

"Thank you "is the best prayer that anyone could say. Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, understanding – Alice Walker

Thank you all for your continued support during these difficult times



Vidya's breast cancer is in remission!

Featured in our January 2020 issue, Vidhya was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer last year. Following the initial diagnosis, she considered taking her own life after watching her mother die from the disease.

Your donations provided Vidhya with treatment, counselling, transport, food, and a source of income.

Today she is cancer free!

According to data, 1 woman dies of breast cancer in India every 13 minutes

Escaping poverty through education

Since 2003 WIN has helped HIV+ single mothers and their children with their medical and socio-economic needs. Today those children are young adults with dreams of escaping poverty and making a better future for themselves and for their mothers. Those who are academically gifted can only succeed in further education with financial support. In our last issue, we appealed for your help in covering HIV+ Chetan's Commerce degree expenses (right). Thankfully the Grand Commandery of the Knights of St Lazarus, Malta stepped forward to cover his expenses. Incredibly we also received an offer of support for HIV+ Piyush (left), who wishes to do a course in Electronic and Computer engineering.

Thank you!

Due to COVID 19 schools and colleges





Bhagyshree aged 10



Today aged 17

Bhagyshree Shau shares joy at passing A levels with distinction

WIN has supported HIV+ Bhagyshree and her parents for 7 years. As a 10 year old, Bhagyshree declared “*I am going to become one of Nagpur’s best chartered accountants*”

In July Bhagyshree visited WIN’s office to bring celebratory sweets having passed her A levels with distinction.

The stigma of COVID 19

In August India’s trajectory of daily cases of COVID-19 surpassed that of the United States, making it the country with the highest number of daily infections. But these alarming figures may just be the tip of the iceberg.



The stigma caused by COVID is proving to be almost as devastating as the disease itself. Countless numbers of those infected are hiding their symptoms, raising the question: how many are dying at home? In some instances, relatives are forced out of the community where a suspected COVID death has occurred. Worse still, the fear

and associated stigma has led some doctors to refuse hospital admission and treatment for suspected cases.

Tragically in August a member of our team lost her mother to COVID-19. She was denied admission in private hospitals and in the government hospital, staff refused to touch her. She died without medical intervention.

COVID-19 has worsened hunger in India

India is one of the world's largest food producers. Ironically, the country is also home to the largest population of hungry people and one-third of the world's malnourished children. The Global Hunger Index ranks India 102nd among 117 countries.

The course of the COVID-19 pandemic has made these conditions worse. The virus has disrupted global and local food systems, and India's poor and hungry are being affected worse than ever.

People working in the informal sector account for 90% of India's labour force.

Without the prospect of earning a steady income, let alone save for uncertain times, it was clear the measures to contain the health emergency would affect those in agriculture, construction, and services the hardest.

As people have lost their jobs and meagre incomes, food insecurity has skyrocketed, and nutrition security worsened among the already vulnerable.

Many people are faced with the cruel trade-off between defying the lockdown and catching the virus or remaining at home and seeing their scanty food stocks dwindle. Given the scale of the problem, WIN's contribution to feeding a small number of families may seem insignificant. But to those we reach every day, the food we provide is everything.



According to OXFAM "India may emerge as one of the epicentres of hunger owing to the social and economic fallout from COVID-19"

And the food we cook is rather good!



Above: Aloo Gobi
Potato & Cauliflower

Above: Shimla Mirchi
Capsicum & Tomato

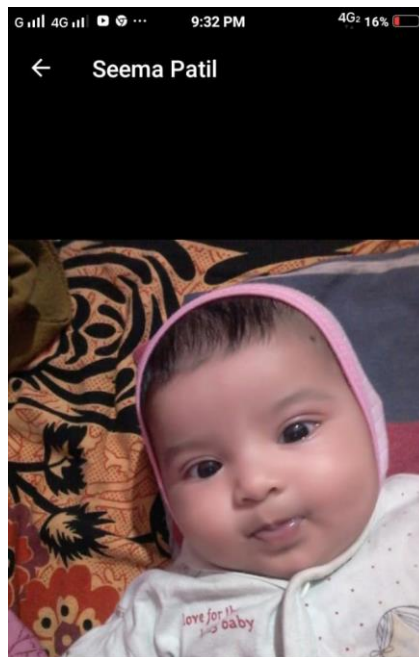


Above: Vegetable Biryani

Above: Indian Rice Pudding "Kheer"

Where there's life there's hope

The following young women were once in need of help from WIN. Today they are embarking upon a new chapter in their lives – motherhood.



We first met Seema Patil in 2002 when she was 10 years old and suffering from leprosy. A bright student, she endured discrimination at school because of the disease. Worse still, her mother blamed her for bringing shame on the family. Over the years WIN supported Seema with corrective surgery, counselling, and financial help with her academic

studies. Now married with new daughter – Seema is determined to put the misery of the past behind and to focus on giving her daughter all the love and support she could possibly need.



Kajal was 12 years old when she approached WIN for help. Today aged 20, the contrast between her life then and now is enormous.

As a child, HIV+ Kajal watched her parents die from AIDS. In the care of her grandparents, aunt, and uncle, she was forced to cook meals and do housework before and after school. If she didn't comply, she was beaten.

Daily visits to WIN's office provided respite from her miserable home life.

Kajal was keen to retake the A levels she failed when she was sick with TB. And we were fortunate to get support for her education from our wonderful friends and long-term donors in Durham, headed by Deirdre Horsburgh. Then the unexpected happened – Kajal fell in love!

When she became pregnant, she couldn't wait to share the good news.

It is an absolute privilege to be part of these young women's lives. Helping them through some of their worst and best times.

Above: Kajal celebrates her 7th month of pregnancy called *Dohale Jevan* a Marathi tradition equivalent to a Western baby shower

Many couples in which 1 person is HIV+ and the other isn't want to have children. With careful planning, it is possible to have a safe and successful pregnancy while preventing HIV from passing to the HIV – partner and to the baby