MUSKAAN
PARENTS ASSOCIATION FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HANDICAP

ANNUAL REPORT
April’2014- March’2015
The year 2014-15 has been a significant year as Open Employment became a reality for a good number of our students. We have experimented with the success & sustainability and are very confident that with more doors getting opened a number of adults with intellectual disability can find their place outside supported work centres also. But let us remind ourselves that this has been possible only when employers got convinced by observing our young adults working confidently & efficiently in our supported work centre. It is also true that open jobs can become a reality for approximately 20% of our adults with Intellectual Disability and for rest of them we still need Supported work centres or Activity centres. Therefore, we as Parents and Professionals have to continue advocating for both kinds of options & facilities for respective skill training.

Students Development

The highlight of the year was increased involvement of the students in various responsibilities at unit level. There was a significant increase in the production capacities of each unit. This led to a smooth functioning during Diwali time which otherwise would have been a high pressure time. All activity time-tables worked smoothly which helped students gain more exposure, information, skills and confidence.

Many of our students face challenge in communication that leads to frustration and it manifests in emotional and behavioural difficulties. Art centre program gave our students an opportunity to find their niche and meaningful involvement with the work of their interest. We regularly try to find innovative opportunity of expression and work for the students.

At Muskaan, Life Skills training is a very important component of our curriculum. We believe this is the key to leading a life with maximum possible independence (varies from individual to individual). Much of it happens by enhancing their cognitive capacities. We have developed a well-defined curriculum with enough flexibility to accommodate individual needs which keep changing with life stages and situations at home or Muskaan or society at large. During our 26 years of working closely with our students and their families we have learnt that each individual (with or without disability) goes through the same life stages and its needs & demands. Training is these skills has led to better adaptability to their life situations amongst our students.

In April 2014 a team from Lemon Tree Hotels visited Muskaan and expressed interest in training & hiring adults with Down syndrome. After doing the job mapping we conducted a sensitisation of their staff. In May 2014 we started training a batch of five students in their Hotel at Aerocity. We dedicated one senior special educator for this placement and the required follow up. In October 2014 all five were employed by the hotel. In February 2015 a second batch of four students was placed for training in another hotel of the company. This experience has given a great boost to the self esteem of our students and team members. It is important to mention here that it could not have been possible without the support of parents.

Glimpses of events attended by students:

- 4 trainees participated in Weight Lifting Competition and won 4 medals (April’14)
- Our trainees participated in carom competition at Very Special Arts. (Apr’14)
- 10 trainees participated in 500mts and 1km race in state level cycling championship and won 1 gold, 3 silver, 3 bronze, and 3 came at the 5th position. (May’14)
- 15 students and 4 staff members participated in Bocce, soft-ball throw, short-put throw, 50mts and 100mts race at BITS Pilani and won 6 gold, 7 silver and 5 bronze medals. (Sept’14)
• 30 students participated in a mega sports event where they won 6 gold, 13 silver and 2 bronze medals. 4 students came at the 4th and 5th positions each and one came at the 7th position. (Dec’14)
• Animal assisted therapy was initiated for 2 students to enhance their emotional wellbeing. (Jan’15)
• A new batch of 4 was placed at the Lemontree Hotel, Aerocity for on-the-job training. They met with 3 external candidates for placements at the hotel. (Feb’15)
• Animal assisted therapy and one-on-one counselling spread over couple of months for one of the student’s with high emotional need started showing positive results. (Feb’15)
• Structured developmental plans were discussed with 5 families to address issues/concerns which were observed. (Feb’15)
• 7 students went for Akshay utsav organized by Akshay Pratishthan for a music presentation where our students won an award. (March’15)
• Students of stringing unit participated in the painting completion at India Habitat Centre organized by AFA for World Autism day
• Baishakhi was celebrated as Sports day and it was combined with the farewell party of Mrs Ahuja & Mrs Ghoshal, our two senior staff members
• Freshers’ party/ Id ul fitar celebration and jam session were jointly organized by computer unit and flower unit (May’14)
• A summer workshop was organised for two weeks. Ms. Shalini Sinha, a parent cum executive member planned and coordinated all the activities. (May’14)
• Raksha Bandhan was celebrated with in each unit to symbolise the mutual love & respect amongst trainees (Aug’14)
• A Diwali party was organised for students and they were distributed gifts. (Oct’14)
• Celebrated “Disability day” by fun sports event (Dec’14)
• Initiated a new program focusing on safety measures under the “Life skills program” (Jan’15)
• Muskaan students presented a dance at International Inner Wheel meet on Feb 11th
• Very Special Art of India organized a cake decoration & flower jewellery making competition, 4 students participated in this (Feb’15)
• Holi celebrations were done in every unit with gujja and kanji. Gujia was brought by Mrs Dhir
• Soap making workshop was organized in collaboration with Acharya Narendra Dev College, DU for 3 staff members to enhance our current product line.

