



Bangla Hope

CHANGING LIVES... ONE CHILD AT A TIME

No. 99

Spring 2019

Only God Could Orchestrate Something Like This! By Robyn Griffin

It was Sabbath morning December 8, 2018, and a still, small voice was urging me to go visit a girl whom we hadn't seen for at least a year. The problem was that I didn't know her name nor did I remember the exact location of her house. The story really had begun four years earlier. One of our 5th grade girls, Brittany, had gone to the nearby village of Gohara to make friends with one of the girls who lived there as part of a Pathfinder assignment. About a year later Brittany and her sisters Brooke and Alisha were on an afternoon walk with me when Brittany remarked, "One of my best friends lives near here." We went to visit her and found that she was desperately in need of a blanket. We had the joy of providing her one.

A little over a year later we received the news that her mother had been hit and killed by a train. The girl's father had remarried and her stepmother had taken everything that had belonged to the girl leaving her with practically no clothes. Even the blanket we had given her had been taken. We sent her shopping with the director of our Children's Home, Papri Tudu, to re-outfit her with necessary clothing, blankets, etc.

Now it was Sabbath morning where our story picks up, and the

still, small voice was urging me to go visit this girl that afternoon. Brittany couldn't accompany me, but the inner urging wouldn't let up.

After lunch I determined to go to Gohara to find this girl if possible. About eight girls from our Children's Home accompanied me. We set off looking for a girl whose name we didn't know who lived in a mud house the location of which I could not recall.

On the outskirts of the village we heard a faint shout coming from the recently harvested rice fields, and then saw a running figure heading our way. Before long we could hear the girl shouting, "Uncle Robyn, Uncle Robyn!". As the girl got closer, we recognized her as the one whom we

were hoping to find. We didn't need to find her. God was arranging the meeting. Her bare feet padded along the tiny paths crisscrossing the empty rice fields and her bare arms were exposed to the cool winter air prevalent in Bangladesh in December. I'm always amazed at God's timing!

"And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isa. 65:24

Upon reaching us she escorted us to her home where she commenced to tell us that her father refused to allow her to receive further education. *Continued on page 2...*



Vockti, Sarabonti, Sujala, and Puja

Princess Natasha...See You in the Morning By Robyn Griffin

Sabbath afternoon of December 22, 2018 will live in our memories until Jesus comes again.

Many children were in my apartment coloring pictures and listening to Christmas music when my phone rang. It was 1:40 PM. The voice on the other end was Kerissa, one of our 9th graders. She and her sister Natasha, a 6th grader had left Bangla Hope just days before to visit their family's home for the first time since they were infants. In an effort for families to maintain their bonds, Bangla Hope has begun to allow those in grade 6 and up to visit their homes during the Christmas holidays if they choose. About 20 students took advantage of the opportunity this past Christmas and visited with family they had not seen in years.

Among those were Kerissa and her younger sister Natasha. They both came to give me a hug as they left the campus to visit their tiny home in the south. Days later on a Sabbath morning, their small family boarded an electric-powered rickshaw, known as a van, to visit an aunt whom the girls had never met. Natasha's orna (traditional Bangla scarf) got caught in the wheel of the rickshaw. Shortly afterward Kerissa was on the phone with me saying, "Uncle Robyn...Natasha is dead!".

Her Bangla Hope family first went into denial and then shock. Happy, smiling Natasha, once so full of life was now asleep waiting for Jesus' return. The father called about an hour later requesting permission to bury her. Normally Hindu burn their dead, but know-

ing that Natasha had been raised a Christian he asked if they could bury her instead of respect. Nishikanto, our Village School Superintendent who lives in that area hurried over to participate in the funeral services that occurred about sunset on the same day.

It's still hard to believe that she is not with us any longer, but we praise God for the twelve years we had with her and look forward to seeing her in the morning.



Natasha

Only God Could Orchestrate Something Like This! Continued from page 1

She had just completed the 5th grade at our Bangla Hope Village School and he figured that it was time for her to marry. I asked her what she wanted to do. She begged, "Uncle Robyn, could you please help me complete my education?" All this discussion was taking place through the translation of one of our 7th grade girls who had accompanied me. I asked the girl, "Can you come and visit me on Monday morning at 10 am and let's talk together with Mrs. Soren, our Administrator?"

Before retiring for the night, I got onto my computer to check my bank account. There I discovered that somebody had deposited \$300 into my personal account about which I knew nothing. The mystery increased after speaking to my wife about the funds and discovered that she didn't know anything about the deposit either.

The following day I received an email from a friend in Oregon who had taught with us at Laurelwood Academy fifteen years earlier, informing me that he had deposited \$300 into our account for personal use or for whatever was needed. I was elated! Only God could orchestrate such a story...and it was such a joy to be a part of it!

