



# Raphael

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Newsletter

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## Chairman's Remarks

Do look closely at the logo: it's been 'tweaked'. It now boasts the name RAPHAEEL and a literal translation in the *Devnagri* (Hindi) script of our mission "the relief of suffering". This should resonate with the people of our State.



The Rehabilitation Workshop is closed. Its activities were driven by the efforts of our two craftsmen employees, the Master Weaver Javed Akhtar and Shiv Gurung, the *diya* (earthen ware wax filled pot) maker: our children with special needs played, at best, a marginal role. Whilst we will continue to make our popular *diyas* every Diwali, the

emphasis is now on vocational training – the imparting of 'life', house-keeping to include cooking and shop-keeping skills. Our small experiment with gardening holds promise. Who knows, with the passage of time, we may even try our hand at rearing goats! Our dream is to build a multi-disciplinary therapeutic centre cum auditorium on the foot print of the existing accommodation.

In the field of Special Education all our off campus activity will fall under the over-arching term 'Out Reach'. Our objectives are limited - sensitise the civil administration; spread awareness about disabilities; identify children with disabilities; counsel care-givers; and disseminate the collated data to service providers. Much though, will depend on the cooperation and support we receive from the state government agencies.

The TB Hospital under our veteran Director, TB Control programme, Colonel (Dr) JP Gupta, is 'chugging along' nicely. A new Cell Counter, LED Microscope and Semi Auto Analyser all donated to us by Garware Bestretch Social Foundation courtesy the ever generous Sunita Garware has added to our efficiency. We are now looking at the possibility of adopting some proactive measures – chemoprophylaxis and the pre-emptive testing of vulnerable members – particularly children and young adults - of the family of persons who test positive for TB.

A concerted effort is being made to improve the accommodation of our 31 residents in life-long care in Shiv Sadan: it is sorely in need of repairs

As always, we remain indebted to our sponsors, supporters and donors – without your trust and assistance we would be able to do nothing – nothing at all.

## Resource Centre

In the month of October, a three-day Continuing



Rehabilitation Education (CRE) Programme on 'Gender and Disability' was conducted at

the Resource Centre. It was attended by 30 Special Educators from Dehradun, Haridwar and Almora. A wide range of topics - discrimination, disability & sexuality, and violence against women with disability – were covered. Care -givers and persons with disabilities also shared their personal perspectives.

## Outreach (OR) Programme

In May, RAPHAEL in collaboration with ALMICO (Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India, Kanpur), organized an artificial limb camp in the Raipur Block in which Cerebral Palsy chairs, walkers and tricycles were distributed.



In July, a disability survey of two new villages in the Dehradun District was conducted to expand our outreach services. Apart from

regular visits by the physiotherapist to the early intervention centres, we had three speech therapy interns assess the children and implement speech therapy programmes.



During this period four camps were held in three outlying districts of Uttarakhand.

Approximately 400 Anganwadi workers, Community Development Programme Officers (CDPO) and Auxiliary Nursing and Midwifery nursing staff (ANM) were introduced to disabilities and their identification. 160 children were assessed and their care-givers provided home based programmes. 19 children were assessed with intellectual abilities and their assessment reports submitted to the concerned District Project Officers for the issue of disability certificates.

## Community Awareness and Exposure



As a part of the community awareness and exposure initiative the children visited a supermarket, railway station, bank and post office. The post office was fun: the children bought envelopes and stamps and then posted letters to their parents in the post box. They found it all quite fascinating.

## Vocational Training - Gardening



Recently, with the help of Brigadier Rajiv Nautiyal, a volunteer, we have begun an experiment at gardening as a form of vocational

training in the school. Ten boys, all carefully selected, were sent on a familiarisation visit to a nursery at the Forest Research Institute. A poly-house has been set up and we have introduced the group to the elements of gardening – the preparation of beds, sowing, watering, weeding, manuring and composting. There is much enthusiasm – as much over their smart blue and red overalls as the gardening bit: we hope it lasts!



## Extra-Curricular Activities

The school bustled with activity during this period. In July the children, singing and dancing, celebrated the festival of *Janamasthami* – the birth of Lord Krishna.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, they celebrated our Independence Day. It began with a flag hoisting by

Brigadier Anil Sinha, the CEO and the singing of the National Anthem. The children had made their own little national flags in their classrooms and proudly waved them during the march past that followed. At the end of the programme they were all given a treat - *laddoos*.