Report from Dera Residential Facility

Third year of Muskaan’s Residential facility achieved another milestone with respect to giving opportunities to residents to go out of the complex to work. This could be achieved as Muskaan has a vocational training cum work center at Vasant Kunj. Arranging for a transport was the second step, as always parents have been supporting us in establishing the facility and create more opportunities for residents. Mr.S.K. Singla with his friends donated a ECCO van. In February’15 we did a trial for 3 months by sending all the residents to Vasant Kunj center to attend the Vocational training, which proved to be an appropriate decision. This year 8 more resident joined us, now total number of residents is 14 (10 boys and 4 Girls). They are between age group of 30 years to 54 years. Training Sessions are given in a group or individual to take up responsibilities in running the facility so that a sense of ownership can be developed. 6 of the residents have taken responsibilities for Drinking water storage, supervision of cleaning work, meal time responsibilities, kitchen and hospitality. Residents celebrated all the festivals including Janmasthmi and Saraswati puja.
We celebrated Baisakhi at a larger level and invited our funders, partners and people from the community. Monthly Outings to Suraj kund Mela, Funcity, Mall, Lodhi Garden, Mac Donalds, Movie etc were conducted on weekends. In December ’14 all the residents enjoyed 2N/3D trip to Gwalior. Overall, this facility is growing as envisioned by us as a unique model of Assisted Living for persons with Developmental disabilities.

Staff Development

One week during summers every year is dedicated for capacity building workshops. This year a series of sessions were conducted by Executive committee members (Mr. Rakesh Dewan, Ms. Shalini Sinha, Dr. Shanti Auluck, Mr. Brij Chandiramani, Ms. Madhavi). Apart from this, several in-house workshops were organised for capacity building of staff. National Trust AGM, Knowledge workshop, LLC meet and ARUNIM AGM was also attended by few teachers and executive members.

Glimpses of events attended by Staff members:

- Presentations by functions done by 5 teachers/project leaders (Jan’15)
- Training sessions for support staff was conducted by Dr Shanti Auluck on March 26th to inculcate Muskaan values, vision & mission at our residential complex. (March’15)
- 10 staff members attended the National conference on skill development of persons with disability. It was organized by MSJE & MSDE and held in Vigyan Bhawan on March 21st from 10 am onwards. Dr Shanti Auluck presented a paper on the vocational training & employment of PWD in the conference. (March’15)
- A one week capacity building workshops held for staff members in May 2014
- Training sessions for support staff was conducted by Dr Shanti Auluck & Neera Chawla on understanding their students and family circumstances.
- Ms Deepika (Volunteer) took a session on “Montessori Ways of teaching” on Feb 6th with the teaching staff.
- Session on “Data Management software” was conducted by Foresight Innovations on Feb 13th for the office staff.
- A session on “Intellectual disability – new insights & emerging approaches” by Ms Abha Ranjan (Occupational therapist)
- A session on “Powerful alternative therapies” by Dr Manmohan Sharma (Nutrition & wellness expert)
- Two team members attended a session on “Inclusive education” organized by Sarthak
- Under the “Know what your peers do”, Ms Reena, Mr Surender, Mr Akhilesh & Mrs Rashmi, did a short presentation on Feb 2nd, 5th, 12th & 13th.

