

# DISHA-A NEW BEGINNING



## DISHA – A NEW BEGINNING

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**Disha – A new beginning indeed!!**



Disha...A New Beginning believes that life is a spring of optimism and hope. Optimism that bravely states - it is the attitude and mindset of a person, not his physical limitations that make him inferior & hope that tomorrow can only get better and brighter. In fact, Disha has taken birth to complete what God could not... Disha strongly believes n advocates the words of Harvey Fierstein – “Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself.”

The birth of Disha – a new beginning was a land mark event in this area because this is the only and first multi disability and counseling center in Rural Pune. To give support and help to every disabled person (may be in the form of supportive gadgets, devices, aids, surgery or therapy) and complete rehabilitation of all. Disha got 289 registrations with all kinds of disabilities like orthopedic, spinal and moderate to severe mental retardation, blinds, hearing impairments, motor palsy, neurological deficits, speech impairments and accidental loss of limbs etc. Initially we concentrated on only children but due to mental age limits in cases of MR we had to consider all possible cases for therapy.



Disha is a movement in the rural area as it is first of its kind. Disha aims at changing the attitude of the way the world eyes a kid with special needs. Disha believes that deformity and disability is not reflected in a person's physical form but it is embedded deep in one's thoughts and attitude.

Disha...A New Beginning kick started on 26/06/2012 It was able to distribute hearing aids, crutches, blind sticks, MR kits, Tricycles and wheel chairs, artificial limbs, supportive equipments for MR, etc. to 39 beneficiaries in its pilot week itself. They were arranged from the ministry of social justice and Apang kalyan vibhag without putting any financial burden on cantonment board. (The total cost of the material was around 2.75 Lakh). The practical life needs hard core efforts to run in day to day pace. We distributed tricycles, crutches, blind goggles, MR kits artificial limbs etc with the help of ministry of social justice to make them independent and confident.



In the words of Walt Disney – “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.” Courage & the zeal n zest of betterment is the only prerequisite that Disha seeks in you. Disha aims at reaching out to the ones who need help in bridging over the barrier of physical deformity & self doubt to reach their dreams, grow & flourish. Disha got 289 registrations with all kinds of disabilities like orthopedic, spinal and moderate to severe mental retardation, blinds, hearing impairments, motor palsy, neurological deficits, speech impairments and accidental loss of limbs etc. Initially we concentrated on only children but due to mental age limits in cases of MR we had to consider all possible cases for therapy & Aids.



Disha- a new beginning started HAPPINESS CLASSES for the moderate to severe mental retardation cases. These kids were absolutely rejected and disowned by the society because of their helplessness. We even rescued one child from a locked home where the baby was kept as animal and the parents would go to work. This mentally retarded child was so helpless that he could not even pick up water and food in the confinement. The aim of happiness classes is to make these kids independent and at least they should be able to live a dignified life. We provide basic training like combing of hair, washing face n hands, toilet training, food habits, brushing of teeth etc also. The kids and parents counseling is done regularly. They are trained for development in inter human relationships, day to day life managements and other skills.





2. Project AARUSHI...The first ray of Sun (Health related ventures)





a. Project Aarushi Health Camp was a grand success. The event was inaugurated by Hon Brig VSM Goswami and was presided by Dr. Vinayak More, Civil Surgeon Pune district. Mrs. Goswami and Mrs. Meenakshi Shaktavat, CEO, Dehu road also graced the occasion with their presence. A free medical checkup and treatment camp was organized as a joint venture of district hospital Pune and Disha...A new beginning. Around 13 cataract surgeries were done on the first day. Dr. Yamini Adbe, In charge Disha, was the master of the ceremony. Around 850 patients were a. examined and will be investigated and treated free of cost at the district hospital. Disha took this decision to prevent disabilities due to illnesses. Since, many patients in the area are poor and live in slums; the availability of best medical facility was indeed a boon for the patients. The funds and manpower was provided by the state run District Civil Hospital and CS Dr. More. The program was concluded by the blessings and speech of Brig Goswami.





