

## **Hope House**

*Provide **H**ealing*

*Give **O**pportunity*

*Bring **P**eace*

*See children **E**merge into a better future*

## **A Case for Support**



**Kids with Cameras**

Empowering children through the art of photography



**Buntain Foundation**

**“I keep thinking if I could go someplace else and get education, I wonder what I could become.”**

– Kochi, age 10

This is the dream of one young girl whose formative years were spent in the red-light district of Calcutta, India. Her life was touched by the chance to follow a different path when she was taught the art of photography. A world of possibility arose through this new way to communicate about her otherwise invisible existence.

As captured by the Academy Award –winning film *Born Into Brothels*, the children of the red-light district are some of the most stigmatized in their own country. They have little possibility of escaping their mother’s fate or creating another type of life.

To create change and opportunity for these children is not simple. What we propose is a landmark endeavor in Calcutta – a three phase model of intervention to deliver psychological and physical health care, education and opportunity to these young children and their mothers.

At the centerpiece is the Hope House – a safe haven for 100 of these girls to live and have the chance to fulfill their dreams.

Kids with Cameras has harnessed the power of film to create lasting social change.

We invite you to help us to continue this pursuit.



*Digital rendering of the Hope House exterior - Design by Tom Zook of Studio Mumbai Architects*

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## Kids with Cameras Overview

In Calcutta, there are over 10,000 women and girls who live and work as prostitutes. In 1997, New York-based photographer Zana Briski moved to Calcutta to live with these women and document their lives through photography. While living in the brothels, she developed relationships with their children and after recognizing their fascination with her camera, began to teach them basic photography.

The goal of the project was to cultivate an environment in which each child could learn, discover their own creativity, and realize their own self-worth. Zana observed the children's work and was motivated by their vibrant self portraits, family pictures, and street scenes that offered stunning tableaux of life in the red-light district.

Determined to share their story, Zana and filmmaker Ross Kauffman set out to document the children and their day-to-day lives. The product of this collaboration is the documentary *Born into Brothels*; an intimate portrait of the lives of the children and their mothers, struggling to survive in the urban brothels while discovering opportunity through the lens of a camera. Recipient of over 25 major awards, including the 2005 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, *Born into Brothels* introduced viewers to the resilient young photographers. The film proved to the world that art and free expression can transform lives despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

The organization, Kids with Cameras, is the product of Ross and Zana's passion for the children of the red-light district, and functions as the vehicle that can reach beyond the arts to respond to the educational needs of each child. Through online sales of the children's photography, Kids with Cameras has supported the education of several children from the original workshop. One of the children completed his secondary schooling in Utah and is now studying film at New York University's Tisch School for the Arts. Another attends a private boarding school in Utah and intends to graduate in 2011. Many of the other children are excelling in private schools in India. Because Kids with Cameras believes that education provides a way for children to leave the red-light district, we are partnering with the Buntain Foundation to build the Hope House. Led by Ross Kauffman and the Board Chairwoman of Kids with Cameras, GERALYN WHITE DREYFOUS, Hope House is the legacy project of the film *Born Into Brothels*.



*Child at one of the Buntain Foundation's food distribution centers*

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## **Buntain Foundation Overview**

In 1953, Dr. Mark and Dr. Huldah Buntain arrived in Calcutta with the simple focus to serve where need arose. Their service to Calcutta was to last one year; little did they know that their desire to serve the Indian people would evolve into a lifelong commitment.

The Buntains quickly realized that they could not help people without addressing the needs of the entire person which included education, nutrition, housing, and healthcare.

Through their visionary leadership, Mark and Huldah established a holistic network of education, nutrition, and medical services which has continued to grow stronger over the last 50 years. Presently, the Buntains remain committed to renewing the lives of the forgotten, impoverished, and destitute.

### **Education**

With rates of illiteracy over 50% in the state of West Bengal and more than 90 million women unable to access proper education, the Buntains found it essential to initiate a campaign for education fueled by the provision of adequate resources. Living among the poor in Calcutta, the Buntains experienced first-hand the consequences of poor education. Their growing concern inspired new programs designed to provide the necessary tools for education. The first co-educational school established in 1964 inspired an educational network that consists of 100 schools in and around Calcutta today. Graduates have gone on to pursue post-secondary degrees, returning to reinvest in the organization that gave them their start.