Programs and Services Update

Family counselling services and Parent training program are two important components of our support services. Thursday has been designated as Family Day at Muskaan when families can meet the counsellors on prior appointment to share their concerns for their child/adult with special needs. Parents from Delhi & NCR and other states visit with their children to seek guidance on the programs being offered at Muskaan. Generally, parents are looking for services for young adults and it is an irony that there are no such services outside Muskaan which cater to life span needs of our young adults. Along with that, there is a regular demand for counselling within Muskaan parents. This year 141 families used services of our counselling centre.
- 42 families registered over the year were called, 26 families attended orientation program for new admissions at Muskaan
- Assessment sessions completed, home visits done for 13 students. All students who underwent assessment went for an outing on 26th Feb at Vasant square mall. Rest of the home visits will be completed in March. (Feb’15)
- Parent training sessions were organized on Feb 23rd & 24th to understand adulthood needs of their wards.
- A joint partnership initiated with St Mary’s school for enhancing their current capabilities & adding a vocational training unit. They visited Muskaan once, followed by Mrs Neera Chawla’s day visit to their school. (Feb’15)
- Interacted with parents at the 6th International rare Disease Day in India at AIIMS on Feb 28th, Muskaan had also put up a stall with their products for sale
- Parent training sessions was organized on March 9th to understand gender related needs and independent living for their wards.
- Our counselling for Down’s Syndrome clinic in AIIMS on 1st Monday of the month & Parents counselling on every Friday (10-1 pm) continued as scheduled.
- Presentation & discussion on “Setting up a private trust” for parents with PWDs on March 30th. It was conducted by Mr Aditya & Mr Ravi Gulati.

Awareness & Advocacy programs

In last few years activities undertaken in this program have increased considerably. More schools, colleges, professional training institutes and corporates are themselves approaching us to sensitize their students and employees. 33 group visits were hosted by Muskaan team during the year 2014-15. Group size ranged from 15-65 persons each. Our product stalls in various venues also serve as a medium of generating awareness about the capacities of persons with Intellectual disability. This year we had put up stalls at 35 venues through which we reached out to 35000 people approximately.

Dr. Shanti Auluck had made several presentations in various seminars and conferences to create better understanding of persons with intellectual disability, their strengths and capabilities. Notable among them are Indian Management Institute, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, Lady Irwin College, and All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Mrs. Neera Chawla also conducted sessions for community workers of Aga Khan Foundation at Akshay Pratishthan. She also participated in various forums discussing and monitoring implementation of Right to Education act organised by AARTH AASTHA.

Muskaan became State Nodal Agency Center for National trust on 8th Aug 2013. SNAC is an arrangement to implement the schemes under National Trust Act. The basic activities of SNAC are awareness generation & coordination between Registered Organizations and National Trust, Parent/sibling & professionals training programmes, strengthening Local Level Committees (LLC), ROs and other NGOs. In financial year of 2014-15 we have conducted three meetings with ROs, LLCs, several meeting with NT and three meeting with DC South & Southwest regarding awareness and legal guardianship. Prepared awareness program and discussed it with NT for physical and financial support. The special focus of these meetings was to develop the plan for Mass Awareness generation through different sources, through schools and colleges in each district, Public offices, hospitals and media.
Muskaan has been functioning as NGO member of Local Level Committee for South-west district of Delhi since 2003. LLC includes NGO member, DC and a person with disability. This year we met 49 families and referred them to appropriate LLCs. Finally 22 applications were received from South-west district of Delhi and 19 legal guardians were appointed. We are also helping the families over telephone about disability certificate, govt schemes, legal guardianship and other related services. We have also started an annual meeting for existing legal guardians of our district. Along with that we also facilitate families to register their wards under Niramaya scheme for health insurance. This year 12 new registrations were done and 36 renewals were made under this scheme. Total 56 Disability Certificate has been issued in through Genetic Clinic of AIIMS on Mondays by Muskaan.

