

Assam Foundation of North America AFNA Newsletter

Spring 2024



MICHIGAN

AFNA WALK AND RUN 2023

The 5th Annual AFNA Walk and Run last year took place in three locations in the US: California, New Jersey and Michigan. In the Bay area, California the walk was organized at Quarry lakes Regional Park with 120 plus participants running for 5k and 10k race. The day began with warm up session led by Ironman Uzzal Barua, walk kicked off by Pranab Sarma followed by breakfast and Assam State Anthem sung by the little kids.



NEW JERSEY

In this issue

- AFNA Walk and Run 2023
- Amrapari Project Update
- AKADAMICS Update
- Cachar Cancer Hospital Project Update
- Moontime- Book Release
- Field Visits
- 9th Annual Essay Contest
- Weaving for Care Update
- Article By Debojit Bora
- AFNA Art Contest

Join us for our
annual GBM
virtually on June
22, 2024

AFNA Walk And Run 2023



CALIFORNIA



MICHIGAN



AKADAMICS- PROJECT UPDATE



AKADAMICS program enters its second decade this year. The program was initiated with a humble goal of awarding 4 students from 4 corners of Assam every year. The very first year of its initiation, AFNA received more than 2000 applications. That shocked us and we quickly updated our first-year scholarships' count from 4 to 10. We also took an aspirational goal to increase the scholarship by 25 percent every year up to a maximum of 100 scholarships every year. We met that goal in 2021 and we have been awarding approximately 100 deserving students every year. As a quick reminder, AKADAMICS awards financially challenged bachelor's degree students with scholarships to complete their courses to lay a strong foundation for a rewarding career. Here are some key statistics for these scholarships as of end of 2023:

1. Total students awarded to date: 266
2. Awardees with STEM degrees: 129
3. Female awardees: 98
4. Total Graduates: 160

This has been made possible through the continued support from our donors, not only through financial contributions but also through continuous encouragement. This is also the result of the strong effort and dedication of the AKADAMICS volunteers who spend a large amount of their personal time every year to conduct the due diligence during the selection process. Sincere thanks are due to the Selection Board who do a phenomenal job in the final selection process.

Applications for the 2024-2025 session are now being accepted through April 30th. The details and the application form can be found in here: <https://assamfoundation.net/projects/akadamics>.

CACHAR CANCER HOSPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

In 2022, AFNA, contributed towards acquiring two new medical equipment at the Cachar Cancer Hospital which offers free cancer care in southern Assam. These two equipment, Identification and Antibiotic Susceptibility System (ID-AST) Automated Blood Culture System were procured to speed up key diagnostic in their microbiology laboratory. The installation was completed in mid-2023. These two machines have reduced the time taken in the processing of the culture and sensitivity to antibiotics. This is very important for patients in the intensive care unit as it allows management of the cancer patients with early care by initiating timely administration of medical care as compared to the previous conventional method where the patients had to wait for more than 24 hours to get the results. The automated system supports reduced complications in patients. In a report provided by the hospital in early December 2023, of 361 Blood Culture in Bact/Alert 3D tests, the hospital served over 340+ individuals (a few patients requested for a second culture report). In ID/AST system (VITEK2 COMPACT) the hospital ran positive isolates from the previous machine, a total of 144 samples were processed and a total of 135+ patients benefited post installation.

Moon Time - Book Release



A group of AFNA volunteers under the leadership of Mrs. Ranju Sarma translated the book "Moon Time" to Assamese as a part of AFNA's one of the key initiatives to focus on better Healthcare in Assam. The book is based on menstrual hygiene and is targeted towards teenaged girls and the information is presented in an easily readable conversational format. The book was originally published in English by Spherule Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Maharashtra, India. Assam Foundation of North America (AFNA) in partnership with Indian Medical Association (IMA), Assam Branch, and Samagra Shiksha, Kamrup, jointly released the book "Moon Time" at the Guwahati Press Club. This project was conceived as a pilot project to easily disseminate knowledge on menstruation which is an important topic to discuss and educate young women. The strategic partnership among the three organizations - AFNA, IMA and Samagra Shiksha, Kamrup - is geared towards leveraging the strengths of each organization to propagate the much needed understanding and awareness of menstrual hygiene among teenage girls.



The book will be made available by Samagra Shiksha, Kamrup in schools and libraries across Assam. Recently the books have been distributed in the Kaliram Baruah High School. Some books have also been sent to Sonari in Assam.

Project “Amrapari”- We Can



AFNA is pleased to witness the successful completion of the project "Amrapari-We Can" organized by Foundation of Social Transformation (FST) Guwahati, Assam with support from AFNA. This project was created during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown as a way of creating sustainable livelihoods for char-chapori women in Assam.



