

**First Quarter  
2022**



**Quarterly  
Newsletter**

## *Announcement*

After a gap of two years, the in-person camps will be held both in East Coast and West Coast.

## *Inside this edition*

- Message from the Executive team
- Zonal Activities
- SAC & EAP Summary Report

# Contents

<b>Desk of the President</b> .....	3
<b>Secretary's Corner</b> .....	5
<b>Treasurer's Corner</b> .....	7
<b>Zonal Activity</b> .....	8
<b>ZONE - 1</b> .....	9
<b>ZONE - 2</b> .....	10
<b>ZONE - 3</b> .....	11
<b>ZONE - 4</b> .....	13
<b>ZONE - 5</b> .....	14
<b>ZONE - 6 (North Carolina)</b> .....	16
<b>ZONE - 6 (Georgia)</b> .....	17
<b>ZONE - 8</b> .....	18
<b>ZONE - 9</b> .....	19
<b>KOA Youth</b> .....	21
<b>Support A Child Program (SAC)</b> .....	23
<b>Education Assistance Program (EAP)</b> .....	25
<b>Obituaries</b> .....	27

## Desk of the President



Namaskar, everyone!

Hope you all are enjoying the blossoms and beauty of spring!! This year started with a spirit of enthusiasm to beat the Covid Blues which have dominated the globe in the past 2 years. We continue to build on the phenomenal work done by our teams in 2021. It gives me great pleasure to share the progress made in various social programs. We continue to expand the scope and benefits to the beneficiaries of these programs. The ultimate winner however is our community at large.

Our signature programs stand stronger and taller.

Last year we added **Career Guidance Counselling** to the SAC program and this year we are offering a **'Communication Skills'** Course to the children enrolled in this program. These added training skills will improve the chance of success of the students as they broaden their knowledge skills, gain confidence and perform better with proper guidance. The number of students receiving scholarships from the Valley under SAC increased to 35 in yr. 2021.

(For a summary of SAC please refer to pg.26)

Under the EAP we covered **270 students** (2021) the highest ever sponsored number so far.

(For a summary of EAP please refer to pg. 28)

**Family Sustenance Program** which was created during the Covid Pandemic has helped many families get back on their feet, but so many more are still struggling to get ahead in life. While it may not be possible to help each and every family, our goal is to create programs to give these families a sustainable livelihood in the future. Our team is working closely with our affiliates in India to create new opportunities for such families. The Kitchen Sustenance Program continues to provide succor to hard-hit families in the Valley.

Although the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of Covid was very mild in India, we made sure that the families in the camps had the adequate necessary equipment and did not succumb to the deadly virus once again. We continue to have close contact with the leaders of these camps. Dr. Rajiv Pandit our Medical Director recently visited Jagti Camp in Jammu.

Our domestic programs have generated a fantastic response and have proven to be very successful in bringing the community together.

**AsunTeGindun** has run 20 sessions so far, with amazing programming. It is loved by kids and parents alike. <https://youtu.be/jDFEyMueIga>

**KhyenChen** exceeded 30 delectable sessions and still going...<https://youtu.be/80K0gTu8Shw>

**ZoomDub** continues to engage the community in dialogues delving into topics from current affairs, medicine, history and so much more. <https://youtu.be/vhWKAjBzLBg>

**SaazTeAwaaz** continues to mesmerize us with spellbound performances by renowned artists locally and globally. <https://youtu.be/Bn2Tu76YaHk>

Every so often we see some unfortunate events hit some members of our community here in the US, and that was the motivation to create a **'Catastrophic Fund'**. So far this year 2 members of our community have benefitted from this program. I am grateful to my board and the gracious donors who have supported and helped create these programs. They have brought smiles and comfort to many lives!

In Feb we approached the consulate general in New York, Chicago and San Francisco for waving the Aadhaar card as a requirement for the domicile certificate for J&K state. This would

make us eligible applicants for the domicile. The letter was sent to the Home Ministry and the Lieutenant Governor's office. We have not received any response yet. It is a work in progress.

This year we are pleased to welcome our community to East and West coast camps, which are being held after two full years of lull. The east coast camp will be held in Connecticut on July 1-4th and the West Coast Camp in Los Angeles from Sept 2-5<sup>th</sup>. Our teams are working hard to make these events memorable for all of us. I hope to see you all there.

