



In Touch with SPARSH

Issue 2

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www.sparshlife.org

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Season's Greetings from SPARSH

We wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year! We express our sincere thanks to you for your support this year and look forward to your continued support in 2011.



Results from 2010

With your generous contributions in 2010, The Mission Hospital conducted **86** SPARSH-supported heart surgeries for life-threatening congenital heart defects in children hailing from families who could not otherwise have afforded the surgeries.



Rural Healthcare Outreach Program

SPARSH is in the planning stages with *The Mission Hospital* and *Aaro Aakash Reaching Out (AARO)* to form a new **Rural Outreach Basic Health Program for Women and Children** that delivers basic healthcare through on-premise clinics in adjoining rural areas near Durgapur, India. Initially, the program will be tested in Kamarpara, a small village about an hour away from Durgapur.



2010 SPARSH Holiday Fundraising Drive

Our 2010 Holiday Fundraising Drive is now under way. Once again this year, we are asking you to consider SPARSH in your Holiday gift-giving, so that we do not have to turn away a child in need of a life-saving surgery. Please help us in keeping their dreams alive. Donations are fully tax-deductible and can be made online using PayPal through our website (www.sparshlife.org/donate.php). Thank You!

Message From The Board

Dear Friend,

With your support in 2010, SPARSH has touched the lives of 86 children who suffered from life-threatening congenital heart defects; that brings the total number of lives saved to date to 182. These children's lives were forever changed by your generosity and compassion. On behalf of the children and their families, we express our heartfelt appreciation.

In the past year, the **Pediatric Heart Surgery program at The Mission Hospital** in Durgapur, India, has continued to flourish under the leadership of Dr. Srirup Chatterjee. Through an aggressive outreach program, contributions from local Indian sources have allowed us to reduce the average funding per surgery for the third year in a row; the 2010 average is ~\$350 (30% less than our 2009 average). While \$350 is only 15% of the total cost of a surgery, it remains a critical part of allowing Dr. Chatterjee to say to a needy child, "yes, we will operate," and not turn away a child whose chances of survival without heart surgery would be extremely slim.



In this newsletter, you will see a message from Dr. Chatterjee, a message from one of our board members who visited The Mission Hospital this year, and stories of some of the children your contributions have saved. We hope these messages and stories will bring you closer to the good work that is being done in Durgapur, India. Your contributions are making a significant difference.

In 2011, we hope to do more and are excited to tell you about a new program that will touch the lives of poor women and children in rural India. Leveraging our partnership with The Mission Hospital, we are in the process of starting a **New Rural Outreach Basic Health Program for Women and Children** in a small, poor village near Durgapur, India. We are determining the right services to offer and the appropriate metrics for success. Our goal is to make this program as successful as the heart surgery program by delivering high impact, low-cost giving opportunities and the assurance that your contributions are prudently used. We will keep you updated on this new program once more information becomes available.

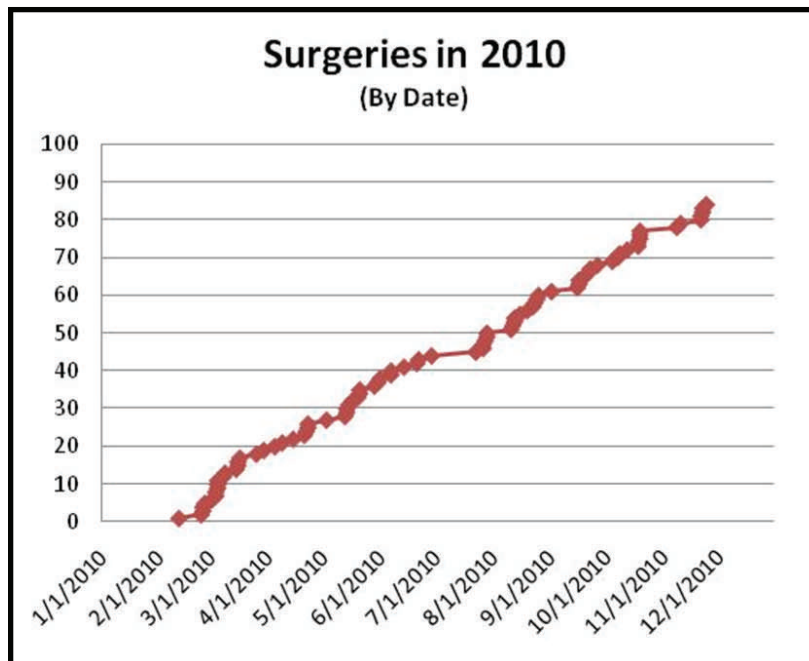
Thank you again for your support!

