



Friends of Prajwala, Washington, DC

# The 50 Brides of PRAJWALA

## Shattered Dreams Reborn

- \* A fundraising event sponsored by the DC Friends of Prajwala, an organization in Hyderabad, India that has rescued and rehabilitated thousands of victims of trafficking.
- \* Help 50 women celebrate their upcoming marriage, the realization of a long-lost dream.
- \* Please join us for an enjoyable evening of Indian food and entertainment.

**Date:** October 23, 2006

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

**Location:** The Sewall-Belmont House & Museum  
144 Constitution Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-5608

**Phone:** (202) 546-1210

**RSVP:** prajwalaindia@gmail.com

**Suggested Donation \$50**  
(Student/Young Professional \$25)

To make a tax deductible contribution visit:  
<http://www.globalgiving.com/pr/1300/proj1229a.html>

**Each \$200 raised will support a bride's dream!**

Over 2 million women and children are sexually trafficked each year in India and have little hope of escaping alive. In 1996, a determined young woman decided to fight for the rights of those trafficked. Sunitha Krishnan started an organization called Prajwala, and through it she has rescued and rehabilitated thousands of victims, reintegrating them into society and giving them back a normal life.

Later this year 50 of the women from Prajwala will be celebrating a milestone in life they once dreamt of reaching - marriage. We invite you to join us - including Sunitha herself - in celebrating this historic moment in the lives of the Prajwala women and in the fight against human trafficking.

Meet recent Washington bride Lucy Melvin, who inspired the idea of bringing two worlds together in this event.

*"As a recent bride myself, I want to join with my friends, colleagues, and family to bring the joy of a wedding to women who have triumphed over so much suffering and abuse." -Lucy Melvin*

**Co-Sponsored by the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum along with Host Committee Members**

Ashoka  
Women & Politics Institute  
I Do Foundation  
Little Black Book  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
Pat Ford-Roegner  
Reema Gupta  
Students Stopping the Trafficking of People  
YWTF: DC Metro Chapter  
Darlene Damm  
Walsh Family  
Gloria Steinem  
Gloria Peterson-Avigah

Women's Information Network (WIN)  
Karen Mulhauser  
Heather Booth  
Gail Ravnitzky-Silberglied  
Jatrice Martel Gaiter  
Lucy Melvin  
Diane Kartalia  
Hitched, Julia Lichtman Kepniss and Carin Rosenberg Levine  
Kim Gandy  
GlobalGiving  
Savina Kaur Singh  
Angie Peltzer  
Leslie Hall



## Amina's Story



Abandoned as a newborn in a train station in the central Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, Amina was taken home by an older woman. Amina was raised, not as an adored adopted daughter, but as a domestic worker in the household and began working as soon as she could walk. By the time Amina reached adolescence, she had been raped, abused, and mutilated by countless male relatives. In spite of never having been allowed to go to school and unable to read, Amina escaped her abusive situation by sneaking onto a train headed to Hyderabad, a city of almost 40 million.

Three days after she arrived, Amina was spotted wandering around the train station by a pimp on the look-out for vulnerable children. He promised her a job then took her directly to a brothel where she serviced scores of men every day and every night.

Before the end of four months, the left side of Amina's face became permanently paralyzed from the constant trauma she was enduring.

Amina escaped again, finding her way to a government safe house where she was referred to Prajwala. Established by Brother Jose

Vetticatil and Dr. Sunitha Krishnan as a refuge and rehabilitation center, Prajwala serves over 6000 trafficked women and their children. Amina had finally found a home surrounded by Prajwala staff and volunteers who healed her physically and psychologically. She was enrolled in Prajwala's vocational program and trained in bookbinding and screen printing. Then Amina found out she had tested positive for HIV. Prajwala provided Amina with nutritious food, immune system strengthening traditional herbs and anti-retro viral drugs.

Two years ago as she was in line at the hospital pharmacy, she noticed a young man looking at her with interest. Noting the amount of medicine he was collecting, Amina wondered if he was HIV+ also. She met him again at the pharmacy and decided to ask Dr. Sunitha to find out more about him.

Most marriages are arranged in India and Amina's is no exception. Sunitha inquired about the young man's background and with Amina's consent, agreed to their marriage. On April 23, 2004, along with three other couples, Amina and her young man were married in a traditional ceremony hosted by Prajwala. District officials attended and even granted government housing to the married couples. Amina refers to Sunitha as "Mummy-Daddy" because of her gift to the young couple of a traditional trousseau which parents normally provide.

Amina has wondered at times if life is worth living and has contemplated suicide on several occasions. However, her goal in life now is to be a contributing citizen to society. "I want to keep smiling until the moment of my death."

