

# Assam Foundation of North America



## Newsletter - Spring, 2019

[www.assamfoundation.net](http://www.assamfoundation.net)  
<http://fb.com/assamfoundation>  
[Info@assamfoundation.net](mailto:Info@assamfoundation.net)



*AFNA wishes our dedicated volunteers a Happy Rongali Bihu and a Happy New Assamese Year ahead!*

## Work-An-Hour Campaign for Spring 2019

Back in old days in Assam, our mothers, while putting rice to cook for the family dinner, used to keep a handful out in a separate pot that was used to donate to the needy. This practice was called "musti daan" or a "handful of donation". Today, this practice still continues but in a more symbolic way. We no longer keep a separate pot to keep rice aside, but we just set aside some money that would be equivalent price for the food and then donate it.

**Work-An-Hour** works in a similar way. We request our volunteers that they help us carry out our projects. Or spend at least an hour on our project. Now with us being so far away from Assam, it is not always possible. Instead, we urge you to donate an hour's wage that we earn while carrying out our professional duties. That way, it is an hour in our life when we are not working to feed our own needs but to earn it for AFNA's project.

**This year's Work-An-Hour Campaign is focused on  
AFNA's AKADAMICS project.**

**Please donate by clicking on the [here](#) or scanning the QR Code**



## Support a Child (SAC) project updates for 2019

AFNA has initiated the disbursement of the following Support A Child scholarships for the year 2019:

- I) \$3000 to Society for Health & Education (SHED)
- II) \$625 to Patacharkuchi High School (PKHS)
- III) \$3000 to Tapoban

**SHED:** We grant \$3000 to SHED to supplement their other income to cover for food expenses for their students (boarders & day scholars). SHED is an integrated school with mostly kids of special abilities that also provides accommodation for the needy. It also runs an evening school for the kids of nearby villages for educational enrichments.

**PKHS:** We partner with Seneh to provide scholarships to 25 girls (\$25 each) in the Patacharkuchi High School on basis of merit as most of the students in the Government High School is from pretty low financial background. This has already been disbursed to the students early in April.

**Tapoban:** Tapoban receives yearly \$3000 from AFNA's Support A Child scholarships to subsidize the food, teaching & therapy expenses for the 30 boarders in Tapoban. We continue to provide this support to Tapoban.

## AFNA fundraising Event: "Joy of Giving - Music for a Cause"

AFNA invites you to our fundraising event: "Joy of Giving - Music for a Cause" - a concert by Sunita Bhuyan on Saturday, May 18th, 2019 at 1:00pm in Canton Village Theater, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton, Michigan.

A recipient of the prestigious Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award for Excellence in Music, acclaimed violinist Sunita Bhuyan from India is that rare performer who blends skill and a nuanced understanding of music with spunk on stage. Her musical range is breathtakingly wide, from pure classical music to a wide range of light melodies that fuse jazz, folk and a host of other influences from different parts of the world to create a distinctive sound. Sunita also uses music as a tool for her life-enrichment workshops on leadership and change. Her album "Bihu Strings" which reflects the folk music from the state of Assam is the only Bihu album on violin. Please visit her YouTube channel for more videos: <https://www.youtube.com/user/violinsunita>.

As a Joy of Giving Ambassador, Sunita has been recognized by His Holiness Pope Francis for her work with almost 20,000 less privileged children. This event is a fundraiser for Assam Foundation of North America (AFNA), a volunteer-driven US-based non-profit organization with a thirty-four years history of supporting social development projects in Assam, a north-eastern state of India, and helping with charitable work in the US and abroad. Visit <http://assamfoundation.net/> to know more about AFNA's current and past projects. You can visit <http://tinyurl.com/aami-fundraiser> to make a donation and get event pass(s).

For more information, please email [aami.fundraiser@gmail.com](mailto:aami.fundraiser@gmail.com), call 248-709-5980, or reach out to Ruma Barua, Krishanu Kaushik, or Chandan Mozumder.

You can find more information and updates about the event at the [Facebook Event page](#).