Before 10 am on Monday morning, Sarabonti (I finally learned her name) and her younger brother arrived on our campus, barefoot, but happy. After interviewing her for about twenty minutes we decided that this was of God and that we would contact her father to obtain his permission for her to continue her education. We sent them back home with the assurance that we would contact her father and would provide funds to purchase them some shoes. Within the week we had received parental permission for Sarabonti to begin school on January 6, at Seventh-day Adventist Maranatha School (SAMS). Not only that, the father, who had been determined to send his son to a Hindu school, had suddenly changed his mind and enrolled him in our Bangla Hope Village School. What a story! What a God! But that's not the end of it!

Three Sabbath's later, on December 29, I was with about twenty kids and we had stopped by to visit Sarabonti to inform her that we had gone shopping for her the day before to get her necessary items for school. While visiting with her she said, "there is a very old grandmother who lives just down the path who is very ill. Can you go and pray with her?" Minutes later we were standing in the grandmother's yard asking God

REGISTRATION DAY AT SAMS



Sarabonti's father, Sarabonti, Vockti, Sujala, Puja, Puja and Vockti's mom

to give her health. The poor woman was suffering from the cool weather and running a fever. She looked up into my face and asked,

"Could I have a blanket? I am so cold!"

"Grandma...what is your favorite color?" I asked.

"I love blue!" she responded.

"Lord willing, we will bring you one tomorrow."

As I rose to leave, the grandma's daughter grabbed me and asked, "Is there any way that my two daughters who are good friends with Sarabonti could attend SAMS with her? They both attended Bangla Hope Village School...the older one Puja would be entering 8th grade and the younger one Vockti would be entering 7th." My immediate thought was, "Dear God.... where am I going to find the money?" Isn't it crazy how we sometimes wonder if God is able? But my response was, "Let me see what I can do."

The next day five children who had been a part of visiting the grandma had the time of their lives as we went from store to store finding just the right blue blanket and a warm coat for the grandmother to wear. It wasn't just a simple blanket but one of those warm Korean-made blankets that shimmers in the sunlight and is as warm as toast. How delighted we were delivering her blanket and coat and how delighted she was receiving them. While we

were there, Puja's mom again pleaded with me to send her daughters to school. I told her that I would see her the next day.

What should our response be when a Hindu mother pleads for her two daughters to attend an Adventist school?

The following morning, I went to get Panuel Baroi, our Sponsorship Director, to have him accompany me to Puja and Vockti's house. As soon as we walked out of Bangla Hope's gate we were met by Puja, Vockti, and their mother. We quickly had them apply for sponsorship and get photos taken. We also provided funds so that they could go shopping for school items.

Then, we hurried down the road to Hazrapur where a fourth girl, Sujala, was seeking sponsorship. She had not been accepted into our Bangla Hope Village School due to limited space. Her parents, wanting the best for their children had enrolled her the year before into the 2nd grade at SAMS, hoping to somehow pay her way. When asked how they were able to pay the bill, the parents answered that they ate only one meal a day in order to see that their daughter was enrolled in a Seventh-day Adventist School. Now, Sujala was ready to begin 3rd grade, but they needed help. I was stunned! The family lived in abject poverty but were sacrificing everything for their daughter.

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Celebrating Wonderful Test Results By Robyn Griffin

Every October the nerves of 5th and 8th graders in Bangladesh begin to be set on edge and butterflies swarm in stomachs nationwide as these students prepare to take PEC (5th grade) and JSC (8th grade) exams. 10th graders also take an exam known as SSC which isn't given until February. These tests are conducted by the government and have a significant impact on the students. Their entire future hangs in the balance.

If a student fails in just one subject their entire year must be repeated. 8th graders face even more challenges since the GPA (grade point average) that they receive on their exams determines what area of study that they will be allowed to take in their following years of study. 9th graders must choose either Science, Commerce, or Arts as their focus of study. Science must be taken if an individual desires to study medicine in any form. Commerce is for those focused on business and Arts is for everyone else. A student who does not take Science will find it nearly impossible to take nursing if they were to choose that field of study later in life. In order to take Science an 8th grader must have a GPA of 3.50 or above on the JSC exam and be accepted by the department in their school. A person taking Science has the most freedom to choose any field of study in the future.

WITH ALL OF THAT SAID...HERE IS THE GREAT NEWS!

All Bangla Hope 5th graders passed their PEC exams and have moved on to the 6th grade beginning in January 2019.



Bangla Hope 5th Grade Class in 2018



Bangla Hope 8th Grade Class in 2018

Our 8th graders at Bangla Hope did exceptionally well...the lowest GPA was 3.42 and the highest 4.71 out of 5.00. Only two students scored in the 3.40's...everybody else scored 4.00 and above. Out of 13 students nine are studying Science and four are taking Commerce.

Our 10th graders at SAMS are still in the midst of completing their exams. Their test results will not be published until late April. We praise the Lord for His rich blessings and commend our teachers for their efforts in preparing our students to be workers for the King.

