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B.P.A. *newsletter*

**RESEARCH AND NEWSLETTER
BLIND PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION
(Formerly Blind Men's Association)
VASTRAPUR, AHMEDABAD-380 015.**

**YEAR XVII
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APRIL, 2008**

(This Newsletter available on website : www.bpaindia.org)

ONLINE DONATION OVER THE INTERNET USING THE HDFC BANK DIRECTPAY OPTION FOR BLIND PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION

The BPA is moving with the times!! The HDFC bank online donation amount will be directly debited from the HDFC bank account to Blind People Association.

HDFC URL: https://www.billdesk.com/hdfc/BPA/hdfc_blind_people_association.htm Donors can also donate through Credit Card.

BPA urges its donors to make use of this opportunity and donate to the BPA.

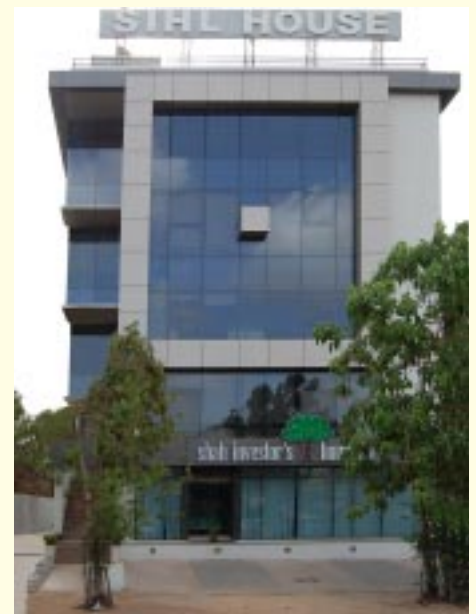


MILLION DONATION FROM SHAH INVESTORS HOME LIMITED

SHAH INVESTORS HOME LIMITED (SIHL) is a very reputed name in the field of financial services sector in Gujarat.

In the last 25 years, they have earned the trust of retail investors by putting the customer first, always. Because of their excellent service to investors in the Equities and F & O segments, and the research based guidance that they provide to their clients, they are probably one of the best in the business today, in Gujarat.

The management of SIHL has a heart which is as expansive as the business they head. SIHL has decided to invest in society and human kind. Hence SIHL has promised a minimum annual donation of a very generous sum of Rs. One Million to the BLIND PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION! This corpus will provide a very strong and much required support to the growth.



SIHL SPONSORED CAMP AT PETHAPUR

The Management of SIHL decided to hold a camp in their native village Pethapur which is very near Gandhinagar-Capital of Gujarat. An assistive devices camp and eye check up camp was held on 3rd April, 2008. All the important stakeholders in Pethapur were consulted and they gave their suggestions and support to the camp.

Villages covered under the propagation work	Aids and appliances required for the first phase camp	Person who supported in pre-camp propagation
Pethapur Fathepura Dolipura Jagatpura Becharjini Para Surela Mahakali Road Ankol Randheja Unaba Varjarunu paru Piplaj	Tricycle-15 Crutches-5 (Medium) Hearing Aid-2 (Mono)	Nileshbhai Modi (Pramukh Nagarpalika) Mukundbhai Parmar (School clerk) Ranjeet bhai Thakor (Karbari Adhakshya, Nagarpalika) Jagdishbhai (Peon Nagrpalika) Amrutbhai patel (Sarpanch Radhenja Village) Dr. Paresh (Pethapur PHC incharge) Saileshbhai Patni (Ex- MD, Seth. Mansukhsbhai Bagubhai Madyamic Sala) Saileshbhai Patni (Ex- MD, Seth. Mansukhsbhai Bagubhai Madyamic Sala) Bharatbhai (Peon, Seth. Mansukhsbhai Bagubhai Madyamic Sala) Samalbhai L. Prajapati (Clerk, Nagarpalika) One such camp will be conducted at the same village during the month of September, 2008 also.