a. Project Aarushi Physiotherapy Center – A well equipped complete Physiotherapy Center with trained physiotherapist is made available for the multi disability patients registered with Disha. It is run on PPP (Public, Private Partnership) with minimum investment of the board. It is run by Disha but will also serve for other patients in routine hours. It also serves as a source of income for Disha.



b. Project Aarushi De addiction Center for Alcoholics in collaboration with AA – Alcoholic Anonymous – an international body. This center serves at no cost basis and reaches to the alcoholic addicts from door to door. Regular counseling sessions are done, including home visits.

c. Project Aarushi INDRADHANU...the vision center

Disha takes a new wing. The recently opened vision center was inaugurated by the Hon Director of Defense estates at the main building of Disha. Leaving apart the multi disability health problems, Disha shows concern for every eye in pain. The center will cater services to the poor patients free of cost. Even major surgeries, IOL, Phaco, Squint, cataract, etc. surgeries will be performed free of cost.



**e. Project Aarushi Adolescent counseling –**

Adolescents from the slum areas are contacted through MSWs & counselors and the center acts as a link in between the working parents & their kids. Renowned experts are helping Disha in this project. The staff is trained at the well known & established organizations like Saathi, Aalochana, Child Line and CCD Trust.

**f. Project Aarushi AYUSH Therapy –** The spastic children are treated with the help of Ayurvedic massage and therapy.



### 3. Aashraya – Old age home for poor & destitute women

Aashraya is a day care center where Yoga, Spiritual discourses, Health care, television, news papers, Indoor games are made available to the members.



### 4. Chhota Jungle (Environment related ventures)



A tiny jungle is established by the kids and adolescent children of Disha. The kids are also maintaining the cleanliness and environment boost. Every tree is given a name of member of Disha and its well-wishers. The flowers give happiness, add color to the life and also provide loads of positive energy in the gloomy scenario of the hospital premises. The barren land is used for this project. The trees will provide shade and pure the air on the traffic loaded Bombay Pune road. It is observed while planting the saplings that selection of the trees will be such that the jungle gets floral colors in every season of the year. The kids are also managing small project of earthworm manure with the biologically degradable waste. Birds especially sparrows that are on the verge of extinction, breeding center is the ultimate aim of this jungle.



Bageecha – another step in improving the vital environ of the hospital and play space for the children. Multiple outdoor games are planned and fixed so that the happiness classes have an additional load of smiles and laughter's. There are different fixtures to make the kids more physically active.

#### Project KHUSHI - Rehabilitation

Tangy Flavors - A tea shop started for the rehabilitation of adult differently able persons registered with Disha. There is not a single center of this kind in this area so we have to help and register adult differently able persons also along with children. This center has a tea coffee vending machine, they serve tinned soft drinks and snacks also.



a. Candle Making/Marketing - This is an enthusiastic project of the center with high expectations and outcome. The disability and poverty makes the situation worst and so we decided to form a self help group who can stand at their own in few years and will function independently. This has persons with orthopedic disability, blinds, hearing impairments, mental retardation etc, they will work in a group. Blinds have great concentration abilities so they are on manufacturing front of designer candles, Coloring is done by the other disabled persons and whole year marketing will also be done by the persons who can speak.



At present our group has taken responsibility of marketing those candles, even parents are also helping them out in our center's outlet. The money earned will become the Principal amount for the future projects so they don't depend on any one for financial support too. The Board has organized a safe and beautiful stall near the octroi post for the center so that they get first platform towards Khushi of self reliance. This is the aim of project Khushi too. The Civil Hospital had given an invitation to our children to have their stall at their hospital and they had kept lunch also for every child and staff.



Recently one of our kids at Disha was cruelly thrown in the chulha (cooking fire) and was half burnt by his mother just because he was asking for food. That day I realized that while we were busy training the kids to comb their own hair, have a bath themselves or eat on their own in order to make them independent and self reliant, a very big chapter in their life was left untouched....i.e. we were not teaching them to cook and in the strata of society where my Disha kids stay, cooking for them is an obvious burden for their parents who are either daily wage workers or who earn very less and so my kids are never on their priority list because they will never be able to give good returns to the family .



