

Assist Bhopal



My name is Megan Sai Dogra. I am a 17-year-old 11th grade high school student from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I am a youth volunteer at United Community, tutor under privileged children, instructor at a summer camp by Thiensville Police and student volunteer at WCAIO to run Milwaukee Police's S.T.O.P. program and Prevent Blindness Wisconsin.

To help the global community, I founded a charity, Assist Bhopal in 2014. Thirty years ago, the Bhopal gas leak was one of the world's worst industrial disasters. On the morning of December 3, 1984 more than 40 tons of methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from the India Union Carbide Limited plant, creating a dense cloud over a resident population of about 500,000. That night 8000 people died due to inhalation of this lethal gas, and over time another 20,000 fatalities have been directly attributable to the catastrophe. The crisis isn't over yet; today an estimated 200,000 people suffer from chronic illnesses resulting from this accident.

Children being born to the victims of the gas disaster have increased occurrence of congenital birth defects, physical malformations and cognitive disabilities. The residual toxic waste from the abandoned Union Carbide (now Dow Chemical) continues to contaminate the ground water. The people who live in these polluted communities are poor, illiterate and helpless: They do not have the resources to relocate to safer locations.

During my recent trip to Bhopal in March 2014, I had the opportunity to meet with the survivors of this horrific incident and hear the heart wrenching stories of their continued pain and suffering. Contrary to the common belief around the world that the tragedy occurred 30 years ago, people do not realize that the tragedy is continuing even today!

Though many aspects of this tragedy caught my attention, it was the innocence of these children that I found most intriguing. It spoke for them. It was extremely heartbreaking to see the trauma and suffering they are forced to endure, for a fault that is not theirs. During my visit to Chingari Rehabilitation Center, I met with a 12 year old boy, Mohammad Zaid who suffers from mucopolysaccharidosis, AAD with C1 stenosis and cervical myelopathy nurick's grade - 4. He cannot stand or sit without support. He is a very smart and wants to study to be a doctor. The sad truth is that he may not even live long enough. That is just heart breaking.

That is when I decided; I will be the voice of these children. I will do everything I can to help them. My film, Assist Bhopal is a part of this promise.

Assist Bhopal's first annual fundraiser dinner, 2014 helped raise \$16,440. The money was sent through PSR Wisconsin (Physicians for Social Responsibility) a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit to Chingari Rehabilitation Center.

My film Assist Bhopal has been selected to screen at Milwaukee Film Festival 2014, AAHSFF 2015, ISFFH 2015 and American Public Health Association's 143rd meeting 2015. This is further helping me spread awareness of this forgotten tragedy.

The second annual fundraiser to Assist Bhopal is on December 3, 2015 in Milwaukee Wisconsin. For more information please contact assistbhopal@gmail.com