"TRAINING WITH SPIRITUAL TOUCH"

BPA and Brahmakumari's World Spiritual University Ambawadi and Vastrapur Centres jointly organized training with spiritual touch at BPA campus. 11 blind students of NRG Physiotherapy School for the Blind and 5 staff members participated in this 4-days training from 12-15 March, 2008.

Brahmakumar Mr. Foong who is a low vision person himself at the age of 75 from Singapore conducted this training on "Foot Reflexology". He shared his knowledge in theory and practical daily 5 hours of these days with participants. By massage and pressure point on foot and heal many diseases and painful conditions can be cured by this treatment.



ACTIVITIES BY HOPE PROJECT

MEHENDI COMPETITION FOR DISABLED BOYS AND GIRLS

HOPE is a voluntary effort started by a group of homemakers to serve a deserving cause at the Blind People's Association (BPA). They do what ever they can for the students, trainees and beneficiaries of the Blind People's Association (BPA).

HOPE spend about 3-4 hours daily at the BPA and address some unmet needs. This group read to the blind students, records their educational material, teach them English, arrange competitions, picnics and other activities which are interesting and educational.

They have organised competitions, picnics and other activities for the students at the BPA.

To encourage the disabled and to increase their confidence, the HOPE held on Mehndi Competition for the disabled at BPA campus on 26 March, 2008. They also distributed 5 sewing machines, 1 handcart and 2 ice boxes to the needy disabled persons on 8th April, 2008.



DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE INCLUSION OF DISABLED PERSONS IN GUJARAT

A programme has been started in 3 Districts of Gujarat, Ahmedabad, Kutch & Surendranagar for Developing a Sustainable Infrastructure for the Inclusion of Disabled Persons in Gujarat with Overall Objective to improve the quality of life of disabled persons in Gujarat by improving access to opportunities. It is 5-year project which is supported by the Australian Government and cbm Australia. The BPA received this project sanction only in the last week of September 2007 and the project was officially begun from 1st October, 2007. This programme is a CBR programme with a difference.

It will not have pure service delivery only; it will create a system by which services to disabled become sustainable in the community. This will be done by formation of disabled people's organizations group at village level, training of local Panchayati Raj personnel in disability awareness and management. A beginning has been successfully made by completing training of 600 grassroot level Panchayati Raj personnel in disability awareness. These trainings were undertaken at Bhuj, Bareja and Sayla.

HAPPY DAY OF G4S AT NAAZ

"G4S Happy Day 2008" Company created an unforgettable atmosphere of fun, love and gaiety for our 100 + children with severe and multiple disabilities on 3rd March, 2008 at our BPA MSM-Naaz Campus. All teachers, care givers, parents all of them came back singing praises about the concern shown by G4S employees towards their children.

All were very impressed and touched to see the beautiful canopy erected by the Company, the balloon animal characters that made them laugh and sing, the beautiful balloons, puppet show, the games, the music and all the other arrangements which made it a magical day.

"G4S showed their great attention to detail by keeping a doctor on call also. More important than the money that they spent is the concern and love that they have shown for the disabled. Truly, "a company with a golden heart".



BLIND SHOW THE WAY AT CAR RALLY

Blind People's Association and Ahmedabad Round Table-40 organized 11th Car Rally for the blind on 3th February, 2008 (Sunday). The objective of this Rally is to create public awareness about the potentials of the blind and to develop the feelings of competition among blind persons.

Blind persons acted as navigators and read out rally instructors from a Braille map and guide the sighted drivers.

This Rally was flagged off on 3rd February, 2008. The Chief Guests were:

- Mr. R.M. Patel, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar
- Mr. Ravi Saxena, IAS, Development Commissioner, Office of Development Commissioner
- Prof. Bhaskar Y. Mehta, Commissioner, Persons with Disabilities Act, Gandhinagar, Gujarat
- Ms. Nutan Vijh, Vice District Governor, District 323-B
- Mr. F.P. Halani, Director, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar,



The spirit of adventure was present in equal measure with the teams often losing their way and finding themselves in the territories which seemed to be the 'end of the road'.