I started PROJECT LADDU so that my kids will learn to cook at least simple things themselves and they won't have to depend on anyone at least for their basic needs. With the launch of project Laddu, we have started training the elder kids with better mental abilities to cook poha, upma, sheera, etc. We also have very young kids at Disha, we don't let them anywhere near the gas and fire; we will train them eventually as they grow up. This project solves one more purpose - my kids start from home at 9am for school and go back by 1.30pm so by the time they leave, they used to start crying because of hunger, however now, as we give them the snacks that they cook themselves, they go back home happy n contented.

b. Basic Cleanliness & Hygiene



c. Therapy & Treatment – Surgery, stem cell therapy, etc.



## Call Aastha Helpline



Rescue just a call away, a help line for children in crises 24x7. This is a new beginning indeed for the rural area where the children do not fall under the umbrella of child line India. We have two lines working round the clock with the counselors and an active supportive team with police support and legal support from judiciary bodies of the state. Anyone can call us any time if he/she comes across any child in crises. The problem will be taken care with in minimum span of time and the child will be rescued/ desired help will be provided with the help of skilled workers and concerned administrative departments. We expect cases like child labor, medical problems, atrocity on children, child marriage, child sexual abuse, psychological problems etc. The help line will operate from the main building of Disha.

### 7. Counseling for dyslectic children with follow up



We have detected few cases of dyslectic children in our schools; they were forced to run with the main stream kids and were over stressed due to the psychological behavioral patterns. Our team of counselors and MSW took charge of them and the parent counseling was started. The kids were subjected to different methods of learning and separate sessions are arranged for them. The efforts are also made for slow learners and school drop outs to bring them back into the main stream .The efforts are done with the help of screening of educational films, special materials, lectures and counseling at regular intervals. The no of children getting benefit are 560 approx.

## 8. Awareness drives for the child labors and drug trafficking by children-



We do believe in prevention of mental disability in children. Dehu road has a huge area covered with slums and there are small children who are deeply engaged in trafficking of drugs and are also involved in drug abuse. We have been doing awareness drives with the help of local social workers, mandals and good Samaritans. We recently rescued a 11 year old child who was badly injured because during drug trafficking he was physically abused leading to 3 fractures and multiple injuries. He is sheltered in shivajinagar observation home with the help of Child Welfare Committee. Chronic usage of drugs and alcohol ultimately leads to mental growth retardation so for preventing this deformity we managed to reach the grass root levels of the problems of de addiction and health awareness. Maximum no of children in slums are addicted to gutkha, indigenous alcoholic drinks, ganja and smoking.

An yearly calendar was released in the hands of Brig. Goswami PCB Dehu road & Dr. Vinayak More, Civil Surgeon Pune. The stars who were modeling for the calendar were the sweet n happy kids of Disha. The calendar was highly appreciated in the