The SPARSH Board.

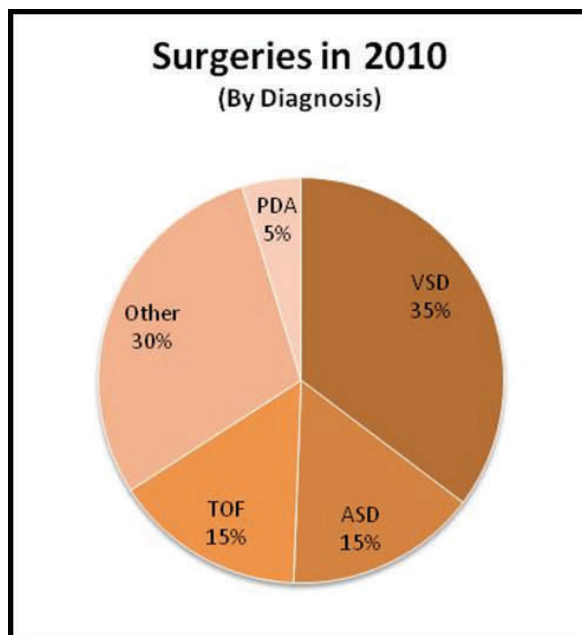
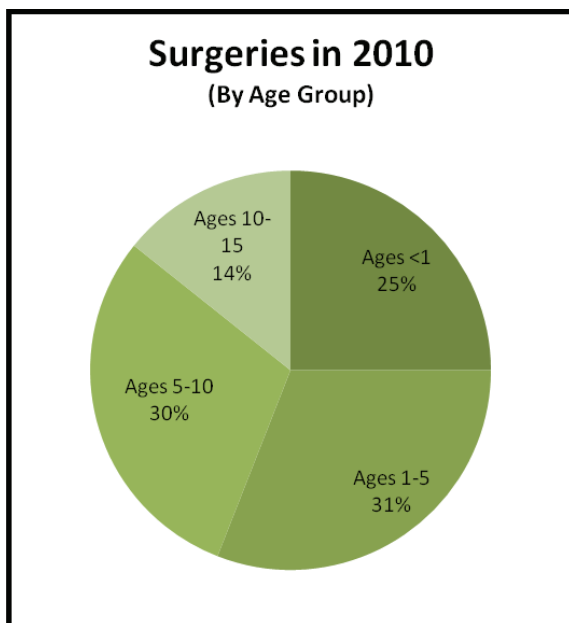
How You Make A Difference!

Key Statistics (Year 2010)

- SPARSH has supported **86** heart surgeries (as of Dec 1) in 2010, compared to 63 total surgeries in 2009.
- Over 85% of the children treated for these surgeries are in the 0-10 age group.
- Over 50% of these children are diagnosed with ASD or VSD.
- The Mission Hospital has maintained its high success rates (over 98%) with these surgeries.