Havmor ice-cream, as usual, delighted the participants with their free ice cream.

VISITORS

- Ruth Daniloff her husband Nicholas Daniloff and Professor Claire Goodman to make film on Chetna, deafblind for their book on 2nd February, 2008
- Mr. Ashish Kumar, Director, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, New Delhi visited on 8 February, 2008
- Mr. Harineshbhai, Credibility Alliance, Mumbai on 12th Feb for the peer review.
- Ms. Akiko Takizawa, Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD) Japan - interview with Ms. Janki Akhani, computer student on 9 February, 2008 for Duskin Leadership Training in Japan
- Mr. Arun Arora, CEO & Mrs. Sachu Ramalingam, Consultant, Vision Rehabilitation, Dr. Shroff's Eye Hospital - Exposure visit to BPA's CBR programmes and redesigning process on 20-21 Feb'08,
- Mr. Ebherald Wrifs, Lions International Vice President & his wife on 8 March, 2008
- Mr. K. Kempaiah from National Association for the Blind, Karnataka State Branch visited on 11 March 2008
- Visitors from "Model Schools", Gandhinagar on 29 February, 2008
- Ms. Ingar during, CBM Germany on 7 April, 2008
- Mr. Wilson Thomas, Sr. Manager, Smile Foundation, Mumbai 4 April, 2008

EDUCATIONAL TOURS

- 32 Special B.Ed., students in Visually Impaired from Blind Relief Association, New Delhi for educational tour to BPA for 3 days 11-13 March, 2008
- 20 students from Kamyani Training College, Pune for educational tour from 13-17 March, 2008.

PLACEMENT & TRAINING

- Mr. Shiv Govind, EDI PGDMN Xth Batch, EDI, Gandhinagar on "Assessment of the Mental Health Projects implemented by BPA in three districts in Gujarat" from 11th February to 14th March, 2008
- Mr. Robin Macwan, V.S. Gandhi Charitable Trust, Kapadwan, Training on Organisational Development from 24-29 March, 2008

CRICKET TOURNAMENT FOR THE BLIND

All Gujarat Cricket Tournament for the Blind organized at Kachchh Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centre, Bhuj-a joint Project of BPA & Spandan, on 16-17 February, 2008 at Jubilee Ground, Bhuj, Kutch; Gujarat. The Guests of Honour of this Tournament were Shri Anantbhai Dave, Former Sansadsri, Kutch, Shri Pushpadhanbhai Gadhvi, Sansadsri, Kutch, Mahant Swami Shri Dharmanandandasji, Swaminarayan Temple, Bhuj and Shri Bhaskarbhai Mehta, Disability Commissioner, Gandhinagar.

WORKSHOPS/EVALUATIONS/SEMINARS/MEETING BY BPA STAFF

Dr. Bhushan Punani Executive Director	26th February, 2008.	Presentation on Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI): Workshop for State Central Library Auditorium, West Bengal - the campaign in Kolkatta for the Educators of the visually impaired and the Government officials from West Bengal
	12 March, 2008	Assembly of Asian Blind Union New Delhi
	21 April, 2008	EFAVI Workshop at Bhopal
	27-29 April, 2008	EFAVI (Education For All Children with Visually Impaired) Workshop at Bhubaneswar sponsored by ICEVI
	30 April, 2008	52 nd Meeting of the Executive Committee Meeting of the Rehabilitation Council of India, RCI Office New Delhi
Mrs. Nandini Rawal Project Director	26th February, 2008	Presentation on Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI): Workshop for State Central Library Auditorium, West Bengal -the campaign in Kolkatta for the Educators of the visually impaired and the Government officials from West Bengal
	10-13 March, 2008	Evaluation visit of CBR Project - Raigarh Ambikapur Health Association (RAHA)
		(Jashpur, Chhattisgarh) by Sight Savers International, India
Nandini Rawal & Vimal Thawani	14-16 February, 2008	Preparing Voice & Vision Manual at Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf, Deafblind, Mumbai
Nandini Rawal & Harmish Modi	31 March, 2008	Meeting with Anita Dumbrell, Sight Savers International, & Dr. M.N.G. Mani, Secretary General of ICEVI for Guidelines on Financial matters for ICEVI at Sight Savers office, Malad West, Mumbai
Mrs. Neelam Gupta & Mr. Vanaraj	21-22 February, 2008	Meeting at CAN (Concerned Action Now), New Delhi - submitting the Reports
Mr. Dinesh Pandya Teacher	13-16 February, 2008	For Conducting O & M, DLS and Rehabilitation (Social & Economic) as Part of the Module II Training at Pastoral Centre, Bhopal. Organised and sponsored by Sight Savers India, Bhopal

