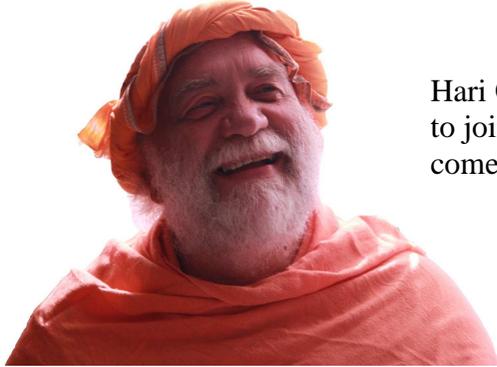




SHANTIPURI FRIENDS FOUNDATION

A MESSAGE FROM SWAMI NIRVANANANDA



Hari Om! I am happy to be back in the USA this year. I invite you to join me at my kirtans and special programs in California. Please come and chant with me!

Swami Nirvanananda

- 8/8 **Soul of Yoga**, 627 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, 7:00 p.m., Kirtan
- 8/9 **Soul of Yoga**, 627 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Special Event:
An Unceasing Stream of Love
- 8/15 **Vedanta Society**, 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, 7:30 p.m. Kirtan
- 8/16-22 Look for Swami at the *Self-Realization Fellowship Convocation* in Los Angeles
- 8/22 **Yoga Center of California**, 445 E. 17th Street, Costa Mesa, 7:30 p.m. Kirtan
- 8/23 **Yoga Center of California**, 445 E. 17th Street, Costa Mesa, 10:00 a.m. *Sacred Paths of East and West: A pilgrim's journey in India and Italy.*
- 8/29 **Seaside Church for Spiritual Living**, 1613 Lake Drive, Encinitas, 7:00 p.m. Kirtan

All events are free! Your generous donations help Swamiji continue to support many underprivileged children in India and allow him to share his special joy and music with many people around the world.

You Make It All Possible!

We are very thankful to all our sponsors and donors who are making it possible to help more than 1,250 children in and around Puri, India, to get an education and live better, healthier lives. This is really the only way for them to look forward to a better life for themselves and their future families.

Please read on for updates on all the projects.

Visit www.shantipurifriends.org and www.nirvanananda.org to find new pictures and videos.

Happy Cows!

The Milk Project was helped very much buying five cows that provide a good amount of fresh milk every day for all the children and babies. The cows are attended by our new "cowboy," Avinash, who provides them with fresh hay and keeps them clean. A solar panel on the roof provides electricity for the fans that cool the stable. The cows look very happy and strong, very different from the normal Indian cows roaming on the roads. The excrement of the animals produces a large quantity of bio-gas which is used in the kitchen. We are planning to buy more cows to cover all the needed milk and fuel for cooking.



Swami Nirvanananda visits Puri, India, nearly every year to help with the many projects he supports there. Puri is located on the Bay of Bengal in the state of Orissa. Here he describes some of the updates and activities:

Beatrix School Update

In January, I visited Puri and the new Beatrix School. I was really gratified to see how nicely the work has progressed and how happy the students and teachers are. More than 650 children, from kindergarten to 10th grade now attend school here. On the first two floors are the higher grades and the computer rooms. More than 20 desktops are connected to a main hard drive so that all the children receive basic technological knowledge.



On the 3rd floor there is a very large hall for the meetings. Every morning at 9:30 a.m. the students practice 30 minutes of yoga before starting their regular classes. A young teacher shows them Pranayama exercises, and meditation and relaxation methods. At the end they all recite the Guru Mantra in Sanskrit and sing the Indian national anthem, composed by Rabindranath Tagore. It is really very touching to see their intense and enthusiastic participation. The teachers are also very supportive because the regular practice of yoga has a big influence on the students' concentration capacity, the quality of their learning, and the improvement of their relationships. Many visiting European guests were impressed with the idea of yoga in the school.

All the students are very proud and appreciative that they can be part of our school. They have so much gratitude that they have this opportunity and the possibility of going on to attend college. There is a very good university in Bhubaneshwar and many would like to go there. One of our students attended this college and is now studying in Australia for two years to get a Master's degree in Computer Engineering. This student has won several national prizes for academics during his time at the Beatrix School. Other graduates of the Beatrix School are attending a three-year nursing school and will go on to have a rewarding career in the medical fields. They all are among the best students.

New Improvements and Project Updates

Among the new projects that we introduced was the construction of new bathrooms for the girls to give them better hygienic conditions.

They will be built at the ground floor near the new school.



Some new sturdy brick huts have been built for the lepers' families and there are more under construction. Solar panels have been installed on the roofs that provide electricity to run the pumps and filters for the drinking water. This will help reduce several cases of dysentery and other illnesses due to the impurity of the drinking water.



With your donations, the various other projects continue and grow:

- * rescuing girls living on the streets;
- * buying sewing machines for our tailoring and embroidery schools;
- * providing medical equipment for our school that serves handicapped girls;
- * helping many families of rickshaws pullers to buy a new rickshaw.

Beatrix School Celebrations

During our visit we participated in several school celebrations:

First was the Saraswati Puja, performed in a room at the school by a young Brahmin, a teacher of yoga. Saraswati is the female aspect of God, representing wisdom, teaching, art and music. She is therefore very much beloved by the students who feel her protection and guidance in all their efforts.

The second celebration was the anniversary of Chandra Bose, the Freedom Fighter who liberated Bengal and Orissa in the last century. A special puja was held while some students narrated his story.

The third celebration took place on January 26th, India's Independence Day, when India gained its freedom from British rule just 66 years ago. All the students prepared many excel-

lent programs, including yoga demonstrations, singing and some different styles of dancing, from the classical Odissi to Bollywood Dance. We all liked it very much.

Then, the fourth celebration concluded our festivities! Every year on January 30th, we have a special festival to

remember Father Marian, the founder of the school and the lepers' colony. This year the crowd was very large and enthusiastic. The head representative of all schools came to give a talk. To my surprise, at the end, she sang an old song called "We Shall Overcome" of the Afro-American slavery tradition. It was a very special moment for all those students, who are children of the untouchables of the Indian caste system. Many other musical programs followed, expressing so much joy and happiness.

It was difficult to leave after being so close to the children and their parents, but we will be back next year for the 10th anniversary of Father Marion's passing.



Thank you for sharing Swami's journey!

Shantipuri Friends Foundation is a 501 (c)3, non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible and go directly to support underprivileged children in Puri, India. Donate at www.shantipurifriends.org

Sales from Swami's CDs go to support his travel and expenses. Visit www.nirvanananda.org