

## Chairman's Message

Welcome to the premier publication of our newsletter.

A lot has happened in the short time since Polio Children was incorporated in the United States in April 2003 and granted an exemption from federal income tax in September 2003. Our fund raising efforts got off to a flying start with a musical evening by *Friends of Raagaa* from Toronto, Canada. I wish to thank Mr. Nandu Atre and his group of musicians for an evening of lively entertainment, the India Community Center of Rochester for allowing us to host the performance at their facility, the many volunteers who worked so tirelessly, and above all the patrons who not only attended the show but also donated generously. We would not have been able to accomplish what we have without your help.



Shirish Patel, M.D.  
Chairman, Polio Children  
(USA)

Over the past 12 months, we have provided the children of Sucheta Kriplani Siksha Nketan (SKSN), the largest school for physically handicapped children in India, with emergency aid to purchase quilts, bedding, and footwear so that they could brave the harsh winter of the Thar Desert. Additionally, with the commencement of the new school year, we were able to provide funds for the purchase of wheelchairs and computer equipment and for the enrollment of 24 new students (see *Personal Reminisce*).

Pooling our resources with Polio Children (UK), two key projects were brought to fruition at SKSN. In April 2004, an Academic and Vocational Residential Center for Girls, which provides accommodation for 140 physically handicapped girls, was completed at a cost of \$171,625, and in July 2003, 11 high school graduates were able to enroll in college for the first time in the school's 12-year history. In this newsletter, these and other ongoing projects are reviewed. It shows how your generous gifts are changing the young lives at SKSN.

On the administrative side, Polio Children (USA) welcomes its two new directors, Mr. Arun Sangave and Mr. Dhiru 'Robin' Prema, and Mr. Amit Thakkar, CPA, who joins us as a consultant

Finally, on behalf of the board of directors of Polio Children (USA), I would like to wish you and your family Happy Holidays and best wishes for the coming year. We look forward to your continued support.

Happy Holidays!

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## Milk and *Ghee* Project



Girls at SKSN gather for their morning glass of milk

Started in December 2002 immediately upon our return from SKSN  
 Aim: To provide daily each child with a glass of milk and a teaspoonful of *ghee* (clarified butter) to boost the nutritional status of these malnourished children.

Result: Most tangible benefit was a 60% reduction in minor ailments.  
 Cost of Project: \$8,100 per annum for 430 students.

Amount Funded: \$8,100 in 2003-2004. The Dairy Farm Project (see below) now meets these needs

## Dairy Farm Project



Milking cows on the dairy farm

Started in September 2003 following the successful outcomes of the Milk and *Ghee* project

Aims:

- To attain self-sufficiency in milk and milk-products.
- To provide school graduates vocation in animal husbandry and dairy farm management.

Result: The stock of cattle numbers 12 cows and bulls. The dairy farm is partly managed by senior students.

Cost of Project: \$55,250

Amount Funded: \$32,130

Funds Needed: \$23,120

## Food Self Sufficiency Project



Students help in reaping a bounty crop of eggplants

Started in September 2003 by Polio Children (UK) as an emergency response to acute shortage of food supply at SKSN. As more desperately needy students are enrolled, the demand continues to rise while the State support remains unpredictable and grossly inadequate. The positive impact of the Milk and *Ghee* project, the success of the Dairy Farm Project, and the commitment of the students and the staff all portend well for SKSN's ultimate goal of becoming a self-sufficient community.

Aims:

- To attain self-sufficiency in basic nutritional requirements.
- To reduce dependency on State support.
- To provide vocation for at least 100 school graduates

Cost of Project: \$170,000

Amount Funded: \$ 3,400

Funds Needed: \$166,600

## Basic Preventive and Curative Health Care

On an average, 20-30 students require medical attention everyday of whom at least 10% need evaluation and treatment by a physician. Current provision is limited to a State supported nurse present on the campus only during school hours. The nearest hospital is 17 miles away in the city of Jodhpur. In addition to these acute needs, the students would benefit from vitamins, especially vitamin E, which may help prevent the development of post-polio syndrome in the unaffected limbs.

Funds Needed: \$16,500 per annum (includes physician fees, hospital visits, and medicines)

## Wheelchairs

About 200 of the 530 children at SKSN lack function in their lower limbs. The school has about 35 wheelchairs which means that the rest of them have to crawl on their arms to get about. Providing every needy child with a wheelchair will not only make that child mobile but also enhance his/her dignity and reduce the risk of developing post-polio syndrome in the upper limbs.

