



**Fall  
Newsletter  
2018**



## **AFNA Charity Run - Bay Area 2018**

The bay area chapter of AFNA organized the first annual Bay Area Run on 19th Aug, 2018. The event comprised of 5K and 10K runs for all age groups. This event was organized with the aim of encouraging healthy lifestyle among the local Assamese community. We saw an overwhelming response with the participants exceeding the initial expectations and AFNA had to suspend accepting new registrations well ahead of the Event.

A run is not just about running the course, it is also about giving people an opportunity to carve out a healthy routine in their ever-busy lifestyle. With majority of the people in the Bay Area Assamese community having no prior experience of taking part in such an event, this was a chance to prove to ourselves that we were strong enough to endure it and complete the run collectively. With this very thought in mind, this event was organized to bring the community here together, for one and all to participate either by running or walking the course, with winning not being the ultimate goal, but inspiring all of us to overcome our hesitations and encourage each other to the finish line.

Along with serving the immediate community here, the run was organized to raise awareness and fund for the following AFNA's projects in Assam:

**Support a Child** to go to school and get an education that he/she cannot afford to have.

**Support a college student** to go to college by providing a scholarship and mentoring through our AKADAMICS program.

**Support a special need child** to have a home at Tapoban, a residential school for these kids and help them get education, vocational training and medical treatments they need to live a respectful life.

**Support a Grandma** at Seneh who have been abandoned by their family and the society.



The astounding success of this event led us to make significant contributions to the above-mentioned causes. AFNA would like to thank all those enthusiastic participants and volunteers for helping with this event. You can look at the pictures taken by our volunteer Monina Maruah [here](#).

The day began early both for volunteers and participants from different walks of life across the Bay Area and Southern California. There was a nip in the air and the sky was overcast, making it an ideal day for a Run at Quarry Lake, Fremont. Taking the lead, the first to start the event were seasoned participants up for the 10k, who were followed by the zealous kids motivated by the victory medals at the finish line and finally the 5k participants. Everyone was excited and cheering for each other, a few ran and a few walked the length, with the core initiative of inspiring one and all towards a community bonding of mutual support and brotherhood. Simultaneously it served the purpose of inculcating a healthy lifestyle among the participants, especially among the younger lot thus ensuring an active and fit future generation. At the end of the run, joyous participants were adorned with the medals and greeted to delicious Assamese snacks and an ever-refreshing cup of Assamese Tea.



AFNA is hoping to carry on this legacy, by planning to make this an Annual Bay Area run for the Assamese Community hoping to inspire and create awareness among everyone and contribute in every aspect that we can to the larger Community back in Assam. There has been renowned interest among other Assamese Communities with the success of our Event to host similar runs across America, which is a huge moment of honor for us at Bay Area AFNA. As always, we appreciate the support from the community and hope to make such successful events a regular feature in our calendar.

## AKADEMICS Scholars 2018

We are extremely excited to inform you that the Class of 2018 scholars for the AKADAMICS scholarship was announced on July 31<sup>st</sup>. We have an extremely talented class of 32 awardees this year and here is the list - <http://assamfoundation.net/11-projects/akademics/12-akademics-results-2014-2015>. Here are some key statistics of this year's class –

1. 15 STEM and 15 Non-STEM students were awarded
2. 12 students are pursuing a professional course e.g. MBBS, B.Tech., etc.
3. They hail from 18 different districts in Assam
4. 11 ladies have been awarded

This is the largest class we have awarded to date. With the addition of the class of 2018, we will be awarding 54 scholarships this year. We have broken the 50-scholarship ceiling and are well on our way towards our 2020 goal of 75 scholarships annually. This is our 5<sup>th</sup> year since inception and we have come a long way since we started with the humble goal of 4/4 – 4 scholarships to 4 deserving scholars from 4 corners of Assam.

This is a result of the continued support from our donors, both through financial contributions and continuous encouragement. This is also the result of the strong effort and dedication of the AKADAMICS volunteers who have spent a large amount of their time, especially in the last few months (since May), screening ~900 applications, personally calling at least 2 references for ~100 shortlisted candidates, sometimes making calls at very late hours at night to get to the bottom of the true nature of the need for the students and providing the Selection Board with the stories behind each short-listed candidate. The Selection Board in turn diligently went through the details and made their decisions on the final list of awardees.