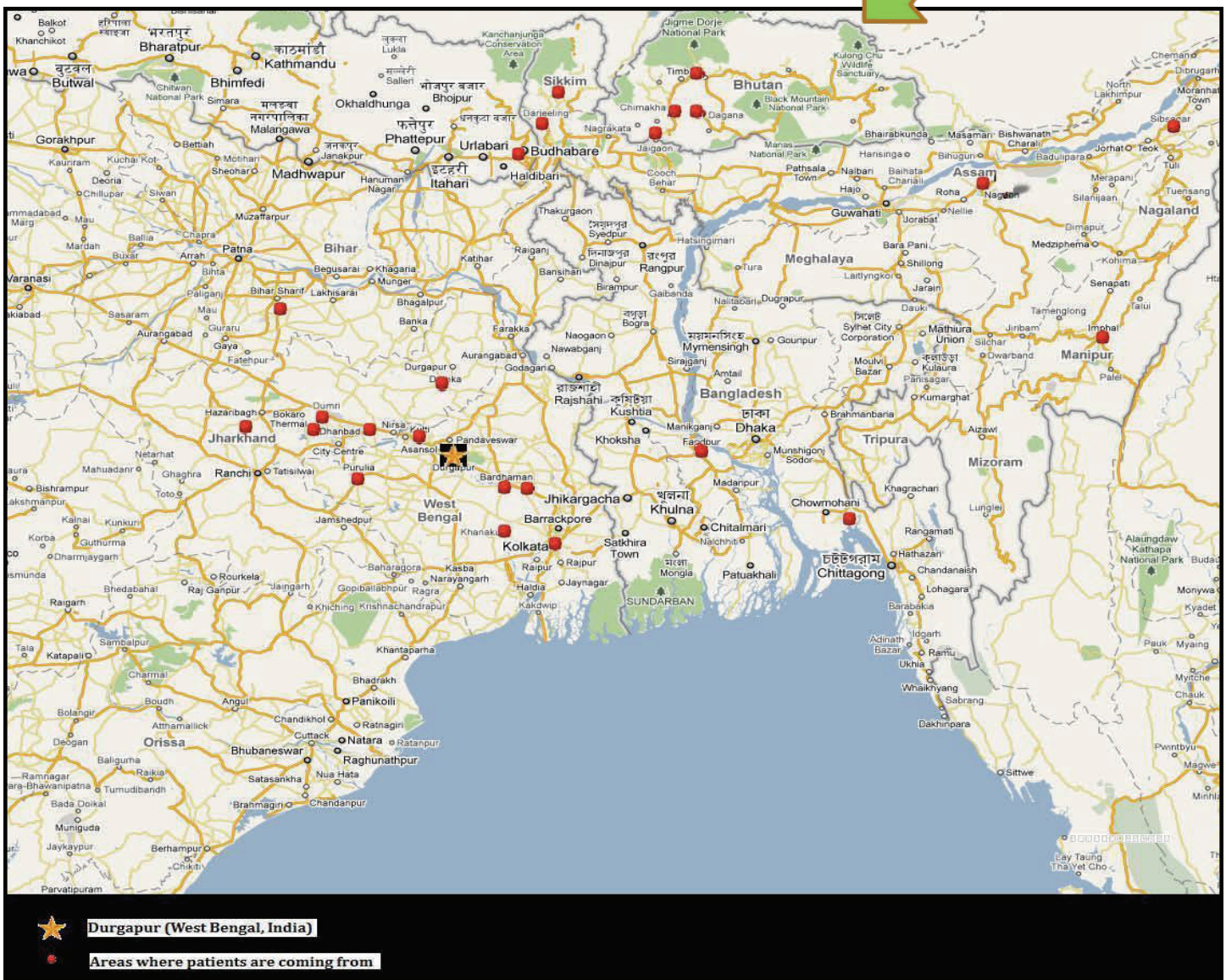


VSD: Ventricular Septal Defect
 ASD: Atrial Septal Defect
 TOF: Tetralogy of Fallot
 PDA: Patent ductus arteriosus
 Other: DORV, TGA, PS, TR, HLV



Expanding Horizons

Word of the excellent work being done by The Mission Hospital (Durgapur, West Bengal, India) is spreading and the hospital now attracts patients (children) even from extended out-of-state regions in Sikkim, Bhutan, Manipur and Assam. With the help of funds originating from SPARSH, The Mission Hospital is able to treat life-threatening heart conditions for these children, even when their families are not able to afford the full treatment.



Greetings from Dr. Srirup Chatterjee

From: Dr. Srirup Chatterjee, Chief Cardiac Surgeon, The Mission Hospital, Durgapur, India

Hallo everybody,

Here we are again after another year of this amazing collaboration that we have established between the communities in Ann Arbor and Durgapur. Through this collaboration, we have progressed further in our endeavor to establish a successful pediatric cardiac surgical program for poor children who would not have been able to afford the operations otherwise.

