Faith-based Charity ‘Hope Abides’ Reaches Out to India

By LISA TSEERING
India-West Staff Reporter

Brent Adams wants to help India’s underprivileged children find homes, medical care and educational opportunities, and he has created a plan to leverage the best work of India’s orphanages with resources from the West.

Adams is the president of Hope Abides, a new faith-based charity that is now evaluating a list of 50 orphanages there to best target the charity’s funding and organizational experience. “While the founders of Hope Abides are Christian we know that poverty, hunger and illiteracy are not limited by gender or religion. Accordingly, we help children regardless of their gender or religious background and seek help from all regardless of nationality or faith,” reads a statement on the organization’s Web site.

Adams, who is based in Elk Grove, Calif., became committed to helping children when he accompanied some Northern Californian doctors on a missionary trip to Guatemala in 2006.

“One morning a group of about two dozen Mayans came into the city to get medical treatment from the doctors,” he explained in an e-mail interview. "By the time the afternoon arrived, some of the Mayan children were showing signs of distress — flushed faces and such. At first the doctors thought they might be sick but we quickly discovered the problem was that the children had nothing to drink since they arrived.

“There was a little market next door to our location selling five gal- lon bottles of water for about $2. That meant that amongst the approxi- mately two dozen members of that group, they did not have $2 to buy their kids water.

“During this same time frame, my wife and I developed an affect- ion for Hollywood movies and made friends with several Indian Americans through our jobs. Due to all these factors and knowing that India has more orphans than any other country, and that a huge percentage of the population lives on less than $1.25 a day, and that much of the population speaks English, we decided to focus our efforts on India.”

Adams is currently in the fund- raising stage, and has gotten Hope Abides certified as an IRS 501(c) 3 public charity. It will work primarily around Pune and Amritsar to start.

“First, we will partner with exist- ing well-run orphanages in India to fund some of their priority needs,” he told India-West. “In return we will ask that they allow us to learn about their challenges and best practices as well as about govern- mental and societal requirements for operating suc- cessfully in India.”

During 2011-2012, Adams and his team, which includes in-coun- try advisers in Pune and Amritsar, will determine the number of charities they can effectively partner with, and will then “take our lessons learned from the previous phase and use that knowledge to assist struggling orphanages with funding, operational efficiencies, government filings, outreach and other factors,” he said.

Adams aims to keep costs low. “To date all administrative work has been performed by volunteers and all overhead has been paid for out of the private funds of the directors or through product dona- tions. The only exception to that has been the filing fees associated with formation of the charity. Our long-term goal is to keep admin- istry costs between 5 and 10 percent,” he said.

India-West asked why Adams wanted to go through the effort of creating a new charity when there were already several top-notch organizations doing work in the country, such as CRY, Asha for Education and Akshaya Patra.

“One reason is that we want the children to become independent, productive adults,” he explained. “In order to do that we believe we have to provide for all the needs of a child — food and education and medical care, etc. We think our approach will accomplish that.

“Another reason is that we believe that there can be a benefit by establishing mentorship and interni- ng opportunities between well-run and struggling orphanages in India. We want to explore that possibility.

“It also helps that a little bit of money goes long way there. $3 can buy medical insurance for a month, $200 can hire a teacher. Some of our Indian friends are now part of Hope Abides and others have helped us with networking opportunities and information.”

For more information, or to donate to the charity online using PayPal, visit www.hopeabides.org.

Dhillon Elected Chair of San Francisco Republican Party

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who unsuccessfully ran for state Assembly in 2009, against popular Democrat Tom Ammiano. In an earlier story (I-W, Dec. 3), outgoing Republican party chair Howard Epstein noted Dhillon’s competence and her no-nonsense approach to politics. Dhillon founded the San Fran- cisco, Calif.-based Dhillon and Smith in 2006, and specializes in business disputes, civil rights, election and campaign law, intel- lectual property, and water and land use issues.