

November 25, 1997

Dear Friend,

This is the report from my trip to India last winter (December 15, 1996-January 12, 1997). I can't thank you enough for giving whatever amount you were generous enough to contribute. I had a fantastic time, amazing things happened... more than I could put in a letter, but this will have to do, along with some photographs and other documents. I do have some video that I'm willing to show to anybody who would like to see it.

When I first did this project in 1992 I raised \$2,000 (approximately 70,000 Rupees) This year I raised \$3,367 (approximately 117,845 Rupees) from about 100 people, including you.

I always told people to whom I gave that this fund "is from 100 friends in the U.S." It always produced a big smile, the idea of 100 strangers reaching out to them, thousands of miles away.

Before I tell you what I did with the money I should explain that while \$3,367 (approximately 117,845 Rupees) doesn't seem like a huge amount of money, it goes much further than it would in the United States. It certainly can't impact 930 million (the approximate population of India)...but for a very small number of people, it can have a very powerful impact.

I basically spent a week in each of 4 cities: New Delhi, Lucknow, Varanasi, and Calcutta. Here's what happened:

December 12, 1997, Berkeley, California. The Nature Company. I spent \$110.00 on toys, puppets, soap bubble-makers, magic wands, masks, etc. You should have seen the faces of the many sick children in hospitals, orphanages and on the street when they saw these various toys. In fact, the most beautiful moment in the whole trip came in a hospital in Lucknow when a very sick little 5-year-old girl with meningitis saw the puppets...her face went from intense suffering (she had a fever of 104) to delight almost instantly...it was like seeing the face of God...what a beautiful moment!

December 24, 1996, Lucknow. 20,160Rs. (\$576.00) to the King George Medical College for antibiotics, disinfectants, surgical gloves and antifungal creams and other medicine for the "medicine fund." In India the very poor (which this hospital serves) get free medical care, but they must usually purchase their own medicine. The health care system doesn't make funds available for this purpose.

Most of these families cannot afford to pay for the necessary medicine, so a fund is usually established to help pay for these costs. The chief resident (Dr. Shallendra) gave me a tour of the hospital and pediatric unit. He said that our donation will undoubtedly save many lives. They were very delighted by this unexpected form of assistance.

December 24, 1996, Lucknow. 100 Rs. (\$3.00) to a woman I met with Dr. Shallendra at the local pharmacy. She needed money for asthma medicine for her sick son.

December 26, 1996, Varanasi. 3000 Rs.(\$86.00) To the Missionaries of Charities (Mother Teresa Center). They take in the sick, the destitute, the dying. I saw numerous developmentally disabled children who were so sweet and they loved the puppet show I put on for their benefit.

December 26, 1996, Lucknow. 850 Rs. (\$25.00) to Swami Satender. He is a wandering monk or "sadhu". The money went for food, blankets and a visit to the doctor after he fell (he has only one leg). He gave me the Indian name "Monmohan". "Mon" means my heart attracts all other hearts. "Mohan" is one of the names of Lord Krishna.

December 27, 1997, Varanasi. 700 Rs. (\$20.00) to Rajesh Kumar, a small boy who was my unofficial guide. This money was for shoes and books.



December 29, 1996, Varanasi. 11,000 Rs. (\$314.00) To Dr. Vishnu Mohan Singh, chief pediatrician at the Shiva Prasad Gupta Hospital. This is a hospital with scant resources. Dr. Singh said that they needed a Phototherapy unit for babies with jaundice. These babies are often premature and their liver is not able to function properly. The ultraviolet light is a lifesaver. Since they didn't have this unit they have to send the (very poor) parents to a more expensive hospital where they usually can't afford the costs of services.

The babies shouldn't even be transported and as a result 200-300 babies a year die unnecessarily. We purchased the unit for 11,000 Rs. (\$314), which saves 200-300 babies per year. The hospital has committed to paying for the yearly cost of \$50.00 to replace the bulbs. This is a photo of Dr. Singh & myself with the new Phototherapy unit. The plaque reads "Donated by Mr. Marc Monmohan Gold and his 100 friends U.S.A"

January 5, 1997, Calcutta. 10,500 Rs. (\$300.00) to Genevieve Walker of the group with no name. This is a group of young Westerners (Aussies, Americans, & Europeans) who go to Howrah train station in groups of three or four on a daily basis doing front-line social work. They help the dying, the mentally ill, people who are hungry, lost, ill or who have no shelter.