# Himadri Das Memorial Essay Competition

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Essay competition by AFNA is open for 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. This year's topic/prompt for the competition is: "Which aspect of Assamese Culture or Tradition would you like to teach your Non-Assamese friends and why?".

The winners of the competition will be announced at the 40<sup>th</sup> Assam Convention in Vancouver, Canada (July 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019). The essay competition has cash prizes for winners and the first prize is sponsored by Late Himadri Das's family, in his honor, through his generous donation to AFNA.

Please submit your essays to [afnaessaycontest@gmail.com](mailto:afnaessaycontest@gmail.com) with the subject line "Himadri Das Memorial AFNA Essay Contest, 2019, <Your Name>" by Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

## Rules for the competition:

- Only Assamese origin students residing and studying in USA, Canada or Mexico can participate in the contest.
- Essays must be no longer than 1500 words in length, submitted in English.
- Only Word (.doc) or PDF files can be submitted.
- Only one entry per student is allowed, 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.

For any questions please contact Krishanu Kaushik – email: [krishanuk@gmail.com](mailto:krishanuk@gmail.com), phone: (734) 262 1697

## 2019 AFNA General Body Meeting in July

Join AFNA's 2019 GBM at 40<sup>th</sup> Assam Convention in Vancouver, Canada (July 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

Updates on the GBM time & location at the convention along with the fundraising initiative for this year are coming! We hope to see you there to share news from AFNA's new and continuing projects!

The convention website below is ready and has all the information you will need.

<http://aanahome.org/assam-convention/convention-2019>



Together we can make  
a difference ...

Join us

# Successful completion of the elevator project for Tapoban

It was a happy moment for Tapoban & the AFNA family when the elevator for Tapoban was inaugurated on 4th February, 2019. For all of us, it was the result of a dream that came true through the efforts of the volunteers of AFNA working with Tapoban's founder Mr. Kumud Kalita to see that the children in Tapoban can be self-sufficient when they need to move across the floors in Tapoban's newly constructed multi story building.

Tapoban, located in Pathsala, Assam, is a residential school for the students with special needs. It was started in 2005 with 5 students by Mr. Kumud Kalita. Today Tapoban hosts 30 students in its hostel and serves another 70 day scholars who receive special education and training. Most of the hostellers are either orphans or kids abandoned by their family.

AFNA has partnered with Tapoban since 2008 by providing scholarships and financial aids to support the vision for the school. Of late, Tapoban received help from multiple local organizations in Assam due to their good work. Last year, Tapoban started constructing a four story building to accommodate the students and borders. But there was one big hurdle. It did not have the additional funds needed to build an elevator. Without it, the students would have had to rely on the staff to take them up or down the floors. In India, where many struggle with the basic needs, an elevator for accessibility is considered a luxury.

AFNA felt that it is a human right for the students at Tapoban and worked with Mr. Kalita to find out what it takes to add an elevator. Our stewards put up a project proposal costing nearly \$21,000 where AFNA committed to pay 75% of the cost. Rest have been raised by Tapoban. We took the project and pitched it to the community in Assam Convention 2018 and received overwhelming support. One of our volunteers even ran a half marathon to raise additional fund. In total AFNA could meet its funding goal with a HUGE support from our community.

The construction started as planned in October and completed as per plan within 4 months without any cost overrun. Big thanks to Mr. Kalita for diligent execution and to the AFNA volunteers for conducting due diligence on the project plan. The final moment of joy came on the February 4th when the elevator was formally inaugurated in presence of AFNA volunteers, Tapoban family and other local dignitaries.

It surely sets the bar high for continuing and future AFNA projects. We hope to continue this work, spread hope and happiness and get a real value for the money for our donors. Thank you everyone in the North American Assamese community!!



## **Volunteer Email DL:**

Subscribe to

[afna-vols@freelists.org](mailto:afna-vols@freelists.org)

at

<http://freelists.org/list/afna-vols>

## **Newsletter Team:**

Lipika Deka

Pallav Saikia

Sarfaraz Taher

Chandan Talukdar

## **Get Involved:**

Monthly volunteer call:

First Sunday, every month,

10am - 11am PT

Dial in: 641-7153272 Code: 457920#