We had a slow start to the year with no pediatric operations in January and then we had a great visit from Lakshmi and MP Narayanan from Ann Arbor in February and since then we have, on average, been operating on two SPARSH-sponsored kids per week. These children have come to us not only from local areas and surrounding districts of West Bengal but also from other states of Eastern India and from the neighboring country of Bhutan.



On a personal note, this autumn, I managed to get away for a two-week sojourn in the Himalayas. I trekked amidst woods of Himalayan oaks, through the evergreens and then beyond the tree line to ethereal heights; camped in cold frosty fields; and gazed at clear starry skies lorded over by Orion and his dog. As always, a transcendental experience. And then, soon after returning and plunging headlong into work, I came across the 1936 Thanksgiving Proclamation of Wilbur Cross, Governor of Connecticut, and that resonated deeply with my thoughts in the mountains:

“Time out of mind, at this turn of the seasons when the hardy oak leaves rustle in the wind and the frost gives a tang to the air and the dusk falls early and the friendly evenings lengthen under the heel of Orion, it has seemed good to our people to join together in praising the Creator and Preserver, who has brought us by a way that we did not know to the end of another year.”



I find it difficult to express how privileged I feel to be part of this joint endeavor of SPARSH and The Mission Hospital. And, in anticipation of the coming holiday season, a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Srirup Chatterjee

Durgapur Trip Report

By Lakshmi Narayanan, SPARSH Board Member

A Visit to the Mission Hospital

My husband and I spent a memorable day at the Mission Hospital in Durgapur in February, 2010. Since we have been supporting the heart surgery program with SPARSH since its inception and had got to know the surgeon Dr. Chatterjee from his visits to Ann Arbor, we had been looking forward to visiting Durgapur on one of our visits to India.



Sheik Rafikul

Dr. Chatterjee had two surgeries scheduled for the day we were there: 6-year-old Suresh Singh with a hole in the heart and a 51-year-old man undergoing a bypass. Suresh Singh was the first SPARSH case for the year. We got to scrub and be in the operating room for both of them – a truly unique experience for those of us not connected to the world of hospitals and medicine. What surprised me about the 6-year-old was how big his heart was. The 51-year-old's surgery was done 'off-pump' so his heart was beating through the entire surgery. We watched in awe - too



Suresh in recovery

scared to ask Dr. Chatterjee any questions while he was operating although he was quite willing to explain. Towards the end of the day we visited Suresh in the ICU and met his parents. It affected me more to see him like this than on the operating table

since he was now a little boy asking for water or to be carried by his mother and not just a nameless body hidden under the sheets.



The SPARSH group

During the course of the day we took a tour of the hospital and had lunch with Dr. Satyajit - the Chairman of the hospital who has been instrumental in supporting the heart surgery project initiated by SPARSH. The highlight of the day, however, was meeting the children. The hospital had invited the children whose surgeries were made possible through SPARSH to come to the hospital that day. About 18 of them came with their families including Sunita Das whose letter we had published in our 2009 newsletter. Another familiar name, Khukumoni was dressed up and smiling and told me she wanted to become a singer when she grew up. It was, needless to say, a very emotional experience for me. No matter how much you know you are making a difference and see their photographs, it has a very strong impact when you see them in person.

Message from Jackie Morrow

Junior, Skyline High School — Ann Arbor, Michigan

I am attracted to SPARSH because it provides an opportunity to give back. The donation and charity work is taken a step further by SPARSH. The efforts you make are tangible. You will receive a picture of the child whose life you helped save. It is also an important cause that puts issues into perspective for kids my age. Five hundred dollars to save a life is a meager sum compared to the amount of money we spend on trivial goods. Helping children who have much less than me makes me appreciate what I have. Small donations by a large group of people can completely transform a person's life. I envision small donations of time or money by a large group at Skyline. Working with SPARSH benefits both the donor and the receiver. Plus, it teaches us teenagers the lesson of giving back.

Featured Profiles

Suchismita Sarkar (6 months, Operated Aug 11, 2010)

Suchismita is an only child living with her parents in the village of Budbud, district Burdwan, about 50 km from Durgapur. Her father is a private security guard (*durwan*), on daily wages earning Rs 3000 (\$67) per month. She was a very sick child, with a large VSD which was driving her into heart failure and she was in danger of imminent death. She underwent successful closure of VSD and is doing well since then.