They also give people clothing, help women who have been raped (a daily occurrence in the train station, alas), and take ill people to hospitals. They said this money would help many, many people and save many lives. There are lots of Westerners in Calcutta doing all kinds of work like this with the needy. Some work with the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa's organization) and others work in a variety of other, lesser-known groups. There are many great and unknown people in this network.

January 5, 1997, Calcutta. 2,000 Rs (\$57.00) Divine Fellowship School for the Blind. The children sang Christian hymns for me. The money went towards building construction, teachers' (very small) salaries and food. This is one of many charitable institutions run by local Indians. The director, Jabresh Dutt gave me a tour of their modest facilities

January 7, 1997, Calcutta. 35,000Rs. (\$1,000.00) to Thierry Darnaudet. Children's Rights Development Center. Yes, you read that figure correctly. I first met Thierry in 1992 when I gave him some money towards the orphanage he set up in Calcutta. I met him again on my last trip after a long search. This young Frenchman is now running 3 orphanages, two for boys and one for girls. The kids are (formerly) street kids who have run away from abusive homes, been sold into work slavery, been abandoned and sometimes are drug-addicted. Thierry also runs some schools in some poor villages in the country and a school I visited in the slums (I have amazing videos from that visit). I know Thierry well, and I knew that the money given to his organization is very well spent. This is in keeping with the idea that this fund cannot help large numbers of people, but it can make a profound difference for a very small number of people. Thierry's programs really transform the lives of these kids providing a place to live, education, health care and lots of love. I met a lot of them, really delightful children. Since I met them near the end of my trip I left them the remaining toys and other items from the Nature Company. (see letter #2; his handwriting might be hard to read so I've also included a typed version of it).



January 9, 1997, New Delhi. All-India Institute for Medical Sciences. AIDS Ward. Rs.2700 (\$77.00). I visited the AIDS unit with my friend Dr. Chowdhury. They have enough medicine and staff, but they really wanted to brighten up the mood in this room, where many people end their lives. So we bought about a dozen posters (nature scenes, children playing and religious images) and a stereo unit so that patients could listen to their favorite music.

January 10, 1997, New Delhi. Rs. 3827 (\$110.00) I met Mr. Babu Rama through the social worker at the All-India Institute for Medical Sciences. He has tuberculosis and is partially paralyzed because of it and was unable to provide for his wife and three children. I was informed that he would die in a few months unless he received the medication, which he could not afford. The medication, if taken regularly for 6 months would completely cure him and likely prevent the infection of about 20 other people. The cost for medication and DOT (Directly Observed Therapy to make sure he takes all the necessary medicine) costs 2327 Rs. (\$66.00). To this amount I added 1500 Rs. (\$43.00) to start a business located in the window of his hut. This enabled him to purchase items such as combs, candy, pens, soap, batteries and other items to buy at wholesale and sell for enough of a profit to support his family and to continuously keep a stock on hand for future resale. I called my friend Shankar in June, 1997 and he said the Mr. Babu Rama is "In the pink of health...doing very well indeed!"

January 10, 1997, New Delhi. Rs. 1750 (\$50.00) Met this family through the social worker at the All-India Institute for Medical Sciences. They took me to meet them in a slum. The father had recently died of tuberculosis. Seven people lived together in one very small shack (Surviving mother and 6 brothers and sisters). A sewing machine costing 1500 Rs. (\$43.00) has enabled this unemployed mother to support her family while she stays home to look after them.

January 10, 1997, New Delhi. Rs. 1500 (\$43.00) Another family I met through the social worker at the All-India Institute for Medical Sciences. This destitute family of 6 lived in a small shack and the money was used to help them set up a small business to support themselves.

January 12, 1997, New Delhi. Rs. 350 (\$10.00) Young Nepali man I met at the end of my trip in the New Delhi Airport. His job is to clean the toilets in the men's room. He told me he lives with his wife and 4 children. He said that none of the kids had any shoes and the 350 Rs. I gave him and he said it would buy shoes for everyone in the family.

Various Dates. Rs. 20,510 (\$586.00). Throughout the trip, I encountered many people who were simply and obviously in need. None of them were begging, they were homeless, or searching for something of value through the garbage, or sleeping on the street with no blankets, hungry, mentally ill or very old, etc. etc. I gave about 50-400 Rs. to about 125 people in this way. You should have seen the looks on their faces!

Thanks again for your help!

Best wishes,

Marc Gold