The project sought to support women’s empowerment and economic self-sufficiency by supporting them in making and selling embroidered quilts—a legacy of a traditional skill women who inherit from their mother in char chapori areas in Barpeta districts of Assam. 60 women artisans of 10 livelihoods group who belongs to Char and rural areas of Barpeta District of Assam were identified under the project.



The project sought to enhance the capacity of the women artisans through training on design and quality improvement, helped establish market linkages through participation in expo, commercial mela at different parts of India, brand building, linkages with government and financial institutions. Also raw materials like sewing machines and training materials were provided to the artisan. During the project period, sessions on basic personal hygiene and reproductive health, an awareness session on government schemes under DICC led by the Deputy Director of DICC with Canara Bank Manager and his team for women artisans were conducted. A session on Women Livelihood opportunity in the project areas was also conducted to further set a path towards gender equality, inclusive growth and resilience. Health camp was also organized for the women artisans with a theme “Health is the best wealth”. Through this health camp it also intends to spread the message among the women that they should take care of their health as they are the prime pillar on which an entire family stands and functions

PROJECT – WEAVING FOR CARE





The Weaving For Care program of 2023 ended in November. The items donated this year include baby blankets, hats, and booties. The program, which is an AFNA initiative, was started as a relief effort to provide comfort for the needy during times of natural disaster. The drive starts early every year, and it concludes by year end. AFNA affiliate CARE TO KNIT, INC. in New York distributes the donated handmade clothes from AFNA, to people in hospitals, shelters, and other places. We thank all volunteers who have contributed this year.

✦ ✦

“Weaving For Care”

Please join us to celebrate a tradition of Weaving and Knitting: The joy of giving



Dear Friends,

The Assam Foundation of North America is having a Weaving and Knitting drive to donate new handmade clothing items to charity.

We invite adults and children to volunteer in this drive. Any child who donates a handmade item will be awarded a certificate of participation for volunteering hours.

Contact Kamalakshi Hazarika by email: goodfund@yahoo.com to participate.
Thank you

From the “Weaving For Care” Team

Want to join us?

CONTACT US:

INFO@ASSAMFOUNDATION.NET

Donate to AFNA

SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW





ARTICLE

KIDNEY DONATION- GIFT OF LIFE



Debojit Bora
California

One of the most rewarding and gratifying experiences of life is becoming a “lifesaver”- this is when ordinary people become extra-ordinary by risking their own lives (whether as a soldier, fire fighter or by donating an organ). Donation or gift of an organ is the greatest gift of all. It is truly amazing that, thanks to organ donors, about 27 thousand such precious gifts are transplanted every year in the United States.

Kidneys are vital to life; we cannot survive without them. But thankfully **the Creator has provided us with a spare** as most of us can live a healthy life with just one kidney. Kidney disease is a silent killer as many wouldn't know until the final stages of organ failure. The best treatment is a transplant, otherwise people with kidney failure must rely on dialysis to remain alive.

Understanding Kidney Donation

The kind act of organ donation extends far beyond the individual recipient. It has ripple effects that touch the lives of families, friends, and entire communities. My own personal involvement with kidney disease extends to being both an organ donor in early 20s (to save my brother's life) and also as a recipient in my mid-60s from an anonymous and generous donor in Houston.

There are two types of kidneys donations:

Living donations, and deceased donation: Living kidney donation involves the voluntary donation of a kidney from a living donor. And deceased donations occur when a person donates upon death- by those who indicated their desire in IDs/Driver Licenses.

Kidney transplantation has made tremendous progress in techniques and post-transplant improvements. However, despite the profound impact of kidney donation, misconceptions and myths persist. The fear and risks associated with organ donation can be reduced by learning about the advancements in medical technology that have made the process much safer than before. Additionally, potential living donors go through a very thorough medical and psychological screening to ensure their suitability for organ donation.

How Can You Help?

Through my own personal experience and those of countless other donors, I have learned that being well-informed, and being confident (of the process) will get the ball rolling. The crucial factors to consider are the donor-recipient compatibility, and any health risks involved (especially for the donor).

If you are inspired to make a difference and give the gift of life to another, through kidney donation, there are several steps you can take: 1) Educate yourself; learn more about kidney donation, including the benefits, risks, and eligibility criteria. 2) Consider donation, either as a living or deceased donor (please indicate your intention in your ID/Driver's license).

