



SAVE A FAMILY PLAN
IN INDIA SINCE 1965

Ektha-UNITY

THE SAVE A FAMILY PLAN NEWSLETTER

Connecting
with your
Family



A HUMAN CONNECTION

SAFP partner families and their donors overseas have been writing letters back and forth for more than fifty years.

Our Family Development Program not only provides partner families with the financial support required to start a small business, it also creates the opportunity for a special human connection between people living on opposite sides of the world.

Today, we still believe that this direct personal contact makes this program and its success so much more meaningful. Save A Family Plan continues to dedicate a great deal of time and effort to the letter writing process, making it a key requirement for all families participating in the program. With more than 9,000 active families, this is no small task!

Letter writing is completed every year between the months of April and July. Each program animator travels miles to personally visit up to 100 families, many who live in very remote locations. Together, the animators and family members reflect on the impact that participating in the Family Development Program has had on their lives. They are encouraged to describe in their own words about their experience in the program, including the goals that they

have set, the accomplishments already achieved, and the changes that they are experiencing in their lives as a result.

Back at the NGO office, the program coordinators are then responsible for translating up to 300 letters from the local language into English. When the partner families come together for regional meetings, the final copies of the letters are signed by the families. Then they are placed in the addressed envelope and mailed to our amazing donors. The whole process takes about four months to complete every year.

“Getting a reply to their letters is a proud moment for the partner families.”

When donors' letters reach the partner families, it is such a meaningful experience. Being able to personally connect with someone who has given them the opportunity to thrive is both touching and motivating. Partner families cherish these letters and they love to receive photographs of the people who have provided them with the incredible opportunity to create a brighter future for their children. It can be a big challenge for poor families to take steps to improve their lives and some kind and supportive words from their donor can help give them courage and inspiration to move forward.

When they reach the local NGO, all of the letters are translated into the local languages by the coordinators and delivered to the family during the regular field visits. Due to the social restrictions in place to combat the COVID 19 virus, our coordinators and animators are not currently able to visit the partner families in the field. This is resulting in a disruption in our letter writing process this year. When the restrictions are lifted, the first priority of our field staff will be ensuring the immediate health and safety needs of each partner family.

Need some help getting started with your letter?

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS!

- Tell your family how proud you are of their achievements and encourage them to continue their hard work
- Share some details about your own life, including your own joys and struggles
- Describe the country you live in and what the environment looks like in different seasons
- Ask them for details about things you are curious about such as festivals they celebrate, traditions they practice or the type of food they eat
- Tell them how you celebrate special occasions
- If you have small children, encourage them write a message or include a drawing
- Send a picture of your own family that they can keep with them



Need help addressing your letter to your family?

CONTACT OUR OFFICE FOR HELP!

We know how important these letters are to the program. We understand that they keep our donors informed of their family's well-being and provide updates on their involvement with the program. We thank you for your understanding during this time of crisis and we will have families write letters once it is safe enough for our staff to do so.

"IT SEEMED THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULDN'T DO"

RACHEL THORBURN, DAUGHTER OF
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
SAFP CANADA, SHARES THE EXPERIENCE
OF HER FIRST VISIT TO INDIA



The first time my mom went to India, she was my age.

She went as an SAFP volunteer, and the experience changed her life. She was amazed by the selfless work that the SAFP staff did every day and had the chance to meet the families they were helping firsthand. On this trip, my mom fell in love with India and with SAFP.

But it would be a long time before she got to go again. Jobs and marriage and kids got in the way (sorry, mom!). But she never forgot her experience. I grew up hearing stories about India, not only about the bright colors and spicy food, but about the amazing people at SAFP and the families they support.

Now, over 30 years later, my mom is finally doing the work she always dreamed she could do. And this February, I was lucky enough to have the same life-changing experience.

I travelled with Keith Tomasek, award-winning Canadian journalist, to interview the SAFP field staff, learn how they have been impacted, and spread the message to people in North America about the programs of Save A Family Plan.

When I think back about the experience, what impressed me most was the women I met. When given the tools to help themselves, it seemed there was nothing they couldn't do to ensure that they, their families, and their communities would thrive. On our first visit, we met a woman who had been given the means to start a tailoring business through SAFP. Since then, her business has taken off. She showed us around her shop, and even gave us a tailoring demonstration! Due to the success of her business, she has been able to provide her family with a new, beautiful home, safe from the snakes which are a threat in the night. She showed off her new home with its gorgeous view, and we had the opportunity to meet her youngest daughter. Her oldest daughter is studying at the University of British Columbia to become a nurse. None of this would be possible without the support of SAFP and their donors, who understand the power in giving someone a chance. And this became a familiar story. Almost everywhere we went, there was a wife, or mother, or daughter who had taken what they were given, and used it to help them and everyone around them prosper.

The other thing I noticed was that everyone we met was so incredibly

generous. Even when we were visiting families who were just starting to receive funding, who lived in tiny mud huts and could scarcely afford to feed themselves, there was always a feast of snacks and tea prepared for us. Everyone was excited to show us their photo albums, their children's grade books and drawings, and the progress they were making. And always, they were so thankful to SAFP and wanted to make sure we passed that message on.

Almost everywhere we went, there was a wife, or mother, or daughter who had taken what they were given, and used it to help them and everyone around them prosper.

I left India with a renewed sense of awe at all that SAFP accomplishes. When you donate, you're not just helping the family for 6 years. You're helping their children thrive, and giving health and hope for generations to come. This couldn't be done without the tireless work of the coordinators, animators, and the families themselves. But it also couldn't be done without the selfless donors who providing them with the opportunity and the resources to make an impact. As the saying goes, "Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day. Teach a Man To Fish, and You Feed Him for a Lifetime".

I find myself inspired, just as my mom was on her first trip many years ago. Who knows, maybe I will find myself back in India some day too!



SAVE A FAMILY PLAN
IN INDIA SINCE 1965

PARTNERING WITH THE POOR FOR A JUST WORLD

C/O ST. PETER'S SEMINARY 1040 WATERLOO ST. LONDON, ON CANADA, N6A 3Y1
P.O. BOX 610157 PORT HURON, MI USA, 48061
phone: 1.855.333.1115 | fax: 519.672.6379 | email: SAFPINFO@SAFP.ORG | WWW.SAFP.ORG