Take care and be well.

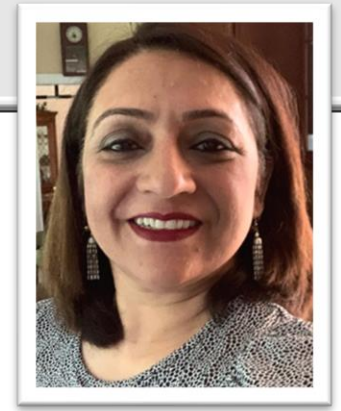
Namaskar!

Dr. Archana Kokroo

President KOA.



## Secretary's Corner



Dear KOA Family,

Hope you all are doing well and enjoying the spring season.

It is an absolute pleasure to bring to you the newsletter for the first quarter of 2022 after COVID. Hopefully, we can put that dark period of our life behind us and move on with renewed energy and fervor.

I am delighted to be here as Secretary KOA since Feb 2022 after having taken over from the outgoing secretary Mr. Anil Ganju. A big shout out to him. It is a huge responsibility and honor. I, therefore, look out for your cooperation and support.

It is our endeavor to bring programs to you of quality and substance. Our signature programs are stronger than ever as our president Archana ji has already talked about them. Being a cultural organization, we strive to honor and celebrate every event and festival as a community and preserve our heritage.

We started the year with the *commemoration of 32 years our exodus day*. A zoom event, **'Remembrance and Commemoration of the 32 years of our Exodus, A Way Forward'** was organized on January 15th. The speakers on the panel included, the pillars of our community, both in US and India Sh. Sushil Pandit, Ms. Arti Singh Tikoo, Sh. Ashoke Pandit and Sh. Vijay Sazawal.

This year we celebrated Shivratri – our most important festival, as a community bigger than ever with both KOA Canada and East Coast conducting the **'Samohik Pooja'** with Pt. Pawan Pandita from India. About 300 families joined the pooja. KOA families in the West coast performed the pooja with Pt. Pawan Pandita per their local time.

Our Shivratri celebrations culminated with our SaazTeAwaaz program where our community members **'Sing to Shiva'** for his blessings. Our guest of honor was Mrs. Archana Jalali Tikoo from Canada. We also paid tribute to the melody queen Lata Mangeshkar.

The release of the movie **'The Kashmir Files'** has turned a new leaf in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits. It has opened a floodgate of emotions and also provided us an opportunity to build on the momentum created by it. The awareness it has created will hopefully help us in creating something tangible for our community.

On April 24th, we had a zoom event to **felicitate the team of 'The Kashmir Files'**. It was an immense success. Our thanks to each and every one who made the movie possible. Those who were felicitated included Mr. Vivek Agnihotri, Mrs. Pallavi Joshi, Mrs. Basha Sumbli and Dr. Surinder Kaul.

The programs like AsunTeGindun, SaazTeAwaaz, KhyenChen, ZoomDub that we bring to the membership are possible only when we have your support, participation and help. We are a member-based organization and your membership dollars go a long way. So please keep your membership current and influence your friends and family to become KOA members, if they already are not. Just a small note that the membership for the year expires on Dec 31st no matter when you paid the dues for the year.

**In order to become KOA members, please visit:** <http://koausa.org/site/membership/>

I hope everyone is taking advantage of shopping at Amazon using smile.amazon.com to support KOA. Click here to shop and Amazon will donate on your behalf to KOA

<https://goo.gl/2QzFmn>.

Look forward to seeing you all at the camp.

Regards,  
Neeta Bhat  
Secretary, KOA.