### **Nutrition**

Over 45% of children in India are malnourished, a condition that limits the development of motor, sensory, social and emotional progression. In response, the Buntains established a meal program focused on providing nourishment for families. This program continues today, feeding over 20,000 people a day and more than 25,000 families each month.

### **Medical Services**

The Calcutta Mercy Hospital opened for service on March 17, 1977, with 120 beds. Today, the hospital consists of 173 beds and 30 multi-specialty units. It treats 100,000 patients annually with 40,000 receiving free care. Mercy Hospital provides a continuum of services administered by Indian doctors and nurses, many of whom graduated from the Buntain's School of Nursing. The facility has trained over 400 qualified medical professionals over 30 years.

The Buntain Foundation exists to continue the vision of Dr. Mark and Dr. Huldah Buntain and expand their network of humanitarian projects.

## Current State & Factors of Concern

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### Demographic

In the last 30 years, trafficking for sexual exploitation has victimized over 30 million women and children in Southeast Asia. In this region, Calcutta has become a central focus on the international stage because of its plethora of red-light districts and the prevalence of disease within those districts. With three of the world's largest red-light districts, Calcutta is home to nearly 10,000 prostituted women located predominantly in the Sonagochi district.

Understood in the context of an economic market, the sex trafficking industry demands a supply of children and young women valued solely as physical commodities. Unfortunately, this booming industry shows no signs of future decline. Trafficking is rampant in developing countries, fueling a tourist economy whose sustainability depends on the trafficking community, and would suffer major losses without it. UNICEF's 2006 report indicated a 'rising tide of commercial sex' in India fueled by a combination of economic, environmental, and cultural catalysts:

### Economic Agent

- India is a growing destination for sex tourists from Europe, the United States, and other Western countries.
- Sex tourism is supported by the mobility of people, the migration policies of governments, and the building of infrastructure for sexual entertainment.
- Prostitution provides huge profits for brothel keepers, pimps, procurers, recruitment agencies, airline companies, hotels, travel groups, and marriage bureaus.

### Environmental Agent

- Growth in urbanization results in an escalation of the population. The economy of Calcutta, similar to other Indian metropolises, cannot sustain a workforce of such size.
- Over 70% of the population in India lives below the poverty line, and prostitution is one avenue chosen by young girls to ensure not only their personal survival, but the survival of their families.

### Cultural Agent

- Social stigmas associated with prostitution prevent women and young girls from receiving access to education, denying these women opportunity beyond the brothels.
- Pervasive gender bias is prevalent within the dominant Indian culture, creating an imbalance in education and employment opportunities between men and women.

Sex trafficking has an adverse effect on the overall healthcare status in developing countries. Besides being a criminal and human rights issue, sex trafficking has serious public health ramifications. The victims of sexual exploitation often suffer brutality in the form of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. The health-related consequences associated with the commercial sex industry include sexually transmitted diseases, pelvic inflammatory disease, hepatitis, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases; unwanted pregnancy, forced abortion, and abortion-related complications; rape and other forms of physical assault.

An abundance of mental and emotional health problems are associated with this industry, including nightmares, insomnia, and suicidal tendencies; alcohol and drug abuse and addiction; and occasional acts of suicide and murder.

The international community is concerned by the HIV/AIDS rates that are steadily increasing in India in relation to the boom in the commercial sex industry. Highly prevalent HIV and other STD-infection is common in the sex trafficking community. Over 5 million people in Southeast Asia are living with HIV/AIDS, 90% of whom live in India. This is an astounding figure that demands immediate preventative measures, as noted in UNICEF's 2007 reports.



*Digital rendering of the Hope House playground - Design by Tom Zook of Studio Mumbai Architects*

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## Project Details

The response of Kids with Cameras to the escalating needs of women and children living within the brothels is a three-fold initiative developed through a partnership with the Buntain Foundation. With over 50 years of experience in Calcutta and an unwavering commitment to holistic care, the Buntain Foundation is the driving force behind the 3-Phase care continuum designed to address the needs of the red-light district community.

