



Samhati

Bangladesh Women's Organization

8602 Aqueduct Road, Potomac, MD 20854, USA

<http://samhati.org/>

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September 1, 2017

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to invite you to Samhati's Annual Dinner and Auction, which will be held on Saturday, October 7, 2017, 6:00 to 9:00 pm, at the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817. **Please note that we are starting earlier this year and that dinner will be served at approximately 6:30 pm.**

Founded in 1984, Samhati is the longest-running organization of Bangladeshi women in the United States. We design and support small projects – focused on education, health, and environmental sustainability – to improve the lives of impoverished women and families in Bangladesh. Samhati is tax exempt (IRS ID Number 52-1390261). As an all-volunteer organization with negligible overhead, Samhati directs 97% of your contributions to needy families.

- *If you donate \$75, it will provide a one-year scholarship to ensure that a middle or high school child stays in school and does not have to work.*
- *A donation of \$100 will provide adult literacy or vocational classes for a village woman, who in turn will be able to better care for her family.*
- *A donation of \$500 will fund our health clinic in Katakhalia village for one month, providing care for the entire Barobaishdia Island of 27,000 people.*
- *Your gift of \$1000 will fund climate adaptation training for 10 villagers in Katakhalia.*

Hundreds of women, children, and families - and entire communities- have been transformed by Samhati's work. Our focus on literacy has created leadership from within to maintain and grow our projects. Samhati has provided cyclone relief and climate adaptation training, established the first women's shelter in Bangladesh, and developed eco-empowerment projects in villages. We are providing educational scholarships to discourage child marriage. Your support makes a huge difference. Please send in your donations and join us on October 7. Feel free to contact us: 703-618-4618 (Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton) or info@samhati.org.

With immense gratitude,

Noorjahan Bose and all Samhati members

UPDATE ON SAMHATI'S WORK IN BANGLADESH

Katakhali Project in Patuakhali District (plus new Modhukhali Project)

Since 2000, Samhati has been working to empower women and families in the remote Katakhali community, a village on an island off the southern coast of Bangladesh. Samhati provides adult literacy classes and leadership and skills training to motivated villagers, mostly women. Because of the increasing severity of storms in the area and other adverse impacts of climate change, the villagers are particularly vulnerable. Through Samhati, they are gaining climate adaptation skills, such as new farming techniques. This year we started a new cooperative in the adjacent Modhukhali Village, where 30 women are taking literacy classes and learning sewing and other income generation skills.

Samhati's Health Center - staffed by a doctor and assistant - provides medical services to Katakhali and the island's entire population of 27,000, which otherwise would have no medical care. This past year, over 2,500 patients were treated, given preventive care, immunizations, and health and nutrition advice. A new lab allows the doctor to do basic diagnostic testing on site. The Center served as a shelter during recent cyclones and all villagers survived. Since 2002, Samhati provides annual scholarships of approximately \$75 each to 30 needy children so that they can attend middle and high school in Katakhali. We have over 80 high school graduates from our program, with seven working for the government (some as teachers in the village schools) and 45 working in the private sector. In 2013, Samhati started the first pre-school in the community, which employs local women. We are also funding a popular community library.

Eco-Village Project in Natore

Our project in Natore is now in its tenth year and has brought positive change to the communities in Natore District, in northern Bangladesh. We have adult literacy classes in three different villages, and over 700 adults (mostly women) have learned to read. We provide scholarships to 30 children (20 girls and 10 boys) annually to ensure that they stay in school. At our Computer Learning Center, we now have five desktop and 2 laptop computers, and the three-month training is very popular and leads to employment for many of the graduates. This year, we have 75 women in the sewing classes, and five graduates have been provided sewing machines (on monthly payment plan) to start their own businesses. A cooperative has been formed with 10 women, who are learning fish farming and production of organic fertilizer.

We have started an exciting new program, granting bicycles to girls to help them get to school. Ten more bicycles will be distributed this year. Girls rarely bike in Bangladesh, so this bold initiative allows girls to be less confined and more mobile. The bicycle program is a very effective tool to empower girls and discourage early marriage.