Glimpses of event conducted:

- An awareness stall was put up at Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar and Apeejay School, Shiekh Sarai (July’15)
- Awareness stalls were put up at various schools, colleges, Corporates and banks and we reached out to approximately 30,000 people thro’ this event. (Oct’14)
- Raahgiri was successfully executed on Feb 1st
- Muskaan gave out prizes to students from government senior secondary school, DERA under the awareness campaign on Feb 18th.
- To celebrate World Down syndrome & Autism day, Raahgiri was held on March 22nd at CP followed by mass awareness campaign on March 31st. Volunteers distributed pamphlets etc on major traffic signals from 8 – 11 am.
- Inner Wheel club conducted their annual meet at Muskaan which was attended by Mrs. Sangeeta Bhatia, their District Chairman
- Students from Amity School, Tagore International School and Keshav Mahavidyalaya visited Muskaan for a sensitisation session. (Apr’14)
- Students of St. Marks School and Sri Ram School visited Muskaan in batches for a sensitisation session
- Japanese Volunteer group visited Muskaan to make their new members aware of Muskaan activities (May’14)
- A team of staff members from Nirmal Chhaya visited Muskaan to understand the possibilities of vocational activities (Julu’14)
- A team of employees from Orange, a corporate, visited Muskaan and interacted with the students
- Students of Modern School visited Muskaan for a sensitisation session
- Awareness stalls were put up at at Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Nursery School in Lady Irwin College, Taj Hotel by SOIL students, Apeejay School, Shiekh Sarai, Tagore International, Vasant Vihar and Lemon Tree Hotel, Aero City (Aug’14)
- A team of students & Faculty members from Lady Irwin with few foreign nationals visited Muskaan
- 40 Students of Guidance & Counselling course from NCERT visited Muskaan
- Japanese Women Volunteer Group visited Muskaan (Sept’15)
- Students & teachers from DAV school Vasant Vihar visited Muskaan
• An awareness stall was put up at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, Lodhi Road, Tagore International, Vasant Vihar, Kashida, India International Center, American Embassy, Nirvana Country Club, Gurgaon, Modern School, Vasant Vihar (Dec’15)
• Delegates from University of Western Sydney visited us
• International Outreach Group visited DERA on 21st Jan
• 25 students from Mata Sundari College came for an overview on Feb 3rd.
• Students from Air Force School visited Muskaan of Feb 4th & 11th for awareness. Each group constituted of 40 students.
• Delegates from Hans Foundation visited Muskaan on Feb 18th for an overview.
• Scottish High International School, Gurgaon came on Feb 11th for Main Tendue largely comprising of French nationals came for a visit to DERA on Feb 9th & 18th where they provided supplies for kitchen & cleaning/toiletries.
• Teams from various NGOs visited DERA to understand the functioning of group housing as a concept on Feb 21st sensitizing their students of our work. (Feb’15)
• 15 teachers from St Mary’s school came for an orientation visit to Muskaan on March 23rd.
• Ek Sang, an NGO working within the intellectual disability sector approached Muskaan for understanding how to run an effective vocational training centre & how to train their teachers on March 16th. They were extremely happy see how our systems have evolved over time keeping in mind the importance of “Happiness Index”.
• Dr Shanti Auluck & Mrs Neera Chawla participated in the discussion with Dept for Empowerment of PWD on the national action plan for training & employment for PWD
• 2 ladies from Hyderabad who work as facilitators between the beneficiaries & the service providers came to Muskaan to understand how the gaps can be bridged on March 17th.
• 20 students from Amity School, Pushp Vihar came for a visit to Muskaan on March 30th.
• 40 students from SP Mukherjee College came for a visit to Muskaan on March 17th.
• Approximately 175 Muskaan members (students, families, volunteers etc) participated in 22 traffic lights to spread awareness on Autism and Downs Syndrome on March 31st. It was an extremely successful program and it was felt that we need more of such awareness campaigns to spread the message. (March’15)
• 7 people from Deepshikha foundation came on March 14th to understand Muskaan & DERA’s functioning
• 30 students & staff from GRC of Bhavana came on March 20th for an overview. 5 people from Gwalior also came to see Muskaan on the same day.
• Macquarie global limited had a sale on March 3rd on their premises & later came to Muskaan for a visit on March 16th.
• PHD house had an exhibition celebrating women’s day on March 11th & 12th where we were able to connect with their CSR wing ~150 people. We were also able to connect with NIPCCD, Central warehousing corporation & BHEL for possible associations. Mrs Mridula Sakle drove this entire initiative which led to a networking platform for Muskaan. (March’15)