Cost of Project: \$32,000

Amount Funded: \$ 1,930

Funds Needed: \$30,070



## Psychological and Emotional Wellness

There is no formal provision at SKSN for mental health care and resources outside the school are limited. Majority of the children suffer from low self-esteem, clinical depression, and signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. These psychological problems interfere with the children's ability to perform optimally in class. Despite the stigma associated with mental health, the staff at the school recognizes these problems in the children and is interested in learning therapeutic interventions to address them.

Needed: Volunteers who have expertise in this field to teach the teachers.

*"I am no longer a socially-discarded child. I can move about like any other normal child"*

*Miss Pameshwari (11-yrs)*

## Academic and Vocational Residential Center for Girls

The single most important need identified by the board of SKSN during our initial visit was a residential facility for handicapped girls. Since co-habitation is not an option, the number of girls who can be enrolled at SKSN is limited by the availability of temporary accommodation in the area. Over the years, the need for such a facility has become even more critical as the number of polio cases has continued to rise.

Result: Construction of the facility was completed in April 2004 and 140 physically handicapped, but elated, girls moved in on July 1, 2004.

Cost of Project: \$171,625

Amount Funded: \$171,625



Girls making their way to the school. In the background is the newly constructed residential center

## University Education Fund



Despite outstanding academic performances, none of the high school graduates of SKSN was able to pursue college education because of a lack of financial support. That changed in July 2003 when the first batch of high school graduates (*pictured*) was able to enroll at the University of Jodhpur.

Cost of Project: \$18,810

Amount Funded: \$18,810

Aim: To guarantee that every child will have access to college education. Funds Needed: Minimally, \$32,300/year to support 20 students (\$1615 per student per year). Please note that this figure includes the costs of tuition fees, boarding, lodging, books and stationery, transport, clothing, basic medical care and other sundry essential requirements. As an increasing number of students graduate with flying colors each year, the funding needed for this project will increase proportionately.

## Power Generator



Staff and students of SKSN rejoice as the first tube well powered by a generator donated by Polio Children spouts water.

One of the biggest challenges facing the students was their inability to study after dark because of the unavailability of power supply. Installing a diesel power generator made this, amongst other activities including running of the computer lab, possible.

Cost of Project: \$7,500

Amount Funded: \$7,500

Operating Costs: \$2,770 per annum.

In November 2002, I had an opportunity to visit SKSN, a boarding school for physically handicapped children, on the outskirts of the city of Jodhpur, India. Most of the 430 (a number that has since grown to 530) children at this institution suffer from polio. That's correct! Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and despite massive vaccination campaigns, this crippling disease continues to wreck havoc on young children, especially in rural India, The WHO estimates that more than 5 million children are able to walk today because of the vaccination campaigns. Unfortunately, the children I met at SKSN were not so lucky. We (my 2 brothers, one of whom has been a polio victim since he was a year old, and I) were very impressed by the enthusiasm of these children and the dedication of the staff caring for them. Both persevered in the face of severe hardships, monetary and material. Thus, Polio Children, first in the UK and later in the USA, was born.



One of the 530 children at SKSN, the largest school for physically handicapped children in India

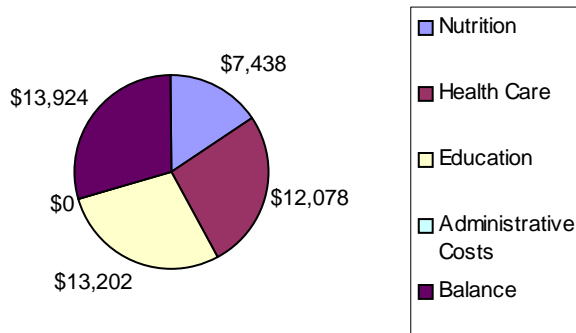
Registered in New York State, Polio Children (USA) has been recognized as a 501 © organization exempt from federal income tax.

Our mission is to ensure that every child with polio will have access to opportunities that will allow him/her to become independent in adult life and join the mainstream of society.