As we enter into our 5<sup>th</sup> year, we have cumulatively awarded over 100 scholarships (102 to be exact) and 46 of the recipients have completed their bachelor's degrees. We are very proud of their accomplishments. Again, this has been made possible by your support over the years. We promise to listen to your advice and feedback always and implement those to make it an even better project for AFNA. So, keep them coming. We are taking up the items we heard at the Assam Convention 2018 as our next tasks in the upcoming months. Thank You and looking forward to you continued support.

Testimonial by Sadiqul Alam (B.Pharm, Dibrugarh University, Class of 2016) – *“...With your continuous support and financial assistance it has become an easy job for me to concentrate on my studies learning beside all other headaches, regarding the future of mine. I wish and hope that you will continue to guide me in my future endeavors. You will be glad to know that I have passed my B.Pharm 2<sup>nd</sup> year examination with 1<sup>st</sup> Class. I also preparing for the GPAT entrance examination at the same time. More over on your financial support and encourage, I would like to prepare for UPSC, APSE examination. I am very grateful to find opportunities like the one that your foundation is providing to student like me who are constantly fighting for the right to receive an education. I remain persistent and will keep working hard until I reach my career goals. I am hopeful to become one of your foundation's scholarship recipients, so that I can continue on my pathway.*

*In a nutshell, collaboration with AKADEMICS (sic) has been one of my finest decisions that I have taken in my lifetime. The guidance, support and financial help are highly appreciated. I along with my family thank you once again for providing me the opportunity to showcase my talent and skill. I assume you to be a successful human resource in the future.”*

Here are a few of our scholars this year.



Contact us  
Email  
AFNA Website  
Facebook

AFNA thanks the contributors for the articles for this Fall issue of our newsletter. The volunteers contributing on this newsletter are (in order of the articles) Nandina Deka, Sarfaraz Taher, Ankur Bora, Pallav Saikia, Niren Choudhury and Lipika Deka.

**Get Involved:**  
Monthly volunteer  
call:  
First Sunday, every  
month,  
10am - 11am PT  
Dial in: 641-7153272  
Code: 457920#

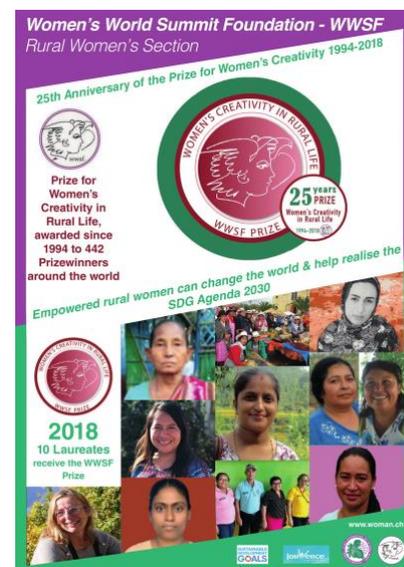
# Women's World Summit Foundation Prize for Birubala Rabha

We are pleased to share the announcement of Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) for the 2018 Prize for women's creativity in rural life for Birubala Rabha. WWSF based in Geneva, Switzerland, with United Nations consultative status, contributes to increasing the empowerment and capacity of rural women and educates for better prevention measures of violence against women, children and youth. The WWSF Prize is a recognition of achievements, awarded every year to women and women's groups around the world who exhibit exceptional creativity, courage and commitment in improving the quality of life in rural communities, for protecting the environment, transmitting knowledge and standing up for human rights, development and peace.

WWSF awards annually 10 prizewinners with \$1000 per laureate to acknowledge their contributions and creative efforts to improve the quality of life by sharing knowledge, protecting the environment, rising up for women's rights, and participating in the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) UN Agenda 2030. Ms. Rabha is among 10 laureates chosen by the International Prize Jury among the nominations received this year. Elly Pradervand, President / CEO - Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF), in email communication pays growing tributes to her – "She is a gem and the world needs to learn from all these remarkable women who right the wrong in so many places. We are privileged to honor her."

The nomination was submitted after several meetings with Birubala Rabha and Dr. Natyabir Das of Mission Birubala and was also accompanied by references from noted journalist and author, Indrani Raimedhi's, popular science writer Dr. Dinesh Chandra Goswami, social activist Anamika Baruah and Preetom Saikia, Commissioner and Secretary. Department of Elementary Education, Government of Assam.