Mrittika Chakraborty (7 months, Operated Aug 24, 2010)

Mrittika is the first child of her parents who live in the small town of Kan-chrapara, district North 24 Parganas, about 60 km north of Kolkata. Her father sell books for a small private library cum book shop. The family income is Rs 5000 (\$112) per month. She was born with large holes in between both upper and lower chambers of her heart (ASD and VSD) leading to heart failure and chest infections.. She was very sick as a result and was withering away to inexorable death. She underwent successful closure of ASD and VSD. Although, in the post operative period, she had a flare-up of her chest infection, she has been doing well since then and will hopefully lead a normal healthy life.

Surajit Das (5 years, Operated Jun 29, 2010)

Surajit is an only child, but he lives in a joint family situation with parents, grandparents, uncle, aunt and 2 small cousins, living in a shanty outside of Asansol about 50 km from Durgapur. His father is a security guard (*durwan*) with a monthly income of Rs 3000 (\$67). He was born with a peculiar abnormality, where in addition to a very large VSD, his right ventricle was double-chambered as well. This combination caused the boy to be very sick and grossly underweight and he could not play games or run around with his friends. He underwent successful correction of his condition of VSD and DCRV and will hopefully continue to lead a normal healthy life.



Barsha Ghosh (6 months, Operated Jun 22, 2010)

Barsha lives with her parents and widowed grandmother in the village of Pandaveshwar about 50 km from Durgapur. Her father is a contract laborer working in a small private factory. They live in a small two-room shanty supported by a family income of Rs 2500 (\$56). She had a very large Ventricular Septal Defect, which was flooding her lungs condition making her breathless and she could not feed well and was not thriving. She underwent successful closure of VSD and is doing well since and hopefully will lead a normal healthy life.

Featured Profiles

Ankit Singh (16 months, Operated Nov 23, 2010)

Ankit resides in Shillong in the North-Eastern state of Meghalaya (the Land of Clouds). His father is a manual worker in a privately owned plywood factory earning about Rs.4000 (\$90) per month. Although Shillong has reasonable basic health care there are no super-specialty facilities anywhere nearby. A local doctor and a charitable institution put the parents in touch with The Mission Hospital. Ankit's condition was such that it was unlikely that he would live for more than a few years. His surgery went well and he is on road to a speedy recovery.



Remembering our Beginnings

As we reflect on the past three years since the inception of SPARSH and see the smiling faces of the many children on this page, we remember with gratitude two of our early donors Aradhna Krishna and Andy Lawlor whose spontaneous and substantial contributions made it possible for us to support the first few life-saving heart surgeries :
Sneha Bhattacharya (7/2007), Sobuj Roy (8/2007) and Sadhna Singh (8/2007).

Memorable Events in 2010

Aparna and D.E.S.H: Dance to Empower Stronger Healthcare

Once again this year, Aparna Ghosh, a sophomore at U-M, and D.E.S.H (Dance to Empower Stronger Healthcare), a non-profit organization she founded as a high school student at Pioneer, donated a significant portion of their proceeds from their 3rd Annual Benefit Concert to SPARSH. This event was held at the STAMPS auditorium on March 19, 2010.

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Written by Sharon Grayden

Imagine it's your birthday and your husband is planning a surprise party. While all birthdays are "special", this happens to be one with a zero following the primary digit. He asks a couple of friends to help with the details; things like selecting a date, contacting the guests, getting you out of the house on the night of the party so the caterer can set up. The friends love the idea of surprising you and take on their duties with cunning delight.



Then, there is the question of a gift, because, like many people celebrating a birthday with a zero after the digit, she needs very little. So your husband and your friends put their heads together and come up with the perfect idea; a gift to SPARSH.

And that's how the giving started. My wonderful friends each made a gift to SPARSH in honor of my birthday. I was touched by their love and generosity. My husband and I added to the total so our gift would sponsor a heart surgery. SPARSH was touched and extremely grateful for the gift. The birthday gift has made its way to the Mission

Hospital in Durgapur, India, and soon will touch the life of a child who will receive the gift of a much needed heart surgery.