## Treasurer's Corner

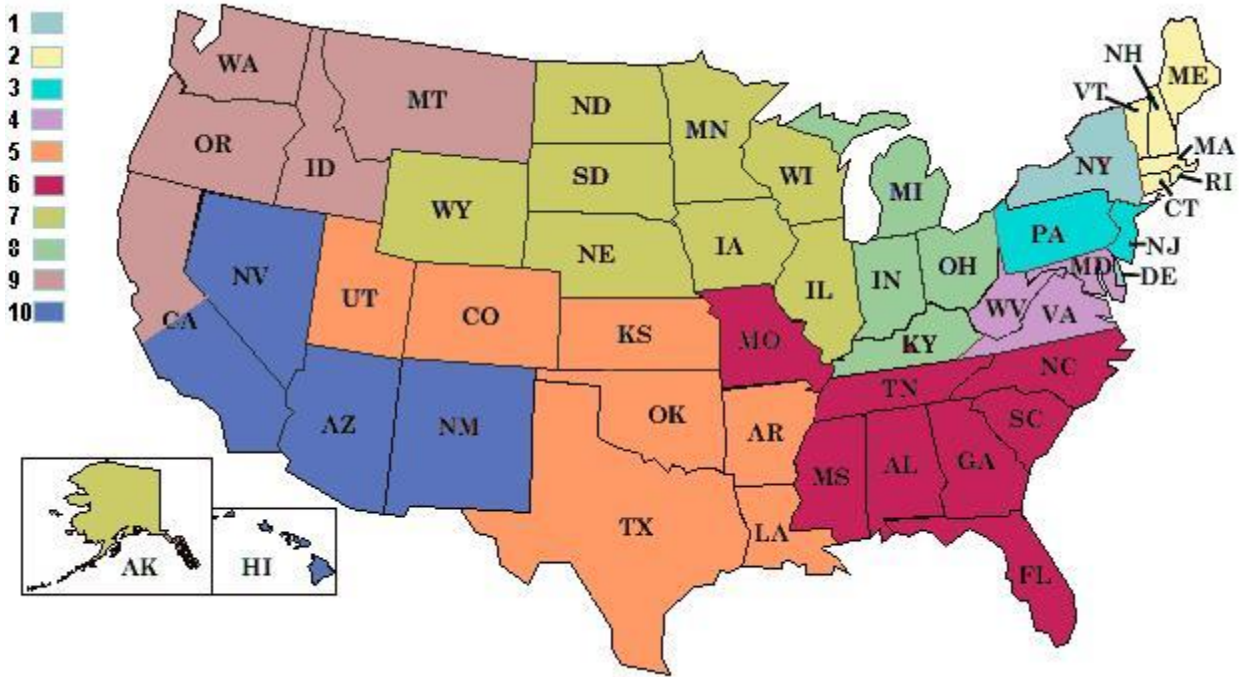


### 2021 Financial Highlights

- 1) Record collections for all our programs
- 2) First time in the history of KOA our P&L income is almost touching a million dollar: **\$960,702.51**
- 3) We started multiple new programs like family sustenance & Kitchen Sustenance where we support **45 families** in J&K in India
- 4) We started **catastrophic fund** and supported Colorado fire victims among our community members with cash support
- 5) We enhanced our Youth programs and youth collaboration and part **funded two picnics/offsites** where our youngsters can meet and build more closer relationships and cultural bonding
- 6) COVID while, as devastating as it was, also brought together our community and various KP organizations in a way which has never happened. We collected **\$592,091.59** in COVID relief and that helped us provide timely critical relief through partnership with **32 registered Kashmiri Sabha's** in India across **15 cities in India**
- 7) Together we have spent **\$273,548.93** on COVID relief which includes **240 Oxygen concentrators**
- 8) Year 2021 also got us highest donation in two of our flagship education programs. We collected **\$135,925.27** for **EAP Program** and **\$130,510.65** for our **SAC** program. This was the highest donation anytime in the history of KOA for these programs
- 9) We continued our Medical program and had record donation of **\$59,930.20**

**Rakesh Thaploo - Treasurer KOA-USA, Email: [Treasurer@koausa.org](mailto:Treasurer@koausa.org)**

# Zonal Activity





## ZONE – 1



Families came together on 30th April to celebrate the Herath Function at “The Cotillion, Jericho NY. Subhir Wanchoo and Rimda Wanchoo were the master of ceremony and kept the audience engaged throughout the evening. The Program started with lighting the lamp by Jawahar ji and was followed by the soulful singing of Neetu Koul. The highlight of the evening was the performances by the Khashu family, Raina family and Chowdhary family. Kids enjoyed the Kashmiri quiz coordinated by Subhir Wanchoo and Arun Moza. It was nice to see that our kids had answers to most of the questions. Musical chairs for kids was fun and coordinated by Arun Moza and Subhir Wanchoo. The event ended with the scrumptious dinner.

