

GIVING BACK



The Care for Children Program, supported by Shankara, educates 67,800 children in India.



More Than Skin Deep

Shankara, a top Ayurvedic skincare line, donates 100 percent of its net profits to doing good around the globe

By Rona Berg

Shankara is one of the top Ayurvedic skincare brands in the world. The elegant, award-winning products are made in small batches in Texas, with plants and Ayurvedic herbs like gotu kola, turmeric and neem, which nourish the skin and leave it looking healthy and radiant. Affiliated with The Art of Living Center, a wellness retreat and spa in Boone, North Carolina, Shankara is also featured in spa treatments around the globe.

“The idea was not just to create another skincare line,” says Bhushan Deodhar, CEO, Shankara. “We wanted to bring forward the wisdom of Ayurveda with the scientific advancements of the West in one bottle.”

But what makes the brand truly unique is its out-of-the-box business model. The brand donates a full 100 percent of net profits to a range of global initiatives: educating girls and women in developing countries, helping veterans who suffer from PTSD, teaching prisoners how to manage

stress, providing disaster and flood relief—for example, from the recent floods in Kerala, India. The goal? Simply to help make the world a better place.

“Many of us were involved with the International Association of Human Values (IAHV),” says Deodhar, “and we thought, ‘How do we create an economic model that benefits society at large?’ Philanthropy was very much the founding principle of the brand.”

Shankara provides financial support to Project Welcome Home Troops, where Deodhar teaches meditation to veterans, as well as how to use breath as a way to cleanse trauma. They teach leadership skills and practical tools to help students manage stress through YES Youth Empowerment Seminars, and 75,000 young people have gone through the program. They bring alternative energy to rural households in India without electricity, through the Light A Home Project, and train the local youth on how to install and maintain it. And they support education for girls in 437 schools across India.

Two weeks after we spoke at the International Spa Association Conference (ISPA), Deodhar was headed to London to speak to speak at the Global Mental Health Summit, organized in partnership with IAHV and the British government. “There’s such a prejudice about mental health,” he says. “There are so many techniques from the East and technologies from the West to bring happiness, and build more resiliency to people, to help withstand the difficulties in life. The question we ask is, ‘How can we give people the tools to get through difficult moments?’”

Deodhar worked in the corporate world, at Oracle, for seven years, where, he says, “It’s all about making money. When I became interested in these programs, it changed my life. It brought me inner peace. Life is much more than personal gains,” he continues. “If I can bring this shift to five people, then I will have accomplished something.”
shankara.com