

N.C. Teens Make Healthy Effort to Help the Poor

Their nonprofit HelpHygiene sends supplies to India, U.S.

By Bhargavi Kulkarni

— CHARLOTTE, N.C.

It was during a family trip to India that North Carolina teen Malika Rawal first got exposed to poverty. "I saw kids walking around in the dirt with only undergarments on — no shoes," Rawal told The Charlotte Observer recently.

"Their families could not afford water, and what little water they had was only for drinking, they were not able to wash their hands or brush their teeth."

The Providence Day School junior wondered: Why do impoverished communities undergo such poor sanitation standards to harm their bodies? That question led her and her friend Simran Bhargava to establish HelpHygiene.

The non-profit seeks to provide supplies for more sanitary living to impoverished communities in the U.S. and overseas. Its work includes educating those communities as well about the importance of personal hygiene.

Bhargava, a sophomore at Marvin Ridge High School, had a similar experience in India, she told the Charlotte Observer.



"There are a lot of diseases around the world that people pass away from that could be prevented by proper hygiene. We have so much and so many people have nothing," Bhargava said.

During the past seven months, the two friends have collected 1,200 toiletry items and

700 pairs of shoes. The pair has also raised \$6,000 to help fund the organization and its work.

The girls plan to go to India over Christmas break to deliver supplies and visit rural preschools to stress the importance of hygiene to the teachers and young students, their website says.

Rawal said there's also plenty of work to do here in the U.S. — not just in India or other nations where people struggle with poverty.

"For the homeless, sometimes hygiene is the last priority," said Rawal. "They have to worry about food, water and shelter. But if we can help them with hygiene needs, then they can make a lasting impact on their health."

North Carolina teenagers Malika Rawal, right, and Simran Bhargava, founded HelpHygiene, a nonprofit that seeks to provide supplies for more sanitary living in impoverished communities in the U.S. and overseas.

Business Council's India Chapter Will Boost Ties with U.S.

IABC opening national location as well as chapters in 3 states

By a Staff Writer

ment from the Chicago-based non-profit.

how and investors relations," the group said in a statement.