## ZONE – 2



After more than two years of gap, we in Zone 2 came together for a small get-together.

Lots of families came, and the whole evening was spent with jokes and laughter. There were a few new families and old families who joined Zone 2 get-together for the first time.

Overall, the evening was delightful, especially when the food was home-cooked by our amazing volunteers.



## ZONE - 3



## Shivratri

This year Zone 3 celebrated the Hearth function on March 12th @ Rasoi III, NJ.

Approx. 110 people attended the event. The event started with shiv Bhajans @ around 6:30 PM followed by a short break for appetizers. The cultural event started at 7:30 PM with kids' performances and the master of the ceremonies was Osheen Kaul and The event ended with the scrumptious dinner and dance.



## ZONE – 3 (Cont.)



## Director's Visit to Pittsburgh

The zone 3 director Hema Raina visited the Pittsburgh area on the weekend of 25th/26th March on their invitation.

Thanks to Upinder Bhatt and Neetu Ji for hosting and the fun Dinner and Karaoke night. The event was so much fun that we forgot to take group pictures. Must say one of the best Yakhani and Roganjosh I have eaten....

Neetu Ji, special thanks for the ksheer chai and the continuous flow of Kehwa....

Thanks to Anju and Rajeev Ji for the awesome brunch you put together the next day...

Thanks everyone, it was such a fun event...I am hoping that you all will visit us for the KOA Diwali function as you all have promised.



## ZONE - 4



After more than two years of covid enforced hiatus the Zone 4 Washington DC metro area Members celebrated the spring with a Navreh get together. It was a bitter sweet moment where community members observed a moment of silence for the people within the community and the world who have who have fallen prey to this deadly Covid virus. Members of the community especially paid respect to their near and dear community member Mr. Ramesh Qasba from Zone 4 Maryland who succumbed to this nasty virus a few months after Covid hit us in the US. But the excitement of the people meeting in person was palpable in the many conversations that were ensuing with most members of the community meeting each other in person after more than 2 years of isolation. Overall, a memorable event especially given the length of time that had passed from the last Community Zone4 get together in November of 2019 for Diwali. And Zone4 has a new President, Ms. Anita Thompson who will carry the baton forward starting with organizing the Diwali get together for the Zone 4 community.



## ZONE – 5



After almost three years Texas Kashmiri Biradari members got together from March 11 – March 13 to celebrate Shivratri at Mexia, TX. We had a strong participation of about 145 members. It was great to meet some first timers. Friday night was spent in meet and greet and singing. We performed Puja on Saturday evening followed by kid's talent show, a skit, Santa to Shambhu by Houston folks and a very well-prepared fashion show by Austin folks. Both were loved by everyone in the audience. There was a quiz for kids on Kashmiri culture. Kids did well! On Sunday morning, tcher chot was prepared for breakfast by our star chef, Arjun Zutshi. This tcher chot on Sunday morning has become a ritual that everyone looks forward to before concluding the camp.



**ZONE – 5 (cont.)**



Dallas KP's got together for a picnic on May 1st. It was a potluck and pani puri stall was a hit!



Austin KPs performed Navreh Havan on Apr 24th at Sai Baba Temple. Prasad was prepared by the ladies and after the completion of havan, bhajans and Leela's were sung.

**Director: Mrs. Renu Wokhlu**

## ZONE – 6 (North Carolina)



North Carolina chapter had a sprint get-together celebrating Herath & Navreh.

This was a catered event attended by 55 adults and 17 kids. The group had a great time seeing each other and catching up after the pandemic.

Organized by: Gunjan, Sonia, Aishwarya, and Shaifali.



## ZONE – 6 (Georgia)



Georgia Chapter celebrated their event on 16th April at Woodstock, Georgia. It was a potluck event with traditional Kashmiri food. Around 45 adults and 12 young ones showed up for the event.

Organized by: Vishal Warikoo and Sunita Durani.



**Director: Mr. Ashwani Kaul**



## ZONE - 8



Zone 8 Michigan chapter celebrated Shivratri on April 30th. We had a big turnout and introduced some new families. Little kids provided sweetest entertainment, reciting Shlokas, Hindi and English songs. Our rising star Shan Dhar mesmerized us by singing Kashmiri songs. Adults enjoyed playing tumbakhnar, doing roff, and singing Kashmiri songs. Kids were excited to get Herath kharach!! Along with some delicious food, it was a wonderful event, enjoyed by the growing KOA MI community.



