



*Dear Friends of
Hand in Hand!*

Vienna, April 2024

20 YEARS OF BALASHRAM! The 20th school enrolment and a very special alumni meeting - that's what I would like to tell you about in this newsletter. I hope you also enjoy the amazing developments of the Hariharananda Balashram Residential School.



As I write these lines, I cannot help but wonder: is it possible that 20 years have already passed since the first 40 girls and boys moved into the kindergarten building with which Balashram has embarked upon so courageously? But a look at our graduates, leaves no doubt about it: 244 children have moved out of Balashram into the world since the school opened on 29th July 2004, and 121 of them accepted the invitation to the first alumni reunion on 25 th June 2023.

Read more about this touching event in our latest Spotlight, available for you on **our brand-new website at www.handinhand.at/Spotlights**



Spotlight, our annual magazine, has been translated into many languages again this year. **Simply scan the QR code** and you will be taken directly to our new Spotlight page.



A special alumni meeting of a different kind

recently took place at the airport in Delhi (India): Paramahansa Prajnanananda, the founder of Balashram, was waiting there for his flight back to Bhubaneswar, when he was approached with great politeness by a young man. Excited and respectful, he introduced himself as Sunil, a second-year Balashram graduate.

What a joyful reunion!



When, almost 20 years ago, Sunil was brought to Balashram by his father, his parents were living far below the poverty line. They struggled to feed their children and schooling was out of the question. Sunil's thirst for knowledge and diligence did not go unnoticed for long at Balashram, and his potential fell on fertile ground.



Today, Sunil is studying science at Kendrapara Autonomous College. Before that, he had already completed a degree in Electronics and Computer Engineering from Gandhi Engineering College in Bhubaneswar. He then got a good job at Appinventiv Technologies near New Delhi.

When Sunil met his revered teacher at the airport, he was on his way to Odisha to visit his parents and siblings. Sunil was able to escape the otherwise hopeless cycle of poverty, thanks to your help dear Friends, and because of this, his siblings and parents are also doing well today; although they still live in modest circumstances, they no longer have to fight for survival.

With your support, the network of effective aid can spread more and more!

Sunil came to Balashram in the spring of 2005. While you are reading this newsletter, the 20th school enrolment is taking place at Balashram. Your loyal support, dear Friends of HAND IN HAND, enabled around 960 children to date, to find a safe home at Balashram, and next year, when the 21st selection process will be completed, we shall pass the 1000 mark for the first time. Isn't that incredible?

Help us to offer more children a chance like Sunil was given! Take on a sponsorship, or even a second one, or make a donation according to your means.

On behalf of everyone at HAND IN HAND, but especially from the parents and children for whom your contribution can mean an extraordinary turnaround in life:

THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS!

Yours, Peter van Breukelen



HAND IN HAND – Organisation for Humanitarian Aid

Austria & Germany: handinhand.at

France: handinhand.fr

Netherlands: handinhandnederland.org

Switzerland: handinhand-schweiz.org