



Samhati

Bangladesh Women's Organization

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samhati.org

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September 9, 2022

Dear Friends,

We hope that you have had a nice summer. After three years we are excited to have an in-person event this year. Please join us for Samhati's Benefit Dinner on **Sunday, October 9, 2022, 5:00 to 8:00 pm**, at the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817. We will have Covid protocols in place. We will serve drinks and dinner after the program and request that everyone except presenters wear masks during the program. We can provide a take-away box if you prefer to eat at home. An online viewing option will also be available.

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 can direct approximately 95% of your contributions to needy families. This is what your contribution will do:

- *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 provides adult literacy or vocational classes for a village woman.*
- *A donation of \$250 provides three months of college costs for a low-income young woman.*
- *A donation of \$500 funds our health clinic in Katakhal village for one month, providing care for the entire Barobaishdia Island of 27,000 people.*
- *Your gift of \$1000 supports 80 families with small cash grants to meet basic needs.*

During the pandemic, Samhati has provided critical support to our communities and continued all our programs to empower women and families. We have given out more bicycles to girls, expanded our scholarships, and are providing leadership skills as well as education in eco-farming, computers, and more. Please support our work and join us on October 9 to get the latest exciting news. We request that you pre-purchase your tickets this year.

With our best wishes and many thanks,
The Samhati Board and Advisors

UPDATE ON SAMHATI'S WORK IN BANGLADESH

Although all our projects and communities were impacted by the pandemic, Samhati worked very effectively to pivot and adapt and assist our communities. Indeed we expanded our work during the pandemic— starting new computer trainings to facilitate online learning, doubling the number of college scholarships, and doubling the number of bicycles distributed to girls. All our projects are fully functioning now, with Covid precautions in place as needed. Schools in Bangladesh were closed for two years with terrible loss of learning especially for rural children who did not have access to internet. We are trying to help students catch up.

Katakhali Project in Patuakhali District (plus 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 women in Katakhali Village and neighboring Modhukhali Village. The villagers are particularly vulnerable to climate change, and we are providing climate adaptation and advocacy training. In 2022, scholarships were given to 30 students in Katakhali High School and 20 students in the neighboring island Ganga Char. In 2022, we gave bicycles/helmets to 20 girls, double from the previous year and including girls in Ganga Char as well.

Our new Computer Training Program helped our students continue to learn online during the long period when schools were closed. Currently, one woman who was trained from our program last year is teaching the current batch of computer students. Samhati's Health Center has continued to provide medical services to the island's entire population of 27,000, which otherwise would have no medical care. Many consultations have been by phone, but patients are also able to visit our out-patient clinic as needed. We provided Covid-19 training to the doctor, along with PPE, two oxygen tanks, pulse oxymeter, and thermal scanner. The oxygen tank has saved the lives of many infants and adults with respiratory issues. Our preschool in Katakhali is thriving. In 2022, we started a preschool in Modhukhali.

Eco-Village Project in Natore

Our project in Hatianda, Natore District is now in its 15th year. Hatiandah is a Union of eight villages in northern Bangladesh, and our work has brought considerable positive change. Our tailoring classes are booming and approximately 70 women from five villages are coming to learn how to make a variety of women's clothing including undergarments. This year started a small project with 10 women to make embroidered kantha. Our Computer Center's current enrollment is 20 girls/women and nine boys/men. We distributed certificates of basic computer literacy to 200 former students this year as we could not do so during the pandemic. Our computer graduates are easily able to find employment, either in the government or private organizations. Some have set up small shops providing word processing and online services to villages, most of whom do not own computers. We have three adult literacy centers in three villages, where approximately 100 women learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. We gave 300 fruit plants to these women as incentive for literacy. To date, approximately 1,600 women have participated in the program. We again gave out scholarships for 30 high school children. Of the 2021, scholarship recipients, 10 are now going to college. We gave out 20 bikes/helmets to girls this year, which made their parents very happy. Our farming cooperative is teaching vegetable gardening and production of organic fertilizer.

Project in Laksmichap Union in Rangpur

Our project in Laksmichap Union, Rangpur, in northern Bangladesh started in 2011. This diverse community includes several religious minority groups. Our computer literacy class is very popular and was started to facilitate online learning during the pandemic. Samhati is providing 80 high school scholarships, health checkups, and training for women in literacy, sewing, organic vegetable cultivation and poultry rearing. We inaugurated five women's literacy centers in February 2021, and these are now fully running and very popular.

Jahanara Ali Memorial College Scholarship for Women

The Jahanara Ali college/vocational scholarship program is now in its fifth year and we have doubled the number of recipients, to six total. From Katakhali, Ashamoni (Economics, BA Honors 3rd year) and Tamanna (Science, Intermediate 2nd year) are attending Patuakhali Mahila College. From Laksmichamp, Beauty Akhtar finished at Nilphamari Government College and was admitted to botany in Rajshahi University, while the new recipient Purnima Roy has been admitted to Nilphamari Government College. From Natore, Mahmouda Khatun has been admitted to Udayan Nursing college in Rajshahi, and Sharmin Akhter is enrolled at Shingra college. Samhati provided laptop computers to each of the women so that they can continue to study during the pandemic. Colleges and universities in Bangladesh are now open after long pandemic closures, and our students are thrilled to be back and to receive computers. Most of the women had never before touched a computer but are fast learners.

Samhati's 2022 Benefit Dinner

Sunday, October 9, 2022
5:00 to 8:00 pm

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817 (entrance @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 performance by Mayur Dance Academy's
Arna Banerjee and Naina Srivastava

Also featuring: Henna Art/Raffle/Mini Auction



photo credit: Koli Bennett-Bose

Benefit Chairs: Monica Jahan Bose & Jhinuk Hasan-Fulton

Admission per person: \$75 (**early-bird September 20**), \$100 (regular) and more (\$40 full-time students only). 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. You may also call to reserve tickets and bring check or credit card to event. For information or reservations call **703-618-4618** or email info@samhati.org. PLEASE SEND YOUR CHECKS NOW OR PAY ONLINE. Buy tickets online at <https://buytickets.at/samhati/757001>
DONORS OF \$500 OR MORE WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN OUR PROGRAM AND WEBSITE. YOU MAY ALSO SPONSOR US AND PURCHASE A TABLE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT FOR \$1000.

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- I would like ___ tickets to the Benefit Dinner. I enclose a check for \$_____. The price per ticket is \$100 of which \$85 may be tax-deductible. (\$75 early-bird ticket before September 20). **Our costs have gone up and additional donations are very much appreciated.**
- I enclose \$1000 as Sponsor of a table and will later send a list of my 8 guests. (Name on table and program.)
- I am unable to attend the Benefit Dinner but would like to support Samhati's projects in Bangladesh. I enclose a check for: \$100 \$250 \$500 Silver \$1,000 Gold \$5,000 Platinum _____ Other amount (fill in)
Please send me a link to the online event (provide email below!!).

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, 13107 Laneview Ct., Oak Hill, VA 20171, USA .
Or visit our website at samhati.org to reserve tickets/donate.