## ZONE – 9



Conducted a private screening of “The Kashmir Files” movie which was attended by community members and their non KP friends. Consul General of India (SF), Dr. T V Nagendra Prasad also attended the event with his family. Everyone was welcomed with hot Kehwa and Roth, thanks to Bhavana Pratap Challu and Rajiv Pratap. Shiwain Kaul led the information campaign about the facts depicted in the movie.

### **Navreh Havan:**

Navreh havan was conducted in full glory with more than 150 members of our community attending the havan followed by serving “Prasad lunch” to every visitor in the temple which was 300 plus people. Hats off to all the selfless volunteers who cooked and served the prasad to such a large audience.

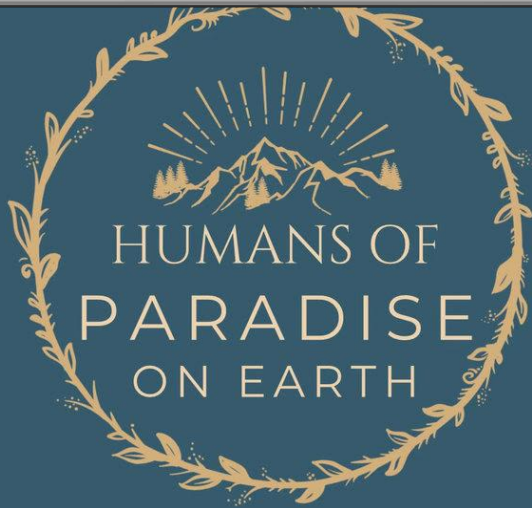
**ZONE - 9 (cont.)**



**Director: Mr. Uphaar Kotru**



# KOA Youth



Over the past couple months, our youth have been working very hard to launch a project to catalog our stories and we want to encourage you to support them. Humans of Paradise on Earth (The H.O.P.E. Collective) is a project that aims to document the stories of Kashmiri Pandit individuals-- their childhood, their experiences of genocide, stories about sacrifice, stories about relatives, and much more. The H.O.P.E. team requests for you to follow, like, and share the page on Facebook and Instagram.

After three long years of virtual events, KOAY was super excited to announce our 2022 Youth Trip in NYC!! This has been the largest youth trip organized with over 50+ participants! We had events lined up from Friday-Sunday, including a walk down Brooklyn Bridge, a yacht party, our welcome picnic, Comedy Club, and Karaoke!!

To end the trip, we had our final meal together at Madam Ji's for a Bollywood Brunch! This was also the very first-time KOAY celebrated Navreh with Kashmiri Pandit Youth from all over the world (Yes, we did have a Thaal!!) A HUGE Thank You to our Social Events team for organizing this trip on behalf of KOAY! Biggest shoutout to Anuva Kachru, our Social Events Chair, for spending countless days working on the logistics of this trip!!



## **KOA Youth(cont.)**

### **KOAY Website**

KOAY has created a website that hosts all of our events and initiatives! You can create a profile, connect with other KP Youth, and stay in touch with all things KOAY!

### **Koshur Language**

Lessons 1-4 of our Koshur Language Series have been released. Make sure to catch up on these lessons and stay tuned for when the next ones are released!

### **Job Portal & Mentorship Program!**

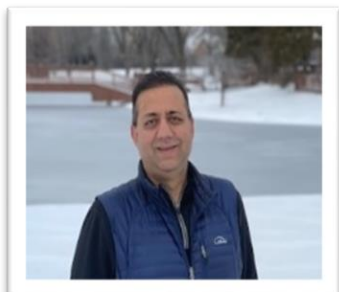
Don't forget that The KOA Job Portal is LIVE! The tool can be accessed when you log into your KOA member account on the KOA website.

Reminder: the KOA Mentorship Program is also live! To access the program, head to the **KOA website > Programs > US-Based Programs > Youth Mentorship**. Fill out the form as a mentee and then you will be able to see any mentors who match your interests as mentors begin to fill the form out. If you feel that your experiences can help contribute as a mentor, feel free to fill out the form as a mentor!

