

December 2014

COCONUT Connections

**AS WE WIND DOWN 2014 WE'D LIKE TO SAY
THANK YOU!**

We would like to thank all of you who have supported us this year by participating and donating to the events we organized. We would not be where we are today without your time and talents! We hope to see you and your friends in 2015!



This holiday season spread cheer to those far and near by shopping at Amazon Smile and supporting Goa Sudharop!

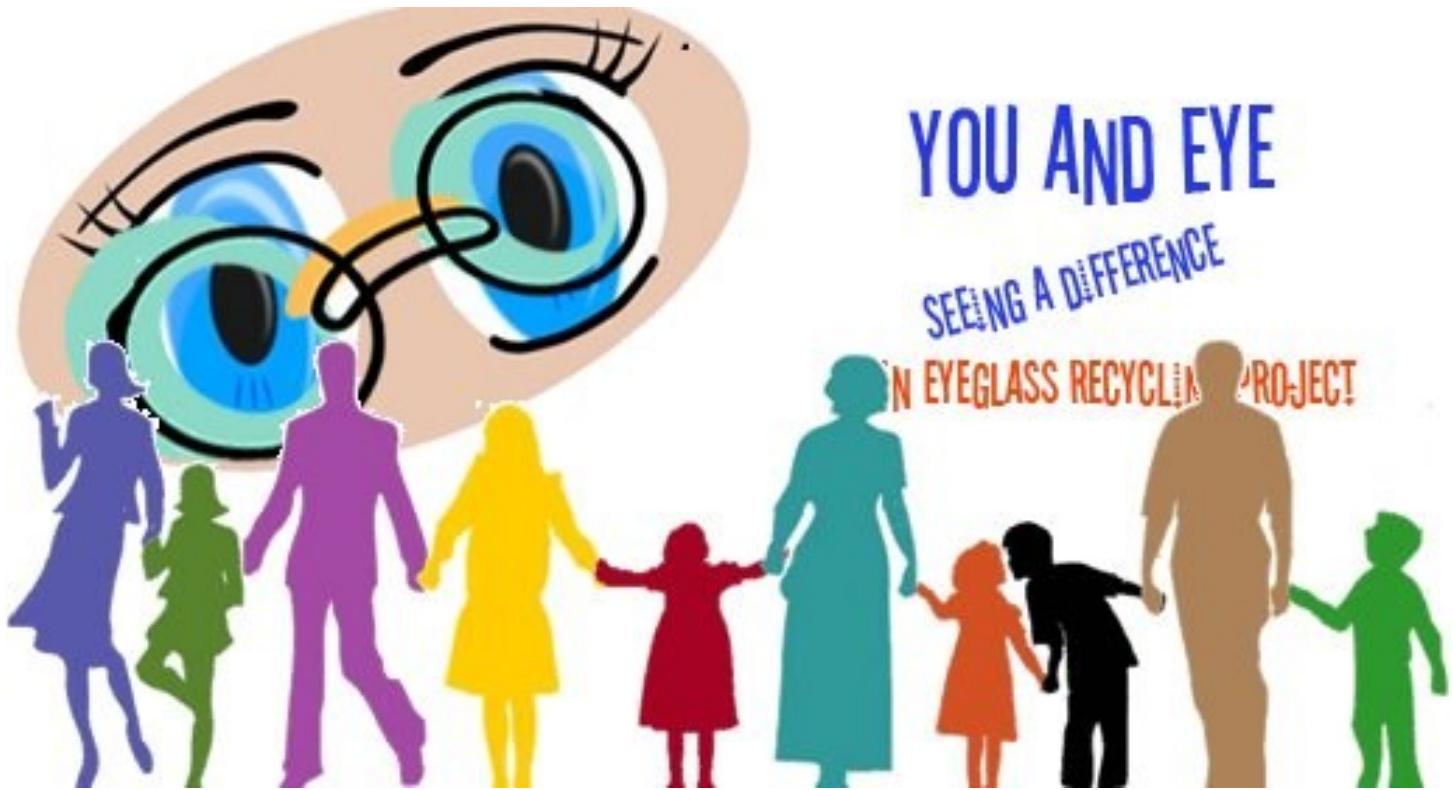
Support us when you shop Amazon.com

We are so very pleased to announce that you can now support our organization easily and automatically by shopping at AmazonSmile (<http://smile.amazon.com/gp/charity/change.html>) and choosing Goa Sudharop Community Development Inc. as your favorite charity to support. Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible purchase to Goa Sudharop.