It is also worthwhile to mention that in 2013, Ms. Suchismita Majundar, Founder of Swabalambi, was chosen while Ms. Peggy Carswell of Canada was awarded in 2016 for steering the Organic Movement in Assam. All the three nominations were submitted by Ankur Bora on behalf of Assam Foundation of North America. Ankur Bora says that it's has been a remarkable journey of discovering, selecting and honoring many courageous and compassionate rural women leaders who fight for their right to development, equality and peace. AFNA thanks Ankur Bora for his hard work and dedication for the nomination. Here is the [link](#) to the award page and communication from WWSF.



## AFNA supporting Hurricane Florence

Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina hard and AFNA took small step to help the victims of this natural disaster. AFNA is grateful to our North Carolina volunteers for quickly finding out what is the need of the hour and procuring the items and dripping them off for airdrop. AFNA made a humble relief contribution for the impacted families in NC and continues to raise fund from the community to send more. Please donate @ <http://assamfoundation.net/give-back/donate> for further contributions.



[Donate Online](#)

# Summary of AFNA's GBM at ASSAM Convention, 2018

Like previous years, AFNA took part in the Assam Conventions 2018 as one of the sponsors. With the physical presence of a big chunk of its volunteers and patrons, Assam Conventions provides AFNA a great forum for interactions, feedback and awareness building around its projects as well as fund raising for them. The Assam Convention 2018 in Washington DC was no exception.

AFNA hold its annual General Body Meeting within the Assam Convention which was well attended by its office bearers, volunteers and patrons. The early morning GBM still attracted more than 40 participants in the room. Around 10 volunteers dialed in remotely. The GBM presentation is published in our [website](#). AFNA office bearers have a term of 2 years and the current body of executives had completed the term. The GBM attendees elected the new body of executives with Sarfaraz Taher of MN as President, Ranju Sarma of CA as Secretary & Anamitra Bhattacharyya of MI as the treasurer.

AFNA had also set up a booth in the Convention where we had enthusiastic interactions with the attendees who provided valuable feedback and learned about our projects. We nearly raised half of our 2018 project needs as donations in our booth and in the GBM. A BIG vote of appreciation to our community who showered us with encouragements and trusted with their donations to carry out the projects in Assam. Special thanks to our NC Bihu team who donated their prize money to AFNA.



## The extra mile and a run for a cause appeal by Ankur Bora

In 2008, I ran a Marathon to support and raise money for a school for underprivileged children in my home state of Assam in India. It was a life changing experience - the practice and the preparation for the run, going through the hurdle, focusing and reaching the finishing line, the race taught how to bring one's best self to every facet of life. The marathon and the successful fund-raising campaign also showed me how this country America stands for those in need, how much can we do for poor and destitute. This year I am running again for a school for differently-abled abandoned/orphaned children called 'Tapoban'. The founder Mr. Kumud Kalita is a sincere and upright man who is doing everything he can in his capacity to help these children lead fulfilling lives. I met him in person this year when I was visiting India, witnessed some of these children performing on stage and realized how he is turning their disability to ability. The residential school building is a four-story structure without an elevator. Every day is a struggle for these children in wheelchair who needed to be lifted by others. I am running to raise money for construction of a lift, an electrical elevator which will greatly help these children.

I am running 50km this year at Dallas, BMW Ultra Marathon and appealing you to a sponsor for a mile at \$100 each. We will acknowledge each of you and will provide Tax exempt receipt and utilization through our Foundation.

It's going to be a grueling race spreading across multiple cities, but when I imagine the cheerful faces of these children, I get motivated to run those extra miles. I am starting from zero, but I am sure I will reach my goal of 50 sponsors with all of you.

Support me by donating \$100 to Tapoban for each mile of my run and help me and AFNA to support the special need children at Tapoban.