Conclusion

Kidney donation is a remarkable act of generosity and compassion that holds the power to transform lives. Whether through living or deceased donation, individuals can make a profound difference by offering the gift of life to those in need. By raising awareness about kidney disease, prevention, and actively supporting organ donation initiatives will greatly help to reduce failures and deaths. There is a critical shortage of organs, *the waiting list is very long...* **And finally**, there is no age limit for donating a kidney (*please see the AARP article below*). The oldest donor as of 2021 was 91 years old. At a minimum, please make your wishes known if you want your organs donated upon death (it's binding in all states, next of kin cannot change your wishes), so, please consider to **“share your spare to save another!!”**

Reference:

<https://www.kidney.org/> National Kidney Foundation
<https://www.nkdo.org/> National Kidney Donation Organization
<https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2022/organ-donation-age-limit.html>



9TH ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST

CONTEST TOPIC

"As a child of immigrant parents, how do you cherish your unique roots being from North East India? Do you feel the need to maintain the connection, why or why not?"

ESSAY CONTEST RULES

- The contest is open to students who are studying in a school in USA, Canada or Mexico and are attending grade 8 through 12 in the 2023-2024 academic year
- Essays must be no longer than 1500 words in length, submitted in English, typed into a Word (.doc) or PDF file
- Refer to the "How to Submit" section below to ensure that all necessary information is provided by each contestant. Failure to provide any part of this information will automatically disqualify the contestant from the competition
- Only one entry per student per year, and each entry must be the work of only one student
- Essay entries cannot have already been published
- Any essays found to be plagiarized will be automatically disqualified and the student will be prohibited from entering any future essay contests
- Second and third prizes will be considered based on the number of entries received

HOW TO SUBMIT

The essay should be emailed to "afnaessaycontest@gmail.com" by June 15th, 2024 with the following information in the body of the email:

- Contestant's Name:
- Parent's Names:
- How are you connected to Assam:
- Grade:
- School Name, City, State:
- Current address of residence:
- Contact phone & Email Address:

**Contest winners
will receive a
certificate and a
cash award of
1st Prize \$250
2nd Prize \$150
3rd Prize \$100**

**The winner(s) will
be announced in
the 45th Assam
Convention to be
held in
Nashville, TN
from June 28th to
June 30th, 2024**

**The winning
essay will be
published in the
Post-Convention
issue of the
AFNA newsletter**

DEADLINE:

JUNE 1st, 2024

AFNA Annual Art Contest 2024



AFNA Annual Art Contest is back for its 3rd year! Grab your Pencils, Crayons, Markers, Paints, or Tablet/Laptop again to create an artwork!



ART CONTEST RULES:

- The contest is open to all ages, use any art medium.
- Create your artwork as a drawing, painting or mixed media (including digital). Your artwork will be judged on its creativity, how well it fits into the theme and the quality of the artwork.
- Participants must submit a digital copy (min 300dpi) of original artwork of their own creation.
- **Artwork must be in landscape mode with 7.5x11.5 aspect ratio.**
- Winners will be announced for three age groups:
 - **Under 12 years**
 - **12-18 years**
 - **18 years & older**
- Choose from the following themes:
 - **Monuments of Assam (past & present)**
- Refer to the **HOW TO SUBMIT** section to ensure that all necessary information is provided by each Participant. Failure to provide any part of this information will automatically disqualify the participant from the contest.

HOW TO SUBMIT:

- A high quality digital scan/copy of the original artwork should be uploaded to <https://tinyurl.com/AFNAArtContest2024>. A minimum of 300 dpi is recommended (600 dpi preferred).
- Email to AFNAArtContest@gmail.com by the deadline, with the following information in the body of the email:
 - Participants's Name:
 - Parent's Names (if minor):
 - Name of the uploaded file:
 - Age/Category (as of 30th June, 2024):
 - Current address of residence:
 - Contact phone:



Entries due:
1st June, 2024

Field visits by AFNA volunteers



Parijat Academy



SENEH



Kalyani Niwas



Parijat Academy



SHED





Please join us virtually

Annual General Body Meeting Saturday, 22nd June, 2024

EST: 1:00pm-3:00pm
PST: 10:00am-12:00pm
IST: 10:30pm-12:30am

Zoom Virtual Meeting link will be shared later!

Become a volunteer

If you would like to join us as a volunteer, there are many ways you can help - steward a project, do fundraising, keep our website updated, raise awareness among your friends about the foundation's efforts, discuss great ideas for new projects and initiatives - the possibilities are limitless.

Come join us and make a difference!

Join us in our virtual monthly volunteer meeting held on the first Sunday of every month at 12-1:00 p.m. CST. Email us at info@assamfoundation.net for zoom link

For any queries

Email us at: info@assamfoundation.net
Website: <http://www.assamfoundation.net/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/assamfoundation>