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In 2013, we fund-raised a total of \$10,000.00 at the Goa Sudharop event, A Night in Goa. This year we disbursed \$7,036.38 to Mukta Opticians to provide optical services at eye camps in villages in Goa.

We are in the process of sighting another village for the funds generated from the auction and from your additional donations and we plan to disburse the remaining funds in January 2015. So far, 5 of the 7 planned eye camps have been completed.

Please note, if you are interested in sponsoring full eye camps, a donation of \$750 will cover the needs for a village. We are very appreciative that you are helping us make a difference in providing the gift of vision to people in impoverished communities in Goa.

Thanks,
Anjali Shastri & Ryan Colaco

Thank you to the generous donors who made eye camps at the following villages possible:

• Neesha De Souza	Bethalbatim	completed June 24, 2014
• Fr.Domingos Jaques	Veroda	completed Sept 21, 2014
• Antoneta & Bismark Da Costa	Colva/Varca	completed July 31, 2014
• Ria, Justin, Kurt & Shilla Almeida	Sanguem	completed May 28,2014
• Lance & Maria Goretti De Souza	Cansaulim	completed May 7, 2014
• Flo & Michael De Souza	Mapusa	Pending
• Bernard & Marina Gracious-Martis	Bali	Pending

My Experience Volunteering at the Veroda Eye Camp

By Chloe Fernandes

Student at Chowgule College, Goa

Together with National Social Service

volunteers from my College I was privileged to attend one of the seven eye camps held in Veroda, Goa on September 21, 2014. The eye camp was sponsored by Fr. Domingous S. Jacques, who just turned 96 this year. He is from Veroda and now lives in Fremont, California. It has always been his desire and dream to give back to the village he came from.

The eye camp was a real success. We began with a small inauguration and the lighting of the lamp at around 10 am, though registration began at 9.30 am. We recorded a footprint of 185 people that day. We asked whoever came in early to call their neighbors as well when they were done, and they did so. It was amazing to see how far a small thought could go. I am so glad to be a part of this initiative as this time the camp was held in a village and I could see how much the people needed this.



You & Eye

\$750 covers a village

Please consider supporting the eye sight needs of those in Goa by sponsoring a village.

"I am so glad to be a part of this initiative as this time the camp was held in a village and I could see how much the people needed this."



Goa Sudharop: Invited to Yahoo's Diwali Celebration

By Shilla Almeida

With much effort from Stephen da Silva, a resident of the Bay Area and employee of Yahoo, Goa Sudharop has become a Yahoo Employee Foundation (YEF) grant recipient. The YEF organization is a grassroots, philanthropic group that is employee driven and employee funded. Donations to YEF from employee contributions are matched through Yahoo's Matching Gifts program. Since 2000, YEF has donated over \$15 million in cash grants to over 700 nonprofit organizations globally.

"Thanks to the YEF grant and employee matched contributions, Goa Sudharop was able to disburse \$3,000.00 to a children's welfare program in Moira, Bardez-Goa."

The event was great exposure for Goa Sudharop and more importantly, for our youth leaders, Nikhil Shastri, Anjali Shastri, Tanya D 'Silva and myself. It provided an opportunity for us volunteers to build our network as an organization while we met with employees at Yahoo to share Goa Sudharop' s Mission Statement and ongoing youth led projects.

As a new recipient, Goa Sudharop was invited to have a booth to showcase our organization at Yahoo's Diwali Celebration held on Tuesday, October 28, 2014, at Yahoo Head Quarters in the Silicon Valley.

The celebration of Diwali, also known as the "Festival of Lights," celebrates the victory of light over darkness, wisdom over ignorance, and good over evil. It was the perfect venue to learn about our organization and the other non-profit organizations YEF support.



From left to right: Tanya D'Silva, Shilla Almeida, Anjali Shastri, Nikhil Shastri and Acaria Almeida

Thanks to the YEF grant and employee matched contributions, Goa Sudharop was able to disburse \$3,000.00 to a children's welfare program in Moira, Bardez-Goa. We are proud to be a YEF recipient and urge all Yahoo employees to support the various projects taking place by donating to Goa Sudharop through YEF.