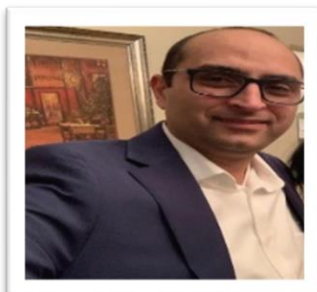
**Director & Co-Director: Mr. Shubhankar Peshin & Miss. Roshni Kaul**

# Support A Child Program (SAC)

## PROGRAM DIRECTORS



Mr. Praveen Raina



Mr. Arun Moza



Mr. Ishet Dhar

- To provide tuition, school supplies and living expenses to Kashmiri Pandit school children (Nursery-12) in refugee camps in India.

- **Raised \$130,510.65 to sponsor 458 beneficiaries.**
- **Supported 33 beneficiaries from Kashmir Valley**
- Donors have been provided credentials to log into KOA SAC portal to access each beneficiary's information that they support.

### New Program - Pilot in 2021:

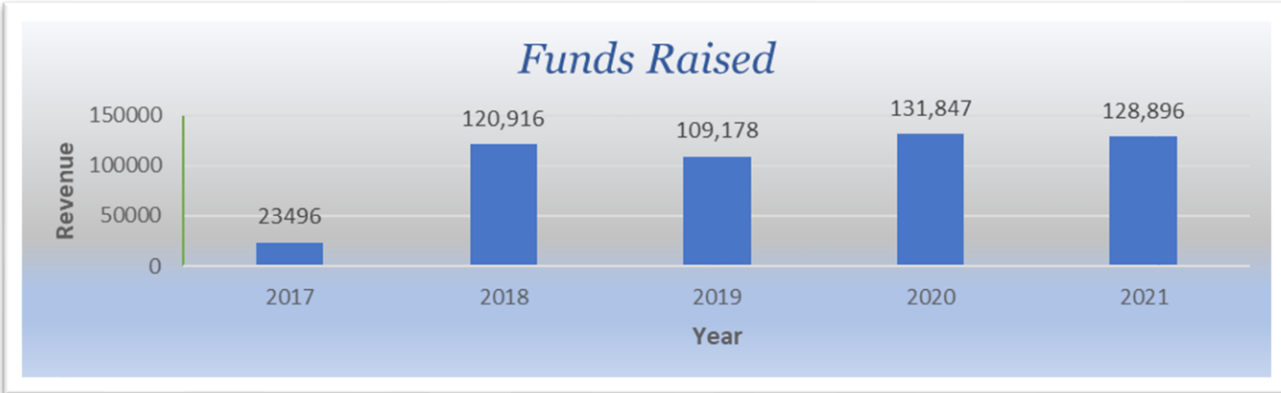
- **"Aptitude Testing & Career Guidance" for 9th - 12th grade students.**
- Engaged a top tier company in India for the project
- Executing pilot program with 31 kids.

Program page: <http://koausa.org/site/programs/sponsor-a-child-sac/>

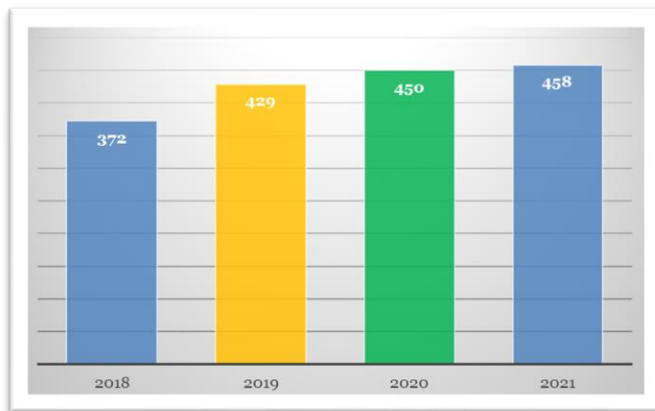
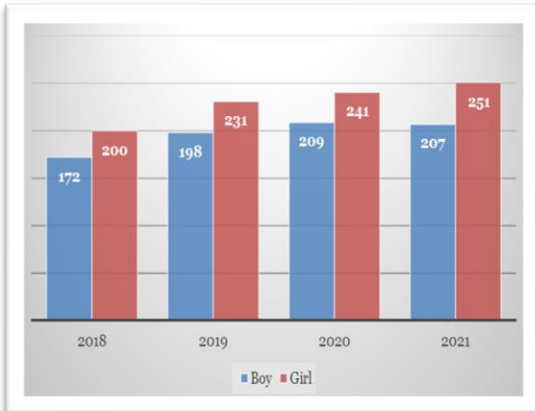