### Phase 1

#### Health Care Clinics

Administered through the Buntain Foundation's Mercy Hospital, two medical clinics located in the red-light districts will be used to address the specific needs of the women and children there. Treatment will range from tending infected wounds and scabies to more comprehensive care for those with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. These clinics will allow for relationships of trust to be built with mothers and their children born into the system of prostitution.

### Phase 2

#### Construction of the Hope House

Designed by acclaimed Yale architect Tom Zook, the Hope House is an alternate home for children. The house will foster education, physical and emotional health, and provide the children with essential tools for life outside of the brothels.

Built on 3.4 acres of open space recently purchased by Kids with Cameras, the Hope House is a place for children to be children. Unique amenities such as landscaped gardens, arts classes and vocational training will supplement ongoing counseling, healthcare, and tutoring, which will assist the children as they are integrated into carefully selected schools. The Buntain Foundation, which currently manages 100 schools in India, will oversee the construction, administration and staffing of the home.

### Phase 3

#### Long-Term Care and Employment Opportunities for Mothers of Hope House Girls

Transitioning children out of the red-light districts and into the Hope House is an initial step. The long-term care of the children is designed to address the physical, emotional and psychological trauma incurred from their lives in the brothels. Mentorship will be provided by students at the Buntain Foundation's College of Nursing. The close proximity of the nursing students to the Hope House will enable each child to receive sustained and consistent relational care, while ensuring that cultural dynamics remain intact.

The home will be staffed by Indian professionals who will provide counseling and health services in addition to education. The home will be closed to outside volunteers so that the safety of the children is not compromised. Plans are in place for integration of new arrivals to the home as well as plans for transition out of the home as children become old enough to leave. A college scholarship program will be available to the children once they have completed their high school education.

A facility for laundry to service other Buntain facilities in Calcutta (including the Hope House) will also be constructed on the property adjacent to the Hope House. This will be a place for the mothers of the girls living at the Hope House to work, giving them an opportunity to earn a living outside of prostitution and to live in close proximity to their daughters.



Digital rendering of the Hope House common area - Design by Tom Zook of Studio Mumbai Architects

## Project Budget

What started as simple photography lessons to children in Calcutta's red- light district has evolved into a viable partnership that provides at least one solution to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The Hope House offers the opportunity to those touched by *Born into Brothels* to contribute to a project that will make a lasting difference.

Through the Kids with Cameras/Buntain Foundation partnership, a careful plan for sustainability has been developed. The Buntain Foundation has adopted the responsibility of fundraising for all aspects of this initiative except Phase 2 – the building of the Hope House facility and the acquisition of the land on which it will be built.

Kids With Cameras invites you to contribute to the construction of the Hope House with the understanding that your gift is part of this holistic strategy to bring children out of the red-light district and into a home that offers education, stability, cultural integration, mentorship, and above all – hope.

- Itemized Funding**
- Phase 1: Medical Clinics in the Red-Light District**  
Goal: \$60,000 for 2009; \$80,000 in 2010; \$100,000 in 2011 (as more clinics open)
  - Phase 2a: Hope House Land Acquisition and Construction**  
Goal: \$1,100,000
  - Phase 2b: Hope House Guest House Construction and Completion of Gardens**  
Goal: \$100,000
  - Phase 3: Long-Term Care**  
Goal: \$60,000/year (ongoing)
  - College of Nursing**  
Goal: \$1.9 million
  - Laundry Facility: Land Acquisition**  
Goal: \$60,000
  - Laundry Facility: Building Construction and Equipment**  
Goal: \$200,000



*Photo of Hope House Site in Calcutta*

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## Hope House Facility Details

We intend to break ground on the main facility in late 2009/early 2010, planning for a 12-month construction timeline. We will incorporate green architecture – sleek and innovative, sustainable, and in harmony with the natural features and resources surrounding the site. We plan to partner with companies that can provide technology to allow us to most efficiently use renewable resources.

The major features of the space will include:

- Library and Gallery
- Auditorium/Multi-Purpose Room
- Recreation Hall/Wellness Center
- Dining Hall
- Kitchen
- Hope House Director's Apartment
- Sleeping Rooms for Staff
- Sleeping Rooms for Girls (6 to 8 girls per room)
- Music, Art, Dance and Photography Classrooms
- Common Study Room
- Conference Room
- Administration Wing

For additional information on naming opportunities, please contact:

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