Helping HIV positive babies in the South Province of Goa

By Acaria Almeida

Goa Sudharop reached out to the Goan community in the Bay Area to support an appeal to provide emergency assistance for HIV positive babies under the care of Nitya Seva Niketan.

Nitya Seva Niketan is a perpetual service center in the state of Goa founded in 1978 by the Pilar Fathers. The mission of the center is to "spread the mission of love to the poor...in Goa". The center originally served the needs of the poor and in 2004 expanded its services to care for, rehabilitate and empower women and children with HIV/AIDS. The center also spreads awareness of HIV/AIDS.

New furniture for the center

- Tables $6,000 \times 6 =$ Rs. 36,000/-
- Benches $2,500 \times 12 =$ Rs. 30,000/-
- Stools $2,000 \times 12 =$ Rs. 24,000/-
- Beds $14,500 \times 30 =$ Rs. 435,000/-

Through individual and employer matched donations we have collected a total of

Rs. 525,000/-

Additional support is always welcome!

We would like to thank Bay Area resident Troy De Souza's generosity. He was the first to contribute to the appeal for emergency funds to feed the HIV positive babies. His generosity allowed the Provincial Superior of the center, Sr. Alphonsa, to provide nourishment and care for the babies.

Additional requests to furnish the center for care and comfort are also being supported through employer matched donations by other donors.

MUSIC THERAPY FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN

THE VISION

The Special Needs Fund is raising money to help children with autism and other disabilities to cope by using a new method of treatment called music therapy.

THE MISSION

Special Needs Fund will utilize music therapy for disabled children. Music is proven to help the mind develop to a higher level, especially in those with diagnosed disabilities. The project will focus on therapy for the larger population of children in Goa suffering from autism and other learning disabilities.

LEADER - Darren & Sherise D'Silva
CONTACT - dsilvadarren@gmail.com

LOOKOUT 2015! Overcoming learning disabilities with music

Sherise and Darren D'Silva have started a new project to provide music therapy to children with autism and other learning disabilities.

If you are interested in participating in the project or contributing please contact Darren D'Silva at dsilvadarren@gmail.com.

**OVER \$1,150 WAS
RAISED AT THE PICNIC
AND THE EARLIER
WORLD CUP SOCCER
POOL TO BENEFIT GOA
SUDHAROP**

**FOOD & FUN
ORGANIZED BY
GOANS LOCAL TO
THE BAY AREA**

The food at the event was provided by Malcom D'Sa (3-D Catering, Fremont CA) and was absolutely exquisite. There were fresh, tasty salads, hot dogs, barbecue chicken and a superb chicken biryani. Cake and tea followed lunch while music played in the background.

Some people played the guitar while others sang oldies and current hits.

Tony and Melanie Moniz of Walnut Creek, CA organized a variety of games for people of all ages. The most popular seemed to be the "Water Balloon" game which evolved into a fun-filled water balloon fight!



Annual Goa Sudharop Picnic

Alexander Gilbert, visiting from Bangor University, Wales

One of the reasons for the annual Goa Sudharop picnic is to focus attention on work done by the organization during the year and to update Goa Sudharop supporters. The picnic was held on Aug 25, 2014 at Lafayette Reservoir, CA.

Anjali Shastri updated us on the success of the "You and Eye" Project in Goa that has provided eye glasses to hundreds of Goans. She and Ryan Colaco deserve huge congratulations and thanks for their hard work and thoughtfulness, a great example of young people wanting to help and take part in more projects and schemes. We also heard from the D'Silva family who are spearheading efforts to provide music therapy to autistic children in Goa.

Personally, it was great to see everyone having such a good time, enjoying each other's company, catching up with old friends and making new ones. I was also impressed with the number of families and youth that attended the event. It shows that the future of Goa Sudharop is and will be in safe hands.

***Anjali Shastri and Ryan Colaco
deserve huge congratulations
and thanks for their hard work
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wanting to help and take part
in more projects and schemes"***



BETWEEN TWO COCONUT TREES

With Nikhil Shastri



In this episode Nikhil interviews Rebecca Lobo, the Communications Editor for Goa Sudharop.

Click on the link below or copy and paste it into your browser to watch what Nikhil has in store for her!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrdOzksXPHQ&list=UUPSzFtiOtIzOYJq-Fh4ZS8g>



If you would like to write for Coconut Connections, have comments, or suggestions please email us at gs.coconutconnections@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Rebecca Lobo, Editor