## A few Landmark Achievements...

### 1. KUNAL – A humble success

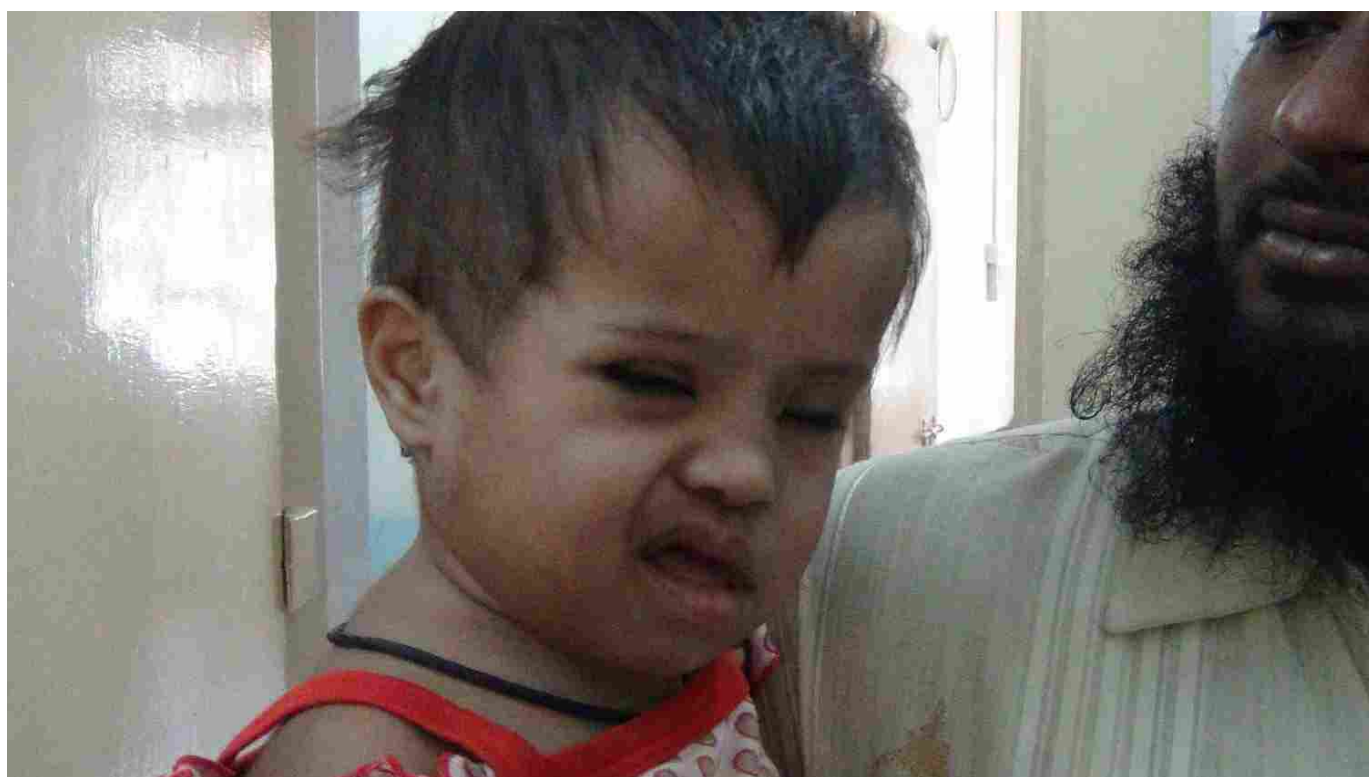


One registered case of Disha was operated upon for heart surgery. Chi. Kunal Mane 5 yrs child was successfully operated on 9/Dec/2012 and is back to the normal health. His photo is attached here with. The funds were arranged by Disha's efforts from state gov.



2. Heart surgery of an orphan child was arranged at free of cost in the B J Medical college. Sunil Waghmare was operated as case of Mitral and tricuspid valve replacement free of cost at the local B J Medical College, Infosys Building Sassoon general Hospital last week and is doing well. He was an orphan child and so we could arrange this surgery through collectors help and Dy. Director Health services also helped us in this case. This was done without putting any financial burden on the board.

3. Two cases of severe malnutrition were detected during a survey; they were not only very serious but had developed crippling diseases due to malnourishment. Disha could arrange for the free hosp stay, treatment and also the wages for the mother who attended the child in the hospital for 20 days.



## Our Celebrations, fun & Happiness...

### Independence Day



WE celebrated Independence Day with all other citizens as normal persons. Our kids had painting competition, Race and lemon race at the center. Every child got a treat from the CEO Mrs. Meenakshi madam and her sister and every child got a small prize as the competition could not be judged between the various mental levels and different disabilities. Kids were given seats in VIP Row at the function organized by Cantonment Board; this is what Disha is teaching them, to live with dignity and respect.





## Rakhi

We celebrated Rakhi with the kids and hospital staff came to tie Rakhi on their tiny hands. Traditional aarti, sweets, rakhi and taking blessings by touching the feet was taught and the kids enjoyed.