BPA PROFESSIONALS ABROAD

Name	Date	Details
Dr. Bhushan Punani Executive Director	8 February, 2008	Presentation on Breaking Barriers in the Community, A Workshops for the Rehabilitation Professional, Organized by CBM, Dar-e-salaam, Tanzania.
	27-29, February, 2008	Chairperson - Role of Technology in Disability & Development” Concurrent Session3rd General Assembly & Conference of Asia & Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) Dhaka, Bangladesh, sponsored by ICEVI Organized by NFOWD, Bangladesh
	1 March, 2008	Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI): Dhaka Workshop, sponsored by ICEVI Organized by NFOWD, Bangladesh
	2-5 March, 2008	Conducted a Workshop on EFAVI and made a presentation on Low Vision in the Saudi Ophthalmic Conference, Riyadh
	8-11 April, 2008	ICEVI ExCo Meeting in Hanoi Vietnam sponsored by ICEVI
Mrs. Nandini Rawal Project Director	27-29, February, 2008	Presented a Paper in the Plenary Session of of 3rd General Assembly & Conference of Asia & Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) Dhaka, Bangladesh
	1 March, 2008	Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI): Dhaka Workshop
	8-11 April, 2008	ICEVI ExCo Meeting in Hanoi Vietnam
Mrs. Vimal Thawani Project Manager	4-8 March, 2008	Consultation of Deafblind and Multiple Disabled Children in St. Nicholas Home, Penang, Malaysia

ICEVI STEALS THE SHOW AT DHAKA

Dr. M.N.G. Mani, Secretary General, ICEVI; Mrs. Nandini Rawal, Treasurer, ICEVI; Dr. Bhushan Punani, Chair, ICEVI West Asia were present at the General Assembly & Conference of Asia & Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 27-29, February, 2008. All three contributed to the Conference by presenting papers in the Plenary and Concurrent Sessions. Mrs. Nandini Rawal presented a Paper on “Role Of Multilateral & Bilateral Funding Agencies And The Private Sector In The Development Of Potentials Of People With Disabilities in the first Plenary Session on 27th February. She was also appointed as Chairperson in Concurrent Session 6 on 28th February. Dr. Punani and Dr. Mani presented Papers on “Education for All” in concurrent Session on 29 February. Dr. Punani was also invited to speak on his experience at the Closing Ceremony of the Conference on 29th February.



EFAVI WORKSHOPS WEST ASIA REGION (February-April, 2008)

EFAVI in West Bengal

State level Workshop was organized on 26th February, 2008, Kolkatta in collaboration with Society for the Visually Handicapped, Kolkatta and Sight Savers. Nandini & Bhushan made a presentation before Educators of the visually impaired and the Government officials



ICEVI West Asia organized a One-Day Workshop on the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) sponsored by ICEVI Organized by NFOWD, Bangladesh on 1st March, 2008. Mrs. Rasheeda Choudhary, Advisor, Education to the Government of Bangladesh remained present as Chief Guest. 65 participants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Fiji, Afghanistan, Nepal and United Kingdom Mani explained the objectives of ICEVI and importance of EFAVI, Nandini presented a successful model on promotion of education for all, Bhushan highlighted achievements of the campaign.

