



**CALCUTTA  
KIDS**

[www.calcuttakids.org](http://www.calcuttakids.org)

**United States**

P.O. Box 465  
Marlboro, VT 05344  
Ph: 802 254 2652 ■ [info@calcuttakids.org](mailto:info@calcuttakids.org)

**India**

51 Bhairab Dutta Lane  
Salkia Howrah, 711106 West Bengal  
Ph: +91 033 2675 7870 ■ [info@calcuttakids.org](mailto:info@calcuttakids.org)

November 25th 2017

Dear Friends of Calcutta Kids,

Each year at this time we write to you with a theme-based message from Kolkata to ask for your continued support to our health and nutrition efforts with mothers and children in Fakir Bagan, a community now of over 600 beneficiary families, a remarkable staff of 22, and you, the well-wishing-believer-investor-friends who make our work possible.

Last year the theme of the message was *hope*, the year before it was *care*, in 2014 it was *empowerment*, in 2013 - *opportunity*. The theme this year is *community*.

We have four updates and stories related to the theme of community which have inspired us and which, we hope, you will also find meaningful.



*In loving memory of  
Mohit Paswan*

**Community as family:** Ritadi, a dear and beloved member of our support staff experienced the greatest of tragedies this past year - the unexpected death of her 13-year-old son Mohit who died from complications related to kidney failure. Ritadi is a single mother with two surviving children whose husband mysteriously disappeared several years ago. When Mohit began having unexplained convulsions in their house, members from the Calcutta Kids team rushed to be with Ritadi, and escorted her and her son to the hospital. As Ritadi does not have any family nearby, our managing director and program manager assisted with the hospitalization formalities and, along with some of the community health workers spent the night with Ritadi at the hospital. Ritadi was surrounded by her Calcutta Kids family when she was informed that her son had died.

With Ritadi in shock and unable to speak for several days, Calcutta Kids organized Mohit's cremation and arranged for team members to stay with Ritadi and her family for the next week and organize meals. Ritadi is heartbroken as are we all. Yet Ritadi now comes to work every day, knowing that she will be surrounded by a community which cares so deeply for her. Special thanks to Ritadi for allowing us to share this story with you, a glimpse into a community that so genuinely embodies compassion.

**A tea stall for women and young girls:** Anyone who's been to Kolkata is familiar with tea stalls. They can be found at nearly every corner of every street. Men from the locality congregate at these tea stalls to talk about politics and recent events and to laugh together. But where do the women go? In Fakir Bagan, women come to Ma O Shishu Shiksha Kendra - Calcutta Kids' Mother and Child Learning Center near the center of this slum community. Every afternoon, this center is a space where women congregate to share ideas and engage in community building activities, conversations always held over a cup of tea. The afternoons provide the space for

the women to get to know each other, develop self-confidence, and acquire skills and knowledge on a variety of topics. In the process, they learn about each other's struggles, and discuss strategies to overcome them.

Some afternoons, the space is reserved for adolescent girls. As we have written about in the past, our new Ashayein Adolescent Girls Program was created at the urging of pregnant women and mothers who regularly expressed the wish that *they* could have had access to such invaluable health information when they were younger.

**Maternal and child health community collaboration and mobile data collection:** We have always taken pride in the use we make of data which we employ on a daily basis to inform our programs and ensure that no beneficiary will fall through the cracks. Our current custom-built system is designed to deliver immunization reminders, special alerts for at-risk mothers and children requiring special attention, and much more. Calcutta Kids has recently embarked on a collaborative adventure with six other maternal and child health programs in India equally committed to data-driven development. Under the auspices of an Indian technology nonprofit organization, our innovations will now be shared widely, with the potential to reach 20,000 families in India by the end of 2018. At the same time Calcutta Kids will benefit from the technological creations of some of these other organizations.

The arrangement also means that by the middle of next year our operation will become paperless and our health workers will be able to type into a mobile phone the name of a beneficiary, view his/her growth chart and immunization history, and then be able to enter new data directly on to the phone.

**Encouraging engagement with you:** This past year many of you have expressed a strong desire for more frequent updates, stories, and dispatches from Calcutta Kids. Accordingly, starting in the new year, we will begin providing, on a regular basis, a manageable amount of meaningful content to keep you informed about interesting happenings. Stay tuned for news on an innovative approach to complementary feeding, on a creative collaboration with the local police department, and on the results of our study examining the relationship between parental mental illness and child malnutrition in our community. Thanks to all of you who are sharing with us your ideas, feedback and encouragement. You are an important part of our community and your voices are crucial to our work.

Please do continue to be a part of our Calcutta Kids community.

With warmest holiday wishes and many thanks,



Noah Levinson & Evangeline Ambat  
Co-Directors, Calcutta Kids



Please make your checks payable to **"Calcutta Kids"** and send to the US address on the reverse page. Or if you prefer, visit our online payment gateway at [www.calcuttakids.org](http://www.calcuttakids.org) and click on the **Donate** button. Donations are tax-deductible in the United States. To donate online using a **credit card issued outside the United States**, follow the instructions above and change the default country from the US to the country of your choice. Then enter credit card details. **For 80(G) tax deductible contributions in India**, please make checks payable to **"Calcutta Kids Trust"** and send to the India address on the reverse page, or e-mail [info@calcuttakids.org](mailto:info@calcuttakids.org) and request instructions for direct bank transfer details.