# Support A Child Program (Cont.)

*Funds Raised*



*Gender Distribution*



- Total beneficiaries = 458
- 207 boys, 251 girls

# Education Assistance Program (EAP)

## PROGRAM DIRECTORS



Dr. Tej Nath Kaul



Mrs. Rohini Ganju



Mr. Shivas Dhar

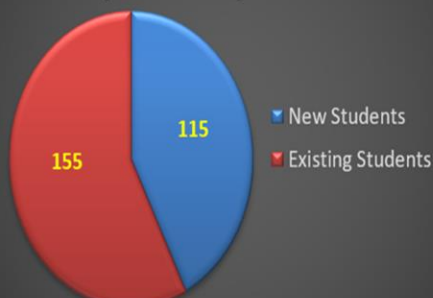


# Summary for 2021

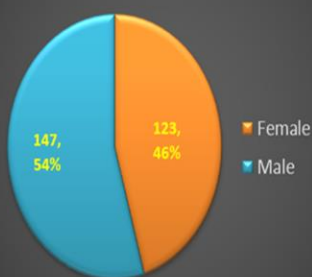
**Dollar amount raised - \$135925 + INR 150,000**

- Beneficiaries sponsored - 270
- Existing Students - 155
- New students - 115
- Boys - 54%, Girls- 46%
- Orphans - 39
- Residing in Migrant Camps - 105 (44%)

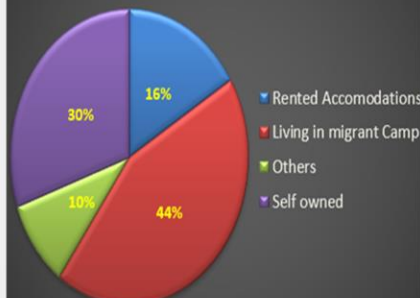
Student sponsorship 2021



Gender distribution

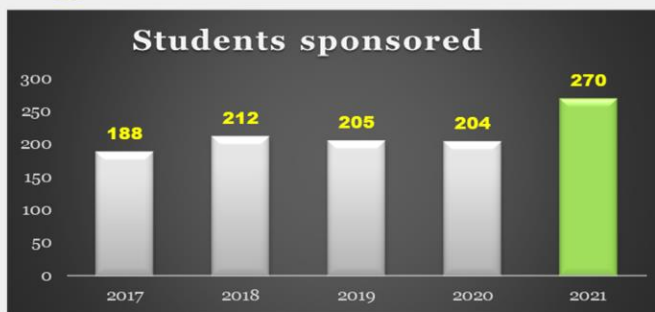


Accommodation

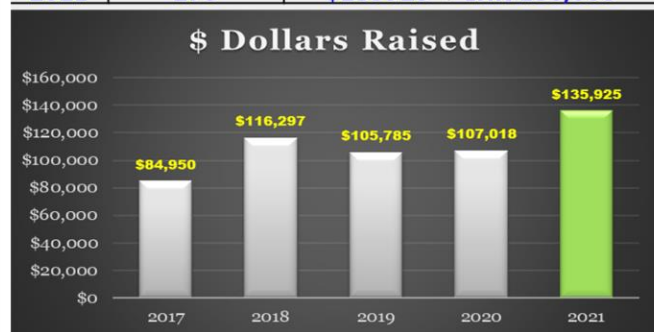


## Five-year progression

Year	Students sponsored	Money raised
2017	188	\$84950 + INR 240,000
2018	212	\$116297 + INR 135,000
2019	205	\$105785 + INR 275,000
2020	204	\$107018 + INR 117,000
2021	270	\$135925 + INR 150,000



Students Sponsored - 32%↑ increase from 2020



Dollars Raised - 27%↑ increase from 2020



INR Raised - 28%↑ increase from 2020

# Obituaries

## *Forever in Our Hearts*



Late Shri. Roop Kishen Taku



Late Shri. Chaman Lal Saraf



Late Shri Bansi Lal Tikku