Saudi Ophthalmic Society: Annual Conference



Mr. Mohammed Bellow, Member of the ICEVI West Asia and Director of Ebsar Foundation Workshop on Low Vision invited Dr. Punani to the Annual Conference of the Saudi Ophthalmic Society on 5th March, 2008, at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Dr. Punani made a presentation on importance of promoting education of children with low vision And EFAVI Global Campaign. Office Bearers of the SOS showed keen interest in the campaign. He made a presentation in the General Assembly of the Asian Blind Union of the Asian Blind Union General Assembly on 6th April, 2008, at Delhi.

AKSHAYA PATHRA FOUNDATION DONATION

From the first week of March, 2008, 72 poor disabled persons working in various departments of BPA were served with nutritious, simple served in a very caring manner by the Akshaya Patra Foundation.

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS/MEETING AT BPA STAFF

Details	Date	Sponsored By
2-Days Organisational Development Workshop	21-22 February, 2008	National Trust, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, New Delhi
One Day workshop on Persons with Disability Act, 1995 (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) & National Trust Act for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 for Practicing Lawyers Meeting of practicing lawyers to discuss the act and its implications and suggest the ways to implement the act	29 March, 2008	National Trust, Ministry of Social Social Justice & Empowerment, New Delhi
State Committee Meeting of Credibility Alliance	19 April, 2008	Credibility Alliance

ACTIVITIES/VISITS DONE BY STAFF OF CBR ASHTAVAKRA STAFF

(Ms. Kinnari Desai, Mr. R.S. Jadav & Mr. Jyotish Choudhary)

1-2 Feb'08	Ashtavakra meeting at Gandhinagar
6 Feb'08	Rubela Vaccination. Program of 500 girls at Ahmedabad
13-14 Feb'08	Advocacy meeting of Deafblind in Idar
21-22 Feb'08	2 days National Trust program on Organisational Development
26 Feb'08	Advocacy meeting of Deafblind in Sayla
27 Feb'08	Meeting at Handicap International, Ahmedabad for DAG Material
1 March'08	Video Conference on collection of loan document at Ahmedabad
2 March'08	Preparation on 11th Mar. loan programme at Ahmedabad
7 March'08	Meeting at Handicap International, Ahmedabad for PWD Book update
10 March'08	Refresher course of teachers training - AusAID in sayla
15 March'08	Meeting of Directors of NGOs registered under PWD Act in Gujarat at Ahmedabad
16 March'08	Orientation on Disability for Unnati Staff in Balaram, Palanpur
17 March'08	Ashtavakra meeting on ADIP, loan target at Gandhinagar
18 March'08	Video Conference on collection of loan document - Targets & achievement at Gandhinagar
26 March'08	Local Government sensitization Training of Local Govt. Leaders' at Bareja Eye Hospital- Ausaid
9 April'08	Pre audit meeting for railway station at BPA
11 April'08	Ashtavakra meeting at Kheralu with SDO by Jadavbhai at K
12 April'08	ASSM meeting of executive members at BPA
15 April'08	Ashtavakra Borsad project staff visited BPA
16-15 April'08	Disability and Development program at BPA by HI
17 April'08	Orientation of Various laws and Disability - A session at DD at BPA
19 April'08	Audit of Railway Station from 9am to 4pm
20 - 26 April'08	Chetanalaya CBR training funded by CBR-F with Kavina
22 April'08	Ashtavakra visit to Abdasa - meeting with SDO by Jyotish
23 April'08	Ashtavakra visit to Mundra - meeting with SDO BY Jyotish
25 April'08	Ashtavakra visit to Kalol - with SDO by Jadavbhai
29 April'08	Ashtavakra visit to Padra - Jadavbhai without SDO
30 April'08	Ashtavakra visit to Dhrangadhra- meeting with SDO