Project in Laksmichap Union in Rangpur

In 2011, we started supporting a project in Laksmichap Union, Rangpur, in northern Bangladesh. This community is diverse (includes several religious minority groups) and has developed an innovative community-based "Rice Bank" for sharing and stockpiling rice so that no one goes hungry during lean periods. Samhati has provided primary school supplies in this community, and approximately \$4,000 toward a revolving fund for training women in skills for income generation. We provided sewing, organic vegetable cultivation, and poultry rearing training to 75 women this year. We are providing a total of 80 high school scholarships in two different high schools. Our adult literacy programs for women have taught over 650 women to read and write. We also provide free health checkups for school children and members of the community rice bank, mostly women. This year 2,140 children and adults participated in the program and follow up treatment was given to eight women and girls. With Samhati's support, the construction of a new Rice Bank at nearby Polashbari has been completed. It is the fourth Rice Bank for the area.

Jahanara Ali Memorial College Scholarship for Women

In honor of our board member Jahanara Ali, who suddenly passed away on October 22, 2016, we are launching a special college/vocational scholarship for three low-income and merit-worthy young women, choosing one from each of our high school scholarship programs in Katakhali, Laksmichamp, and Natore. The scholarships will begin in January 2018, and we request your additional donations for this initiative.

Women's Scholarship Project to Reduce Child Marriage in Six Villages

With the initiative and support of a longtime friend of Samhati, Sidney Schuler, we are now in the second year of a new project to reduce child marriage through scholarships to young women in six villages in Rangpur, Magura, Faridpur Districts. Each woman receives four years of scholarship to cover the two latter years of secondary school (grades 9 and 10) and two years of college or vocational training, such as nursing school or teacher training.

Check out our website for further details and images! samhati.org

Samhati's 2017 Benefit Dinner and Auction

Saturday, October 7, 2017

6:00 to 9:00 pm

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817 (@Whittier Blvd.)

Free parking in lot. (Exit 39 from Beltway to River Road. Go towards Bethesda/Washington, take left at Whittier Blvd and venue is immediately on left. Public Transport: Bus T2).

Featuring:

Dance by Mishka Mukherji & Mayur Dance Academy

Samhati's 2017 Host Committee:

Sharmeen and Uzair Dossani, Rose Hayden, Hamid Faruqee, Susan Courtney-Faruqee, Mehmood Kazmi, Sangeeta Mookherji, Wameek Noor, Mustafa and Naheed Chowdhury, Grace Kibue Sharp, Jyoti Tulsi, Satwant Tulsi, and Laurie Whiteman.

Benefit Chair: Monica Jahan Bose

Auction Chair: Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton



Admission per person: \$75 (\$35 students) and up. Includes drinks, dinner, dessert.

If you send in your check, we will reserve a ticket for you and your name will be on the guest list at the door.

Tickets will also be available at the door. Or buy tickets online at <http://buytickets.at/samhati/107007>

For information call 703-618-4618 or email info@samhati.org. LIMITED TICKETS AT DOOR — PLEASE SEND YOUR CHECKS NOW OR REGISTER ONLINE TO ENSURE A SEAT.

**DONORS OF \$500 OR MORE WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN OUR PROGRAM AND WEBSITE.
YOU MAY ALSO PURCHASE A TABLE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT FOR \$1000.**

I would like ___ tickets to the Benefit Dinner. I enclose a check for \$_____. The price per ticket is \$75, of which \$60 is tax deductible. Additional donations are very much appreciated.

I am unable to attend the Benefit Dinner but would like to support Samhati's projects in Bangladesh.

I enclose a check for: \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$5,000 _____ Other amount (please fill in)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

Your email helps us save postage and paper.

Please make your check payable to "Samhati" and mail with this form to:

Samhati, 8602 Aqueduct Rd, Potomac, MD 20854, USA . Or visit our website at samhati.org to reserve tickets/donate.