

FOURTH PRATHAM GALA

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2001

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend those associated with the fourth Pratham Gala held last month in Houston, Texas. Pratham was established in 1994 by UNICEF and the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, with the mission to achieve "Universal Primary Education" in Mumbai by the year 2000.

This mission is now growing in scope and scale. Throughout India, individuals, corporations and the state governments are taking the initiative to further ensure that every child in their respective cities receives a formal education.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to include a recent article from the Indo-American News regarding the recent successful Gala in Houston and again add my congratulations.

[From the Indo-American News, Sept. 13, 2001]

PRATHAM CONTINUES TO BUILD MOMENTUM AND FUNDS

(By Bidisha Roy Banerjee)

HOUSTON—Targeted to reach out to the slum-children across India, Pratham has found tremendous amount of success in such a short time. The support Pratham received so far has been overwhelming and much more than anticipated. Since the last gala, Pratham has made great strides in both India and USA.

Not only has Pratham doubled the number of children it reaches (180,000 to date), it has also successfully established programs in 12 cities and nine rural areas with another seven cities being initiated this year. Several Pratham chapters have spread in a number of cities and college campuses in America.

The fourth Pratham Gala in Houston served as an evidence that a

Meceed by radio show hostess Meena Dutt, the event started with an invocation by Uma Mantravadi, singer and attorney, who performed a beautiful selection of songs.

The first speaker of the event, Vijay Goradia, Chairman of Pratham USA was introduced by Meena Dutt as the "man who does not want to speak; a man who contributed the major chunk and the man who brought Pratham to Houston."

Goradia amused the audience by mentioning a conversation that he overheard just before the program started.

Three kids were discussing how they could contribute to Pratham. The first one said he would draw a circle, throw his allowance in the air, and donate to Pratham and keep the rest to himself. The second kid said the same. The third kid, a Gujarati boy, said he would draw a square, stand outside it and throw all of his allowances in the air. Whatever dropped outside the square, he would donate to Pratham and the rest of it inside the square, he would keep for himself.

Goradia lauded Pratham for its tremendous achievement in the last four years and boasted that "Houston is the leader in drawing the maximum amount in the last four years. Other cities are now taking cue and following initiative. It is replicable in lot of different cities. I hope and wish Houston will continue to lead the way and show what

basic programs like Pratham can do for lives of others."

Meena Dutt reminded the audience that "Many say that he (Goradia) has money, so give it. But not everyone who has money wants to share it. A little sharing can go a long way."

The next speaker was a 17-year-old Pratham volunteer who flew all the way from Mumbai to attend the gala, Disha Katharani. "Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision is merely a passing time. But vision with action can change the world." Quoting Joel Barker, Disha went on to appall the audience by her wisdom, courage and her inspirational speech. A 12th grader in Ruparel College, Disha's interest in Pratham was initiated by her grandmother who took her to an orphanage and gave her the responsibility of teaching the children. After this incident, which had clearly left its impression on Disha's young mind, her father Harish Katharani exposed her to Pratham's Pratihristi (Computer Assisted Learning project) through his friend and Pratham's informative web-site. As someone who grew up with an access to a computer, Disha realized that computer assisted learning center might be one of the key ingredients to an educational revolution in India. Dr. Madhav Chauhan, cofounder of Pratham and Yogi Patel of Houston assisted Disha to carry through the daunting task of acquiring 30 computers which were shipped to Mumbai with the help of K.C. Singh. Although proud of her enormous achievement in seeing through her dream, Disha looks forward to bringing smiles to more innocent faces and the light of knowledge to many more dark and rusting minds. "This is just a drop in the ocean," says the awe-inspiring youngster in her motivational speech, "But we must remember that every drop constitutes an ocean and make our best efforts to make this world a better place."

Cofounder of Pratham, Dr. Madhav Chauhan is a man who eats, breathes, and sleeps Pratham. A former teacher in the University of Houston, Dr. Chauhan spoke about the birth of the Indian Education Initiative. "When we started, we talked only to Balvadi but now we have increased to different categories such as 6-11 year old out-of-school children, children in school but not learning, and children from the streets and railway platforms. And in the next year, we should have 10 times this definition."

"Pratham programs such as the pretest, mid-test and the post-test are directed to gauge every child's learning ability. At the present level of our skills, about 60 percent children who entered Pratham without any learning background, learned to read and write in less than six months. I myself was amazed by the results. This, I am sure, will get better and better," exulted the founder.

With the support from municipal government, Pratham added Lucknow to its program only three weeks ago, while Bhopal came into the picture just 10 days back. Dr. Chauhan said, "The challenge in Bhopal is unique. Let's see if a child can stand up and read a story book."

Turning to the Houstonians, Dr. Chauhan expressed his gratitude to the people who helped raise the most funds for Pratham USA. "You give so selflessly that we are constantly encouraged by your compassionate nature. I hope you continue giving and make difference in the lives of these children."