But the giving doesn't stop there. The gift will touch the life of the heart surgery recipient every day for the rest of his or her life. It will touch the lives of the child's entire family—mother, father, brothers, sisters, and relatives. The gift will touch the lives of the doctors and nurses at Mission Hospital who are committed to supporting care for disadvantaged children needing heart surgeries. And hopefully, this gift will inspire others to give.

It was a wonderful party, and without question, quite a surprise. What I remember most was that my friends thought enough to care. Please keep SPARSH in mind if you have occasion to observe a special event. Celebrate life with the gift of life. The feeling is just amazing.

Sharon Grayden

The birthday "girl"

Photo Credit: Betsy Walker, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Team SPARSH runs at the 2010 Big House Big Heart

Written by Lakshmi Narayanan

The memory of Hail to the Victors echoing in the tunnel was still vivid from last year, as was the thrill of being right in the middle of the Big House and the unmatched sense of achievement of my first ever 5K. These were some of the reasons I decided to run the Big House Big Heart again on October 3rd this year. Plus the fact that, along with Naroo Krishnan, another SPARSH member who participated in the run, we could make a difference in the life of a child.

Temperatures were in the mid forties as we gathered on the north side of the stadium the morning of Oct 3, 2010, but the chill was soon overshadowed by the excitement of the event. The 5K participants, 4732 of them to be exact, all packed on East Keech Avenue – a little street leading down to the starting line at the corner of Kipke and Greene. I stood alone in this crowd, filled with awe and hope.

The announcements and encouragements belted over the sound system and we were off. You hit the only hill quite quickly on Division when you are still fresh to tackle it. Then comes the flat square of State, North U, Church and South U.

You are dying for a drink by the time you turn the corner of North U and Geddes and sure enough the water stations appear. Once you rejoin State for the last mile of the race, you are re-energized because you can see the road gently sloping down all the way to the stadium. Approaching the stadium, I'm tired and thirsty again. I want the race to end but I keep at it, walking a lot. Then I enter the tunnel and Hail to the Victors has a new meaning now that I'm close to finishing the race so I pick up the pace. When I finally burst into the vastness of the Big House, turn the corner to face the finish line and see the multitude of beaming faces, I understand the real reason this run is special – it is about people coming together and working together to make a difference. The numbers are staggering: 12,000 participants raising \$750,000 for more than 140 charities.

Starting with the organizers and volunteers, to the spectators that line the route cheering us on with bells and music and encouraging words, to the many businesses that sponsor the event, my thanks go to you all. BHBH 2010 was made more meaningful for me by the generosity of my friends with their donations to SPARSH. I am truly grateful to each one of you. Together we have given the gift of life to a child!



SPARSH Fundraising Events in 2010

2010 Mar 2	Event co-hosted with Bichitra Inc.
2010 Mar 19	D.E.S.H dance performance (3rd annual)
2010 May 8	Nava Nritya Dance Academy
2010 Oct 4	Big House Big Heart run
2010 Sep 12	Birthday gifts (Sharon Grayden)
2010 Dec 1	SPARSH Annual Holiday Fundraising

How You Can Help!

Donate

Considering a donation to SPARSH?

We now accept donations online via PayPal! Visit us at www.sparshlife.org/donate.php. Donations are fully tax-deductible!

Donations can be also be mailed by check.

Please send us an email at sparshlife@gmail.com to receive instructions for sending the check to us.

Partner

- Got a great fundraising idea?
- Willing to organize your own event to support the SPARSH cause?
- Interested in partnering with us to jointly organize a common cause?

If you answered Yes to these questions, we'd love to hear from you.

Volunteer

We often look for volunteers to organize and facilitate events during a few weeks of high activity every year.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, send us an email.



SPARSH (meaning "touch" in many Indian languages) is a 501 (c)(3) registered nonprofit organization with a mission to provide resources and support to eliminate barriers to health and well-being for disadvantaged children and women in India.

Connect with SPARSH



sparshlife@gmail.com



Become a member of the [SPARSH-Touch A Life](#) Group on Facebook