**ACTIVITIES/VISITS DONE BY STAFF OF
MULTIPLE DISABILITIES DEPARTMENT**

4 February'08	Rubella Vaccination- SNTD college	Neha, Nagma, Dipali
13- 14 February'08	Advocacy Event - Idar	Krupa, Neha, Nagma
14 February'08	Voice & Vision Meeting at Mumbai	Vimal Thawani, Nandini Rawal
26-27 February'08	Advocacy Event - Sayla	Vimal Thawani, Krupa, Neha, Nitin, Nagma
29 February'08	Movie for children - welcome	All staff of Multiple Disability Department
3 March'08	Picnic - G4s - Naaz	All staff of Multiple Disability Department
4-5 March'08	Advocacy Event - KCRC - Bhuji	Nitin, Krupa
18-19 March'08	National Trust & Advocacy event at Navsari	Mihir, Nagma, Krupa
25 March'08	National Trust awareness program for parents at Mehsana	Mihir, Krupa
27 March'08	CRE Program at Bhavnagar - Session on Multiple disabilities & Deafblindness, communication	Vimal Thawani, Krupa
26-28 March'08	NT Awareness program at Bareja For Sarpanch	Mihir, Jyoti
28 March '08	Meeting with Bijubhai & Uttam	Vimal Thawani, Krupa
29 March'08	Equity training at BPA , Lawyers Meeting	Vimal Thawani Mihir
31 March'08	"Disha" School for children with Mental retardation, Goa Visit : RLC	Krupa, Nagma

BPA EDUCATOR SELECTED FOR ELP

Mrs. Krupa Bharat Velani, Project Coordinator of Persons with Multiple Disabilities Department of BPA has been selected for Educational Leadership Programme, (ELP) in Perkins School for the Blind, USA for the 2008-2009 school years which will begin on September 2, 2008. The program concludes with a graduation ceremony by the end of May, 2009.



TRAINING IN JAPAN

Ms. Janki Harshadbhai Akhani, who is a low vision student of BPA Computer Training centre by ITI, has been selected as a trainee of the 10th DUSKIN Leadership Program in Japan which will be started in the end of August, 2008. Ms. Akiko Takizawa, Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD) Japan - interviewed Ms. Janki Akhani, on 9 February, 2008 for Duskin Leadership Training in Japan.



AWARDEE

Anjanaben A. Acharya, Teacher, Shri Ashirwad Day Care Centre, Sayla was conferred the Award for Best Teacher for Disabled District by the worthy hands of Shri Ramanlal Vohra, Education Minister, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar on 27th April, 2008 at Surendranagar District. Smt Varshaben Doshi, Director of Savashala and MLA of Vadhwan was also present on this occasion.

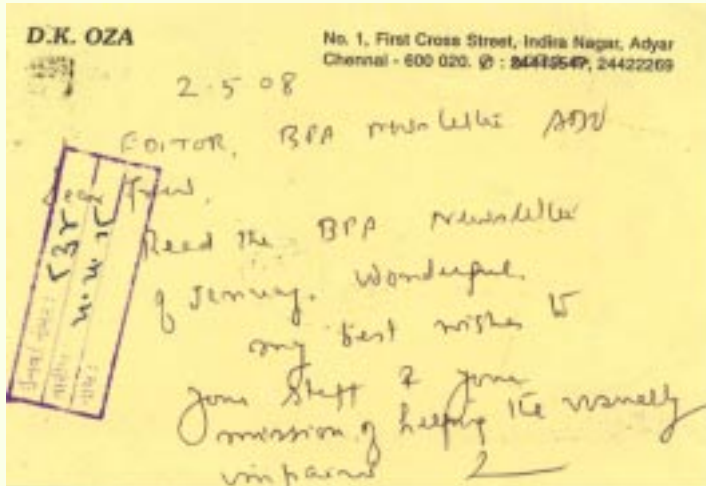


JAGDISH PATEL MEMORIAL CEREMONY

The death anniversary of Mr. Jagdish K. Patel, Founder of BPA was observed on 31st March, 2008. Mr. Vasantbhai Ahir, Minister presided over the function where in which blind scholars were awarded the H.N. Makim Scholarships, parents of 5 outstanding blind persons were felicitated and brilliant blind students were given special prizes. Jagdishbhai was keenly interested in promoting education of the blind and this is a fitting tribute to his memory. Lions Club of Vastrapur (mostly of the blind) founded by Jagdishbhai was a Coorganiser of this event.