## Common Birthday Party

Independence Day



We celebrated common birthday of all the children together. A huge cake was brought, many balloons, whistles, foam machine, sweets and every possible fun we expect in a birthday bash was organized. The usual motive of happiness classes was fulfilled



## Eid & Dussera Celebration

We celebrated Eid and Dassera also in the similar traditional ways. Our kids are of mental retardation and these activities and parents counseling together are doing wonders indeed. Kids who were unable to hold their neck also are showing big signs of improvement. Parents counseling and therapy has practically shown changes in every child. Except 3 all can brush their teeth, toilet trained, can recognize in good touch- bad touch, identify friend and foe, they can eat at their own and tell us the taste now. They share news and learning communication.

## Republic Day



They do not understand the depth or dimensions of the Republic day, but a small picnic, treat and a few games did brighten up their day...I think by making them happy, we did our bit to make our republic state a better place for them...



## Sankranti



In Disha, we celebrated the auspicious occasion of makar sankranti by sharing til-gud sweets with each other. In maharashtra, while giving the sweets we say 'til gud ghyaa ani god god bola' that means take these sweets and let the same sweetness spread around by every word you say, so i thought who could be sweeter than these lovely angels who share n spread their sweetness even through their incomplete fumbling words, even their silent smiles bring alot of happiness to all...



## Krishna Janmashtami celebrations

Our children had lots of fun when they celebrated janmashtami in traditional way. In normal world they are not entertained to enjoy the fun of breaking Dahi pot with enchanting music and frolic. We had a small traditional festival celebration at our hospital garden when kids danced till they were tired. They were given sweets and food.

### Picnic & Outings

a. A multinational company – TIBCO Software India Private Ltd had invited kids from Disha, to their company as a part of their CSR project. They arranged for an exhibition cum sale of the candles prepared by the kids of Disha. Their employees also participated in large numbers by buying a lot of candles & encouraging the kids.



b. The kids of Disha were taken to the Snake Park for observing nature and animals. They had a lot of fun watching them & playing in the park. The Director of Snake Park, Dr. Khaire was with the kids the whole time. He told the kids about the animals & their way of life. It was a fun outing for the kids that they enjoyed a lot.



### What YOU can do...

1. Donate Time - Spend time with the little angels, they love making new friends & treasure the old ones!! Celebrate your special days with them or just come down whenever you want a never-ending smile on your face.
2. Volunteer – take up the task of teaching them some skill that will help them in their daily life or will give them pleasure. Trust me; the happiness you will get out of it will know no bounds...
3. Help – Disha is open for all the differently able kids who need our help. If you find one around you, you can inform us and help us reach out. Families with disabled children are under massive strain because they can't get the support they need locally. Help us change this.
4. Support Shops – A few Kids in Disha have taken a giant leap into the field of entrepreneurship. They have mastered the art of candle making and they set up a stall every time they get a chance on festivals, in exhibitions, etc. They are artists, please support them and do buy their stuff. You will be brightening a lot more than just your home...
5. You can also connect with us through our Facebook Page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/DishaANewBeginning>  
We keep updating it with our new adventures & happenings.
6. Donate material, equipments and books- this will help an underprivileged child to catch up the normal course of life. You can donate toys and learning materials to give them extra byte of happiness.



Disha completed its first year in learning the field of specialization. It was opened with a tiny hope to cater the services to differently able kids but with due course of time we realized that the adults who are differently able and need support and help. We tried to take every helpless differently able person under our wings. Today its a known name in the suburb, a synonym of empathy, support, direction and counseling. We have recorded and released a dvd with nursery rhymes with slow pace for mentally retarded children with similar melody but with Indian accent. This will help the children to enjoy the music. We are in the process to shoot the play where our differently able children are acting as characters of the nursery rhymes.



A few rays of hope clenched in tiny fists who have the vigor to fight the odds and teach life that no matter how bitter the world gets, the sweetness of our souls shall always triumph and achieve a lot of things that others fail to understand and value....our brave little soldiers are a huge source of inspiration to us, they show us that life is way beyond staying ahead of the rat race or of earning heaps of money or going crazy for success...in fact they redefine success, happiness and love for all of us, don't they??

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