Dr. Chauhan's speech was followed by a screen presentation on Pratham in action. Happy kids in classroom, enjoying the learning process and laughing at the cartoons

they play on the computers—little boys and girls, the future of India. Pratham sure has made a world of difference in the lives of people. Keynote speaker N. Vahul, Chairman, ICICI took out time from his undoubtedly busy schedule to attend the gala. Its amazing how a man of his stature can find the time to give generously. It is mainly due to his support that Pratham could reach out from 2,000 children to 200,000 children.

Clearly impressed by the eloquent speech of Disha Katharani, Vaghul said "I have never seen a young person speak with so much passion and commitment. Even after a quarter century of public speaking, I feel I should not talk tonight after Disha's speech. Its said that 'give me 100 dedicated people, and I will change the face of the country,' but I say, 'Give me 100 Dishas and I will change India.'"

Vaghul said that "India is the world that binds us together. On one hand it evolves a sweetness and pride and on the other, sadness. A sadness because a country with so much potential cannot reach the top position due to poverty. The underlying cause for all this is selfishness and greed in every sector which is pulling our country down. Maybe it is the human nature but unless a counter balance is achieved, we will not be able to come up again. In Houston I see the counter balance. The element of selflessness, love and compassion which I see in Houston, travels across the oceans and lights the heart of hundreds. We have missed the industrial revolution of the 19th century because we were not the masters of our own destiny and we were afraid of being taken over. When we woke up, it was impossible to catch up with the revolution. But in the 21st century, we have 20 million qualified individuals, ready to race the Knowledge revolution. This time we are wide awake and we have the brain power. So we will not let this revolution bypass us. By the year 2010, my gut feeling tells me that we will turn this 20 million into 200 million and race with the entire universe. This is where Pratham is needed." Citing the example of New Yorker Abraham George who goes to rural India and tests the IQ of children to educate them, Vaghul said "we have the same culture, same genes and same talents. Let us help Pratham make the rest of the people useful citizens of India. At least we made one Disha. If we can replicate Disha's commitment, then we have succeeded. Pratham will be fortunate of 10% of corporate India can express the same amount of compassion, love and commitment as shown by the people in Houston."

Congressman Nick Lampson's commitment to the South Asian community goes much beyond the duties of his elected office. Pratham was honored to have him grace the event with his presence. Nine years as a teacher, Congressman Lampson believes that "teachers are blessed because they see the future everyday from their spots."

Congressman Lampson cited the example of Parveen Shaikh who is a Bridge Course teacher at Zakariya Bandar in Mumbai. Coming from an illiterate family, Parveen's dream was to become a teacher. And Pratham gave her that chance, encouraged her to pursue that dream by teaching at balvadis and following a vision. Applauding the committed community members who have played a key role in the fast expansion of Pratham, Lampson said "You are touching the soul of mankind with every dollar that you donate. Your commitment is giving a person your vision and role." Congressman expressed his wish to travel to India to see if the same type of program can be initiated in other countries.

Paul Lima of Northwest Mutual Financial Network, the sponsors of the Gala Event spoke about the high sense of social responsibility of his country. "When I heard about Pratham and understood their cause, I felt humbled," said the VP, Emerging Markets.

"The high level of integrity and the fact that Pratham is considered the top organization in what it does, makes us at Northwest Mutual very honored to sponsor this event and we sincerely hope to be involved in this for many more years in the future."

A vote of thanks was passed by Pratham President Yogi Patel. "Pratham has a very special meaning to me because I can relate to those kids." Patel recollected his own childhood, growing up in a small town in India where his parents were illiterate. There was no formal Pratham in that town but there definitely were people with the Pratham spirit. These were the people who paid for Patel's tuition and books and tickets to USA when he got admitted to Rice at the tender age of 17. And today, due to these generous and compassionate people, he has been able to carry on the spirit through his two daughters, Shivani Yogendra Patel, M.D. and Anuja Yogendra Patel, B.A. Double Major. Thanking Dr. Madhav Chauhan, Patel said "You are a modern day architect. You have created a beautiful vehicle." He thanked Mr. Vaghull and Vijay Goradia for their intensive support. He thanked all the donors who paid time and money and made Pratham a success story. "If education has worked for my family and my kids, it sure should change the lives of every individual out there waiting for an opportunity."

After dinner, cultural program was performed by Uma Mantravadi and her music group.

The gala raised \$390,000 with 560 ardent supporters attending the event promising their integrity to a cause so great that it can change the life of mankind and the destiny of a country. The current target of Pratham is now \$500,000

TRIBUTE TO ARLETTE T.
GATEWOOD

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2001

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the RECORD.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF ARLETTE T. GATEWOOD

Born to Mayhue and Ella (Jackson) Gatewood, in the late 1920's, the fourteenth child of fifteen children, Arlette T. Gatewood began on his journey of life. Raised on the Eastside of Youngstown's Sharon Line and a graduate of East High School class of 1947.

During his adolescent years he met a sweet, supportive girl named Emma G. Bunch, whom he married, and 51 years and two daughters later, they are still a couple that has love, respect and commitment to each other.

Arlette's daughters, Aleatha L. Summers and Roslyn M. Austin both of Evanston, IL were raised by the stern hand of a father that instilled a foundation of love, common sense, and self-respect along with a wealth of knowledge and commitment. These keys of success have been handed down to his grandchildren: Rashida, and Jelani Summers and Marcus Austin, and this torch will be handed down to future generations.