Follow me on my blog through this journey until December 9<sup>th</sup>

<http://ankurbora.blogspot.com/2018/10/the-extra-mile-and-run-for-cause.html>

[Donate Online](#)

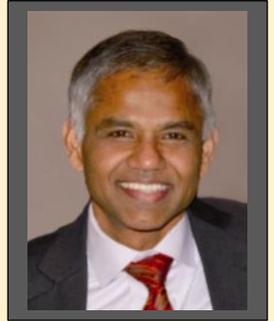
# Himadri Das Memorial Essay Competition 2018

AFNA is happy to publish the results of the 3rd annual Essay Contest of AFNA, that was announced at the 39th Assam Convention celebrated in Washington D.C. The following are the winners of this year's contest:

First Prize – Anvi Bora, 9th Grade, Daughter of Ankur and Anjana Bora from Irving, TX

Second Prize – Grishma Baruah, 9th Grade, Daughter of Vikas and Pimi Baruah from Chantilly, VA

Congratulations to both the winners and their proud parents! We take this opportunity to thank our respected judges - Debabrata Sarma, Gayatree Siddhanta, and Anurag Barua, for taking time out of their busy schedule to judge the essays received in a very thorough way and providing excellent suggestions for future improvement of this program. We also want to thank Smita Baruah, from the Assam Convention organizing committee for all her help in conducting the competition and thanks to all the AFNA volunteers and leaders who provided their valuable assistance and guidance for conducting this competition.



This year we would like to thank the family of Himadri Das including Kyoko, Brian and Leo for offering the first prize of this competition from the memorial fund of Late Himadri Das, who passed away on May 3rd of 2017, after courageously fighting a neurological condition for a long period. Himadri Das was an active community member and closely involved patron of AFNA, who served as a treasurer of our organization for two terms in the late 90s.

**2019 AFNA Calendar coming your way!** AFNA is happy to let you know that our volunteers are working hard to have the New Year calendar printed on time for you. AFNA volunteers will work hard to get the calendars to your door before the New Year arrives. [Please order your copy of the calendar by clicking here](#) and stay tuned for updates and emails about this from our volunteers! Calendar Drive is one of AFNA's year-end fundraising campaigns; please support our projects by buying a calendar, almost 100% of the money raised from the calendar drive goes to our projects. Please let us know how many copies would you like to have by completing this form along with your mailing address. Please order by November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to get free shipping.

## Tree for all Autumn Festival - a AFNA partnership

AFNA is proud to partner with The Bridgewater Township Shade Tree Board (Team Arbor) to host a tree dedication ceremony to honor the internationally renowned forester Jadav Payeng for over three years now. The free community event will take place on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM at Kids Street Park, behind the Bridgewater Municipality Building. The event will include a memorial tree dedication, live music and other community activities. The ceremony is sponsored through the support of the Assam Foundation of North America (AFNA). Jadav Payeng is a Mishing tribe environmental activist and forester from the river island Majuli, Jorhat, India. Over the course of several decades, he has singlehandedly transformed almost 1,400 acres of a river sandbar into a bustling forest ecosystem through the planting and tending of thousands of trees. That's equivalent to an area almost twice the size of Central Park in New York City. In recent years the island has been transformed into a preserve for over 100 species of trees and plants as well as a wildlife refuge for elephants, tigers, monkeys, birds and the rare one-horned rhinoceros.

The celebration also marks Bridgewater's achievement as a recognized Tree City USA for the 20th consecutive year and honors the community for its commitment to effective urban forest management. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.

For more information about the tree dedication ceremony and celebration please feel free to contact Kristen Schiro, Director of Human Services, by telephone at (908) 725-5750 or by email at [kschiro@bridgewaternj.gov](mailto:kschiro@bridgewaternj.gov). Additional information about the Assam Foundation of North America is available at [www.assamfoundation.net](http://www.assamfoundation.net).

**Bridgewater Township**  
"Tree 4 All"

Mayor Dan Hayes Announces "Tree 4 All" Autumn Festival

"Tree 4 All"  
Saturday, October 20th  
11 AM to 2 PM  
Kids Street Park  
at the  
Bridgewater Municipal  
Building

**Tree Dedication to Honor  
FORESTER JADAV PAYENG**

A free community festival including, a memorial tree dedication, live music, food tastings, and other community activities, presented by the Bridgewater Township Shade Tree Board.

For more information, contact Kristen Schiro, Director of Human Services at 908-725-5750 or at [kschiro@bridgewaternj.gov](mailto:kschiro@bridgewaternj.gov)

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