Others (updates on volunteers, interns & meetings)

Students from schools, colleges and professional institutes keep approaching Muskaan for doing their internship. This demand is increasing day by day. Interns come with educational backgrounds
like Psychology, Human Development, Special Education, Social Work, and various Management fields. At Muskaan, we plan a special program for each one based on objectives of their internship as defined by their parent organisation and sensitisation & awareness of Muskaan’s work in the field of Intellectual Disability. In each case an individual supervisor is appointed from Muskaan team who guides the interns to make it a gainful learning experience for them and in the process ensure their commitment to work during this period. This year we trained 15 interns from Institutes like Lady Irwin College, NMIMS Mumbai, SOIL, IGNOU, AFA, Kamla Nehru College and Lady Shri Ram College.

- Annual Diwali event was inaugurated by Mr. Patu Keswani, Chairman, Lemontree Hotels. The event was well attended by many senior team members from Lemon Tree Hotels and friends of Muskaan (Oct’14)
- A presentation was made at School of Inspired Leadership, Gurgaon, a management school, for their students and four of them chose to intern with Muskaan for a year. (June’14)
- A Meeting was held at DC Office for Legal Guardianship (July’15)
- A Volunteers’ meeting was held to orient all volunteers for Diwali event (Sept’14)
- 9 interns from various prestigious colleges & universities have begun their internship (Oct’14)
- A meeting was held with parents for Legal Guardianship followed by a meeting at DC office
- Preparation of expert committee report on “Asha Kiran
- Meeting with families on legal guardianship & gave guardianship to 8 families
- Executive Committee meeting held on 7th Jan
- 2 sub-committee meetings (EC) held on 22nd & 27th Jan
- Participated in multiple meeting with NDMC for Raahgiri preparation
- Review meeting with DERA staff

- 9 interns from various prestigious colleges & universities have begun their internship
- 10 volunteers from various prestigious colleges & universities have committed their time to us (Jan’15)
- Revived & restructured the parent counselling sessions at AIIMS. Issuance of certificates on every Monday | Down’s Syndrome clinic on 1st Monday | Parents counselling on every Friday (10-1 pm)
- Held 1 meeting with Dept for empowerment of PWD to discuss the linkages between skill training & employability in various industries. The next follow up meeting is scheduled for March
- Transporters, Parents coordinators & staff met on Feb 27th to discuss smooth functioning of transport.
- 4 interns from Narsee Munjhi institute of management studies, Mumbai executed 2 projects. 1 was for marketing & the other was for HR functions. (Feb’15)
- SOIL interns made a presentation on March 18th about the work they did at Muskaan in front of Muskaan faculty members.
- 2 volunteers from DPS vasant kunj & 3 volunteers from Tagore international school started coming to Muskaan from mid-March (March’15)

Report on Chandigarh Project

In July 2010, Muskaan was assigned the responsibility by National Trust to train Kajal, a resident with intellectual disability at Ashreya home, Chandigarh to become self-reliant and to look after her daughter. We have been working through a special educator employed at Chandigarh for this
purpose by preparing the training plans, guiding & facilitating her to implement it in the best possible way. It included continuous interactions with her via phone, email and visits to the project site from time to time. Dr. Shanti Auluck and Mrs. Neera Chawla have been mentoring her in the process. We appreciate the initiatives taken up and efforts put in by Ms. Geeta Bajaj to bring in many changes in the Ashreya Home environment, skill training of residents especially for Kajal and nurturing growth & development of two young children (Pari & Chirag). It has been a great learning experience for us since it further strengthened our faith in capacity building with appropriate training opportunities for the persons with Intellectual disability. This project culminated in December 2014. By that time, Kajal had been employed by Ashreya Home as a helper.