READERS' DIGEST



BEST OF LUCK TO STUDENTS OF X & XII STANDARD

Mrs. Aruna Jadeja, Volunteer Reader

We convey our good wishes to our children even in America too at night for their exam and the next morning we ask them about their performance! But we have no time to wish the good luck to disabled students from our city, expect their school, no one is with them

So the volunteers/readers, of course almost lady volunteers (a mother figure to these blind student tat this critical period a examination) organize, each year a programme named "BEST OF LUCK". The day before the Board Exam, we the READERS wish them all the Bests!

Every child feels unsecured at the time of exams. So that this is our efforts to give them love, warmness, support and security.

For this purpose, we give them a kit including; some breakfast like well prepared fresh toast from the best bakery; variety of biscuits; roasted gram (not groundnut, it causes cough and cold and March/Holi festival is a season of illness); not a single item of fried material; some medicines too like stripes of Crocin tablets, Vicks cream, Vicks/Halls, chewable tablets to face health problems, handkerchief to prevent the spreading infections. Always be presentable. We encourage them to be presentable by remaining clean and well mannered so that writer will assist them willingly

and he will also recommend other to assist these students. That's why supply them shampoo, bathing and washing soaps, welcome powder (for boys disposable shaving razors too), we also provide them some tablets like 'Popins & Pollo" so that while dictating their answers for long time, they will not disturb their writers by throwing split drops and they don't suffer from throat dryness.

All these above articles and items are given them considering their needs for during the almost 15 days of examination. Do you know, who is supposed to be the Chief Guest of this programme? We invite sighted students of Xth and XIIth student who are also going to appear exam in next day. These students spend their one hour for our blind students. They and our students convey all the bests to each other. The purpose is that sighted students must learn to develop charity.

Our other friends, family members wish the Good Luck with kumkum tilak, delivering a curd and then we, in a very lovable way we deliver them the above kit. In the end of our students, convey their thanks to the readers and feeling of gratitude. Luckily this function is arranged on 8th March, 2008 - A world women's' day.

NEWS from Far & Near

MESSAGE FROM REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

Dr. J.P. Singh, previous Member Secretary of RCI has proceeded on study leave from October, 2007. Dr. A.K. Sinha has been appointed as Member Secretary of RCI by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. He has taken charge w.e.f. 18th February, 2008. All correspondence regarding RCI's role, responsibilities, information, participation in meetings, workshops, seminars etc and anything related thereto may please be addressed to Dr. A.K. Sinha.

New York: Scientists in the US have discovered a protein that may be able to reverse two major eye diseases that can lead to blindness.

Inside the Eccles Human Genetics Lab, researchers successfully activated a protein in mice that both prevented and reversed age-related macular degeneration and

diabetic retinopathy.

London speaks of this protein called robo4 which when triggered, reversed abnormal growth of blood vessels in the eye. It also stabilized the vessels to prevent leakage. These are the major villains in the two eye diseases.

"We were able to induce retinopathy or macular degeneration, and then reverse the process with a protein that binds to the robo4 receptor," said graduate researcher Nyall London, who deals with human molecular biology and genetics.