Arlette over the years has taken the time to share his time and knowledge with his nieces and nephews, and with so many other young adults. There are so many lives that Arlette has influenced, the advice shared and the support given has created powerful, productive adults throughout this country.

For 32 years Arlette worked as a cranesman in the Conditioning Yard at the Brier Hill Plant of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company. A member of Local Union 1462, United Steelworkers of America AFL-CIO-CIC, where he served in various capacities as a Local Union Officer; Vice President, Treasurer, and Grievance Committeeman also served as a member of the Civil Rights Committee, and the Worker's Compensation Committee. A dedicated trade unionist, he was appointed to the position of Staff Representative January 16, 1978 by Frank Leseganich, Former Director of District 26. Though retired from work, Arlette continues to fight for the rights of labor and labor relations.

Arlette is a member of Reeds Chapel A.M.E. Church where he serves on the Trustee Board, a member of the Board of Directors of Interfaith Home Maintenance Service, Leadership Youngstown, and the Labor Advisory Committee for Congressman Traficant.

He is also a board member of Youngstown Community Action Council, a past board member of the Youngstown Employment and Training Corporation (YETC) where he served as president for 4 years, a member of Citizens Participation Organization (Model Cities), Mahoning Valley Council of Church Economic Task Force, and Labor-Management Citizens Committee of Youngstown.

Arlette serves as a member of the Youngstown Area Urban League, Youngstown Chapter of N.A.A.C.P., Associated Neighborhood Centers, Leadership Youngstown Class of 1987, A. Phillip Randolph Institute; and Board of Trustee of the United Way.

Arlette Gatewood is and has been an asset to the entire community and has shared his experiences so that the future generations can benefit from his knowledge. He is a silent storm throughout the valley.

To My Husband, Our Father and Our Grandfather:

HERE'S TO THE MAN

Here's to the man who knows who he is and where he stands, the man with enough confidence in his own beliefs that he isn't afraid to let others express theirs . . .

Here's to the man who doesn't claim to know the answers until he has tried to understand the questions, the man with the strength to hold an unpopular opinion and the courage to change his mind . . .

Here's to the man whose warmth and wisdom and humor have earned him the respect of his friends and family and who makes this world a better place in which to live . . . Arlette, Daddy, Papa

HERE'S TO YOU!!!

With Love,
Emma, Pam, Raymond, Roslyn "Bunny", Ray Austin, Shani, Jelani, Marques, and Pap

THE RETIREMENT OF DR. SARAH
HARRIS

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 14, 2001

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. My community of Dayton,

Ohio is losing one of its most respected citizens. Fortunately, she is just retiring and moving to Nevada, but it is a loss of Montgomery County nonetheless.

Dr. Sarah E. Harris has been a stalwart of Montgomery County and the Miami Valley of Ohio all of her life. She exemplifies what it means to be a public servant. Her life has been dedicated to serving others and improving the lives of all of her neighbors. She has been the perfect example of a Good Samaritan, always willing to lend a hand and meet a need. Like a good neighbor, Dr. Harris was there.

She is also a good friend and I will miss her a great deal. I have had the pleasure of working with her for many years, in a variety of capacities. She has worn a number of hats in her lifetime and is still retiring early. We thought we had a few more good years left and I am happy that she will return to Dayton to continue her relationships and work on bringing our community closer together.

Dr. Harris is a product of the fine education from Dayton's public schools and Miami University of Ohio. She immediately started her career of public service by becoming first a teacher and then a principal in Dayton. She continued by also working with Central State University and the Dayton Urban League. In 1987, she began her service as Montgomery County Treasurer and continued as one of our three county commissioners from 1990 through 1992.

As she has stated, "nobody likes to lose an election, but I think it catapulted me into different things." Yet another testament to her commitment to our community is that she did not leave public service, after leaving elected office. She continued her work as the director of our chapter of the National Conference on Christians and Jews, now the National Conference on Community and Justice.

Her recent service as co-chair of the Dayton Dialogue on Race Relations (DDRR) continued her dedication to improving the lives of people from all backgrounds. She has brought all of her talent, energy and dedication to bear on this current initiative. I am pleased that U.S. District Judge Walter Rice, County Commissioner Vicki Pegg and City Commissioner Dean Lovelace will continue their work and be joined by former Common Pleas Judge Adele Riley.

I am particularly touched by Dr. Harris' tireless work with this latest endeavor. She has volunteered full-time to ensure the success of the DDRR and its signature dialogue groups. These groups meet in people's homes, with people of all ethnic backgrounds. They have conversations about their personal experiences with issues of race in an informal setting. Instead of just speaking of black and white, people are building relationships that will allow them to think of friends who happen to be of a different race.

The last time I was together with Dr. Harris was on the steps of the United States Capitol. We were there for a conference on "Connecting Communities for Reconciliation and Justice," sponsored by Initiatives for Change and Hope in the Cities. I was proud to have her introduce me to her fellow participants and glad to have her representing Dayton at this international gathering.