In the months of October and November there was a festive air in Raphael. For Dusshera the school made effigies of the three demons







– Ravan, Meghnath and Kumbhakaran - and burnt them to the ground: a reminder of good triumphing over evil. Three weeks later Diwali – the festival of lights - was celebrated with the children helping in arranging the *diyas* and lighting up the campus – a gorgeous sight that ended with the traditional fireworks display.

## Visits



During this period RAPHAEL has had the privilege of hosting several visits. In July and November, we had groups of students

from local nursing colleges on familiarisation visits and in August-September we had students from local schools promote and participate in inclusive cultural activities. In November a group of students from the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) under the auspices of the Rotaract Club interacted with our children and made a short film of their visit.



This year after the annual familiarisation visit by trainee civil servants from the Lal Bahadur

Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) we were in for a pleasant surprise. In a touching reciprocal gesture, they invited a group of 25 children to the Academy in Mussoorie for a day full of fun – a cricket match, drawing and painting and best of all,



lots of yummy food! By all accounts the children made a good impression on their hosts.

## Children's Day

This is what Jamie McCartney had to say -

Children's Day is celebrated all over India on 14<sup>th</sup> November to commemorate the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru. Students from The Drona International School were invited to join in the celebrations.

A dress rehearsal was held the day before. The children practiced in small groups, marching and waving to 'pretend guests'. Sandeep, one of the residents, was standing on a chair as the imaginary guest of honour. He is a quiet boy with autism and is usually very much in the background. Today though he loved every moment of his fifteen minutes of fame, clapping and squealing with pleasure at the waving groups of children marching past. It was a touching sight to see his utter joy.



The next day, 40 children and staff from the Drona International School arrived, immaculate in their school uniforms. Everyone was divided into teams and was given coloured t-shirts and matching paper flags. The marching began to the sound of the big bass drum. The children waved enthusiastically to the teachers and guests, and then took their places, ready to start the afternoon's activities.

A balloon game was followed by a game with plastic cones and then hitting a stump with a ball. Doctor Peshin was asked to hand out prizes to the winners. This was followed by a Tug of War. First our older students played against the senior Drona school girls, then the younger children of both schools against one another, and then the finale was the Raphael teacher trainees against the Drona school senior





girls. This was a fiercely fought battle. The Drona girls won and there was much celebration, which included selfies and some group photos

before they all got on their bus and headed off!

The day ended with singing, with the teachers accompanying them with the *tabla*, guitar and harmonium. It sounded beautiful and the children, residents and staff clapped and danced to the music.

It was an overwhelmingly emotional moment and I held back the tears feeling very lucky to be part of



something so pure and to be involved in the lives of these extraordinary children.

### Teacher's Day

Teacher's Day is celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> September every year. This year the teachers went off to see a movie and thoroughly enjoyed their day out.

### Achievers

Roopa Adhar, who was at Raphael for eight years, is employed with the Doon Girls School. She began by helping with house-keeping work in the girls' dormitory and is now assisting in the library. A confident young woman she certainly has done us proud.



Ajay Bhandari won the second prize in a dance competition organized by the IVY Memorial school in Dehradun in October 2018. Ajay loves dancing and impressed the

audience with his hip-hop moves. He won a cash prize of Rs 2500 and when asked how he would like to spend the money he said he would have his house painted and buy rations for the family.

### Volunteers

A big thank you to our splendid bunch of volunteers.



Anil Esleben (UK) tip-toed around the hospital – careful to stay out of the Doctor's way - trying to see if a career in medicine was for him. This is

what he had to say “my short 3 weeks in Raphael have proved to be much more than a line on my university applications..... I have experienced a culture central to my upbringing and family.”

Geeta Manohar (Canada) and her daughter Sneha (UK) helped with advice and suggestions on the maintenance of student records and the streamlining of administration in the girls hostel and central kitchen.

Jamie McCartney, on his 8<sup>th</sup> visit to RAPHAEL, conducted very useful classes for the Special Educators in spoken English and said “...hope to be back for the Founders' Day Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in April 2019”.

Familiar faces, Trish Twaits and Johanne Sunnex (Australia), helped in the workshop, packing and disposing of our *diyas*, renewing old friendships and spreading goodwill and affection.

And, on this note the RAPHAEL family would like to wish all a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy 2019.

