I know that other charities raise funds through their supporters running the London Marathon and we have had 2 or 3 people running for shuktara already, but there are many other ways, such as hosting small fundraising events, coffee mornings or dinner parties – if you feel motivated to do something like that for shuktara, we would be extremely grateful, and we will provide you with all the help we can. Again, you can contact Sue to discuss any ideas.

I have some great ideas for 2014 which I will let you know about as soon as I have formalised them.

I have been using Facebook and Twitter to raise the profile of shuktara, so if you use social media and would like to join in our shuktara conversations please find us at :-

www.facebook.com/shuktarahomes

and on Twitter at @my_shuktara

As always my thanks goes out to you for your support, because none of this would have been possible without your help. Also to the amazing staff in Calcutta who not only care for the children and young people but keep their space safe and secure for them.

Thank you – David Earp



Ratan with his carer Malai