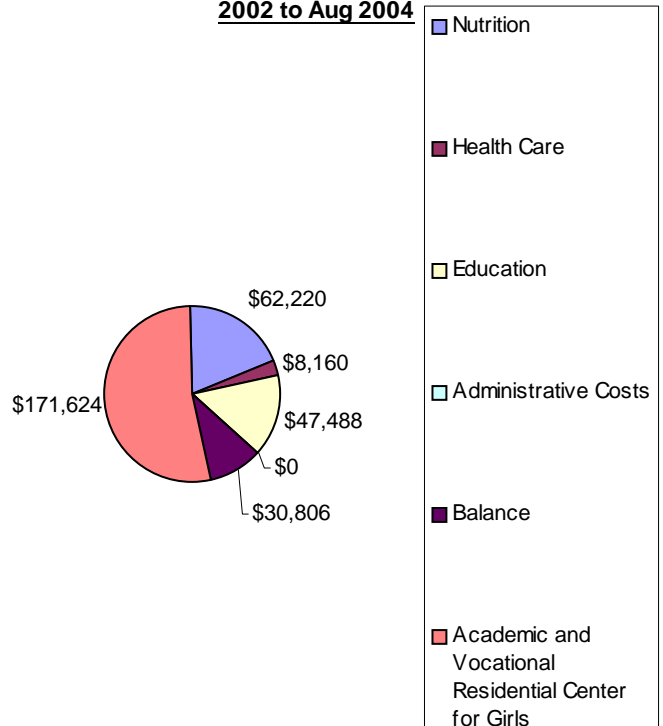
We aim to accomplish our mission by supporting organizations like SKSN in 4 key areas:

- a. nutrition
- b. health care
- c. education, and
- d. vocational training.

**Polio Children (USA) - Financial Summary**  
Sep 2003 to Oct 2004



**Polio Children (UK) - Financial Summary - Dec**  
2002 to Aug 2004



In June this year, Dr Bhairon Singh Bhati, secretary of SKSN, called me from England, where he had gone to raise funds for his institution, to thank Polio Children (USA) for our donations. As we exchanged the usual pleasantries I could hardly wait to ask him about the girls and boys I had met at the school. He assured me that they were all fine and that they remembered me fondly. Somehow, I sensed that that he was holding something back. I feared for the worst as a couple of girls (not much older than my 6-year old) had become particularly close to me during my visit to SKSN. In his typical reticent manner, Dr Bhati finally let it out and told me he was not looking forward to returning to SKSN. I found this perplexing knowing how dedicated he was to the children. Once again my mind began to flood with pessimistic thoughts. The real reason, as he informed me after some prodding (“I don’t want to make my problem yours, you have already done so much for us”) was that he had received news from his school administrator that about 50 families were camped outside the school in anticipation of enrolling their children at SKSN for the new school year. He related that with the budget constraints he was facing, he was barely able to support the existing enrollees let alone take additional students. I knew



School boys emerging from their classroom at break time.

what this meant for those children if they did not make it into SKSN. They all came from very poor families whose own survival was tenuous given the severe drought conditions the state of Rajasthan has been experiencing for the past several years. If these children could not somehow be accommodated at SKSN, they almost certainly faced a future of neglect, misery, and worse. I told Dr Bhati to enroll *all* the eligible children and that I would somehow find the funds. Off-the-cuff promise? Definitely. Overconfident? Probably. Insane? Close. I heard his voice crack up as he hung up promising to send me the cost analysis of enrolling this new batch of students.

#### Update

Polio Children (USA) was able to raise sufficient funds to support *all* 24 children who met the intake criteria for SKSN. On July 1, 2004, the “Class of 2004” entered the heavenly gates of SKSN. I share this experience with you as my way of conveying my personal thanks to each and everyone of you for giving us the confidence and the courage to take on such challenges.

*“As a Non-Governmental Organization, we (SKSN) have to rely on the goodwill of charitable organizations like Polio Children to make our ends meet”*

*Dr Bhairon Bhati,,  
Secretary, SKSN*



- Your contributions *can* make a difference!
- \$2 will buy a glass of milk a day for 30 children
- \$50 will pay medical costs for 20 children for a year
- \$400 will buy 6 wheelchairs
- \$1500 will provide a girl with living accommodation for the duration of her schooling.
- And we welcome your assistance in any area of our organization that you wish to contribute to including joining the board of directors, fund raising activities, and IT.



There are more than 200 children like these who desperately need wheelchairs.

If you wish to make a regular monthly donation, please fill out the following form and send it to **your** bank.

I authorize you to send \$\_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_ day of each month starting on \_\_\_\_\_ 2004 to the following account:

Name of Bank: JP Morgan Chase Bank

Address: 1755 Monroe Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14618

Bank Account #: 772-5008531-65

Account Name: Polio Children

ABA Routing #: 022300173

"We make a living  
 out of what we get..  
 We make a life by  
 what we give"  
 Winston Churchill

For a one-time donation, please make your checks payable to Polio Children and send it to:

155 Dunrovin Lane  
Rochester, NY 14618

**Thank You!**



Giving Hope and Dignity

EIN: 32-0070765

NYS Reg. # 20-43-72

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

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*Giving Hope and Dignity*

Polio   
Children

Mailing Label

Please join us in helping these children get on their feet