Blessed Milestones By Debi Axford

Life is filled with milestones. One's life is often reviewed and evaluated through the lens of life's major milestones: taking one's first steps; starting school; learning to drive; graduating high school and college; marriage; the birth of one's children; and the list goes on and on. Not everyone, however, is blessed enough to be able to celebrate the major milestone of their 90th birthday. On January 16 of this year, Dave Waid and his family celebrated his 90 years of life. And what a life!

Most people who near retirement have visions of enjoying a bit more leisure, taking exotic cruises, and engaging in long-dormant hobbies. That was certainly not Dave's aspirations for his "retirement". While he certainly had dreams of travel and adventure like most retirees, he however wanted his retirement activities to have a purpose.



Dave & Beverly Waid with their daughter Bristi and her two children.

Being a man of action and compassion, he approached retirement from paid work in a way that seemed quite natural for him. At the age of 76 he and Beverly decided to build an orphanage in the third world country of Bangladesh. Talk about an indomitable spirit!

For this special milestone birthday, Dave can look back over many years of rewarding work, exciting adventures and selfless service to the orphaned and underprivileged children and youth of Bangladesh. He can entertain any listener for hours with amazing and amusing stories of his adventures overseas. In addition to his three daughters Jann, Amber and Bristi, Dave has many, many more who call him "Daddy". Though Dave's health has recently forced him to take life a bit more slowly, he carries Bangla Hope and the children it serves in his heart. **Happy 90th birthday Dave. We love you.**

Bangla Hope Contact Information

Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 9am—3pm (PT)

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Website: www.banglahope.org
www.facebook.com/banglahope.org



Student Correspondence Only

Bangla Hope
Student Name & Number
Village: Hazrapur
Post Office: Mazina (Uchai)
Upozila: Panchbibi, District: Jopurhat
Bangladesh

Only God Could Orchestrate Something Like This! Continued from page 2

This was the type of people whom I sincerely desired to help. We assured them that we would do everything we could possibly do to find a sponsor for her. I gave them money to get the necessary items for school and arranged to meet them the following Sunday to enroll her along with the other girls into SAMS.

In less than twenty-four hours' time I received a text message from my niece in North Carolina wanting to know how she could sponsor a child through our organization. I called her and as soon as she found out about Sujala she signed up to sponsor her on the spot. My heart went out in love to God!

Watching God orchestrate stories like this is one of the highest levels of joy that must exist in this walk on earth.

I often feel like I stumble and bumble along while God works marvelous miracles. What started out to be a Sabbath afternoon visit turned into four girls being enrolled in a school where the love of God will be taught. No telling how this story will end. I guess we will not know until eternity.

With the \$300 that God provided, the girls' schooling has begun, but they will need continued sponsorship to complete their education. If the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart about sponsoring one of these girls or other students like them, contact our office today and become a part of transforming the lives of village students in Bangladesh. You'll never regret it.

Financial Update (As of 02/25/2019)

Girls Dorm: \$230,328.89 received of \$350,000
Security Fence: \$47,828.96 of \$80,500
New Generator: Fully Funded!!! THANK YOU

IN HONOR OF Thank You

Darrin Bartell
Amazing Facts Prophecy Seminar
Paul & Lena Adams
Lexi Stafford (Missionary to Thailand)
By Al Wiggins
Carol Young
By Cheryl Gallant

IN LOVING MEMORY OF Thank you

Gary Holland
Clifford Chappell
Lynn Chappell
By Bev Holland
Arlene Wiggins (Beloved wife of 50 years)
Dougie Wiggins
Del Wiggins
Elmer Wiggins
Ruth Wiggins
Paul & Lena Adams
By Al Wiggins
Grover Rose
By Robert Jones
By David & Blanca Dougherty
By Michael & Nancy Barnett
By Geraldine Eberhardt
By Miguel & Teresa Rodriguez
By Barbara Woodland
Paul Zabolotney
Arla Zabolotney
Bertha Dickinson Sunken
By Jack & Avenell Starr

SPECIAL PEOPLE HELPING CHILDREN Thank you

Robert and Lois Smith: 2 receiving blankets; 3 pr. plastic pants; 1 top; 1 pr. shorts; 1 pr. booties; 2 sleepers; and 2 crocheted baby blankets.
Peet, Dennis & Marilyn:
Stickers for the children at Bangla Hope orphanage

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES: Village School Students

Name: Dola Biswas
Gender: Female
Grade: 3rd
School: Dharabashil Village School



Village school students receive tuition, books, supplies and a uniform. You will receive a photo, name, grade level and perhaps a bit of personal information as available. The tuition rate for all village school students is \$20/month or \$220/year.

Name: Rimpa Roy
Gender: Female
Grade: 2nd
School: Dharabashil Village School



If you are interested in sponsoring a student, please give us a call or visit our website for more information.

"You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."
Isaiah 26:3