Results of the mouse models look good right now and human clinical trials are sure to follow. Those trials could begin within five years.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE (DAP)

Preliminary Conference Announcement and Call for Papers - [NCICT4DAP] from September 12-13, 2008 at Auditorium, Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute, Drive-in-Road, Ahmedabad-380 052 and

Organised by:

Computer Society of India, Ahmedabad Chapter
201, "CENTAUR" Building, Nr. Vijay Cross Roads, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad-380 009 (India)
Phone: (079)2644 60 65/2656 80 76
Email: ncict4dap@gmail.com
Conference Website: www.csiahd.org/conference/

For any queries regarding submission of Papers contact:

Mr. Harshal Arolkar, GLS Institute of Computer Technology, Ahmedabad
(M) 9898240919
Email: ncict4dap@gmail.com

Supported by:

Blind People's Association (India), Ahmedabad

A woman with many a mission

By Umesh Ambegsakar

RAHMEDABAD, Jan 20. RICHES can get many a top post. But very few use the post for doing something worthwhile for society, that too, for the less privileged. Fewer still devote their lives to a certain cause.

Among the few, who do, can be counted Mrs Chandrikaben Sumant Shah. But her case is different. She has been involved in social work of one or the other sort since 1950. And, when an opportunity presented itself by her election as president of the Rotary Inset Wheel Club in 1964-65, she utilised it to expand her activities.

Inspired by Gandhiji, in the pre-and immediate post-Independent periods, many a woman in Gujarat had taken to constructive activities. And it was but natural for Chandrikaben to be associated with the activities of Gujarat Scouts and Guides. Her diligent and sincere efforts to expand its activities among school going girls brought her public recognition as much as being selected for the coveted post of commissioner in 1955. She continued in the post for a decade.

That would have remained her only sphere of social activity, but for some discussions with Dr Jagdish Patel, a blind man himself, who used to visit the Shah home. Dr Patel had been working for the blind from an old place in Kameshwar Pote. Taking a cue from Dr Patel, Chandrikaben started working for the cause, often providing free food to blind students. She also persuaded the government to give a

plot of land to the association and raised funds for the construction of the first building for the Blind Men's Association at Vastrapur. Recognising her service, she was elected founder-president of the association in 1962-63 and once again in 1973-74.

Starting with just four students, the Association now extends its activities to nearly 14,000 visually and physically handicapped. She also became vice-president of the National



Mrs Chandrikaben Shah

Association for the Blind.

However, she was not content with these two activities only. She yearned for more fields to work in, mainly dealing with health aspects. That was but natural for her, being the wife of the eminent city cardiologist Dr Sumant Shah.

The Chinese aggression meant the need for a blood bank and Chandrikaben was in the forefront again. In the days, when people had little idea about blood donation, she undertook

it as a mission to spread the message. She says, "It was difficult to dispel funny ideas people had." She remembers an incident, when a Sindi trader actually shed tears, pleading her to let him go as, "I have got a wife and children to look after. Who will look after them, if I die?"

She recalls that many others had similar misgivings, which one of them voiced as, "Aa to mari nakharavano dhando chhe" (This business is for killing). But not deterred by such opposition, she went ahead with her mission. The result was the first blood bank in the city and held the post of the Ahmedabad Red Cross Society.

Honour came to Chandrikaben in many ways. She was president of the Ladies Club of the Ahmedabad Medical Association in 1965-66 and was a leading member of the Gujarat Sarasar Mandal. She had also played a key role in the formation of the Gujarat Cancer Society.

From the beginning, Chandrikaben has been modern in her outlook. In 1966, she went against the prevailing public opinion and got a young widow re-married. She took help of local Gujarati newspapers, writing an article propagating the remarriage of widows, based on facts from several religious books. For that she had to go through several religious tests.

Now at the ripe old age of 75, she is content. For the past five to six years, Chandrikaben has disengaged herself from the field of social service and is seeking solace in religious and spiritual activities.

L. Dalal

ONGC effluent

BPA Newsletter is the Quarterly Newsletter of Blind People's Association (India) (Formerly Blind Men's Association). If you would like to contribute some articles or be included in the mailing list, please contact Mrs. Nandini Rawal, Project Director

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