

Maitri...

friendship



SOFOSH E-Newsletter
April 1 – June 30, 2014

Heart To Heart

Message from the Chairperson and Managing Committee



Dear Friends

The first of April is a red letter day in the Indian Almanac as it marks the beginning of the new financial year. Facts and figures are compiled and reviewed; plans and budgets for the year ahead are drafted and debated. It is a great challenge for us to expand our resources to support our programmes which serve vulnerable patients, families and children in our society. But over 50 years we have never hesitated to respond to a crisis which has come our way at SOFOSH. We have expanded our range of services which started out as a blood donation drive and addressed many new causes along the way, among them “Shreevatsa” child care center for the family deprived children and “TARA” home for the challenged children.

SOFOSH goes beyond these services to championing social causes such as the stigma against HIV/AIDS patients, deserted single mothers, child rights, and dignity for challenged children, rights of adoptive parents etc. Over the years our Social Workers have organized and participated in forums, workshops, committees and social platforms to support these causes. We have the satisfaction of knowing that we have **MADE A DIFFERENCE!**

This was possible due to the encouragement and contribution of all our well wishers.....

Thank you for being with us!

Shreevatsa



This quarter was filled with fun filled activities for the children at 'Shreevasta' child care center. The children enjoyed their summer vacations. Picnics were organized to the Sambhaji Park, Vartak Udyan and the Empress Garden. A visit to the tribal museum gave the children exposure to the different aspects of the lives of the tribal people.

In house activities included different competitions like block stacking, chocolate unwrapping competitions, dance, shlokas/ poem recitation and fancy dress competitions. All the children participated enthusiastically and amused everyone with their skills. The dolls wedding and the doll house play (bhatukli cha khel) gave them a different experience.

The celebration of Ambedkar Jayanti took place on April 14 and the monthly birthday celebration program of all the children, staff and the adoptive families who visit SOFOSH for the birthday celebrations was held as usual.

A summer camp was organized by Mrs. Petronella Eates and her group of volunteer's between May 5 to 17, 2014. Activities like storytelling, craft, games and play time in the garden were organized. There was a live pottery show which fascinated the children. This helped them to understand how earthen pots were made. A big "thank you" to Mrs. Eates and her "Mitra" group.

Thanks also to the Seva Mitra Mandal (Sukrawar Peth) for organizing a fun filled evening for the children on May 6, 2014. They were given rides on a horse cart and got an opportunity to play in the amusement park set up, like the magic house. The children were served snacks at the end of the evening.

About 7 children got a chance to learn swimming at the Solaris Sports Club between May 18 to 23, 2014. Two volunteers accompanied the children and the staff every day. Initially the children took time to open up and enjoy themselves in the pool. But at the same time, they were seen helping each other while they enjoyed themselves in the water.



All the children were invited for a birthday party in Baner on June 8, 2014. A mini bus was arranged by the host to pick up and drop the children. Upon reaching the venue, the children received a warm welcome. They danced to the music along with the birthday girl Sara, enjoyed playing with the balloons and the Mickey Mouse at the venue and loved the tattoos that were drawn for them. Having their dinner on the terrace on a moon lit night was a special experience for the children. All of them had dinner gazing at the stars and moon. They came home to Shreevasta with stars of joy shining in their eyes!



Tara

Home for Challenged Children



TARA's 6th anniversary was celebrated on May 14, 2014. The centre was decorated for the celebration and the children were wearing new clothes for the occasion. The celebrations started with the welcome song and dance by the children from St. Ursula's. This was followed by the cake cutting. Mrs. Madhuri Abhyankar then addressed the guests and the audience and felicitated Sister Silvie and Sister Veena. The children presented their dance skills on different songs while our children Arti and Snehal sang songs and entertained the

audience. The staff at TARA also enthusiastically presented a dance. Cake and ice – cream were served to everyone present for the celebrations. All the children, staff and the guests from St. Ursula's enjoyed the birthday.

On the 3rd of June the children visited the Snake Park at Pimpri Chinchwad. Aarti, Snehal, Aditya, Athang, Kedar, and Sawari enjoyed this picnic to their hearts content. They were very excited to see the birds and animals. Later they played on the slides and swings, feasted on sandwich and frooty. The glee on their faces was worth watching!



Six children from TARA – (Athang, Sawari,



Kedar, Anamika, Shrutika and Gopal) have started visiting Bal Kalyan Sanstha for recreation. This beautiful centre provides various kinds of recreation facilities to special children from all over the city. Their buses ply to all places to carry children to and from their schools to the center, a wonderful service to children with special needs.

Foster Care:-

SOFOSH Foster Family Care Programme has provided countless children with family care when they had lost their birth family.



Currently six foster mothers continue to take care of children in their homes providing care to 13 children, 3 of whom are above 5 years of age. Staying in a family provides the children individualized care and helps them learn family concepts.

A session on immunization was held at SOFOSH for foster care mothers on 10th April, 2014. It was conducted by Dr Mona of SOFOSH, who gave a lecture on the importance of immunization. She explained the consequences of improper immunization and the dangerous consequences of neglecting the proper schedule.

She further described the need to strengthen the immune system of children who are prone to falling ill frequently in order to protect them from the smallest to the deadliest kind of infections and diseases. Such sessions not only inform foster mothers about how to take care of children but also boost their confidence about their ability to handle the children properly and look after their needs on their own. A child's entire future depends on the mother, having her well informed and dependable is the best foundation for the child's healthy and happy future. SOFOSH'S foster mothers are well trained and experienced in child care.



Stories/ Experiences:

Unwed motherhood does not have social acceptance in India. Most unwed mothers relinquish the custody of a child born out of wedlock. At SOFOSH we explore all options to keep birth mother and child together if it is in the best interest of the child.

A 23 yrs old pregnant girl approached SOFOSH for help along with her grandmother and the birthfather. She was about 7 months pregnant. She was in love with a childhood friend and from their relationship she conceived a child. Upon talking to her, the social worker realized that only her grandmother and younger sister were aware of her pregnancy. They kept it a secret from the rest of the family. So they decided to arrange for the birthmother's temporary stay in Pune until her delivery and then relinquish the child and get her married thereafter. Accordingly she stayed in Pune until her delivery under the pretext of pursuing a study course. Eventually she delivered a baby boy. The birthparents seemed to change their mind after the birth of their baby and they expressed their desire to take responsibility for their baby. It was important to talk to their respective families. The social worker called the birthfather's parents and the birthmother's mother. The facts were shared with them and after some counseling they too expressed their desire to take responsibility for the baby. They agreed to get the birthparents married to each other. The birthparents got married on June 07, 2014 in the court. The child was restored to the birth family on June 12, 2014 after completing all the relevant legal formalities. It was indeed an overwhelming experience to see how a baby brought two families together and built new relationships



Adoption

During this quarter, the highlight of the adoption programme has been the placement of 2 older children in to adoption to local families. A six year old male child was placed in an army family who are from Kerala. The adjustment was difficult due to the vast language difference. But the efforts of the family are worth appreciating. He is now not only understanding what the parents say but has also started communicating in small sentences in Malayalam. The family is very happy with this newly created relationship, which has taught us that the language of love is universal.

Another 5 year old boy was placed in a local Maharashtrian family. The couple visited him every day to get to know him. As both were working parents and still had a few days left before the adoptive mother could avail of adoption leave, they had fixed a particular day to take home their son. But he got so attached to them that he would cry when they left for the day. The family readjusted their schedules and took him home and they are all happy with this decision.

A total of 29 children were placed in adoption in the last 3 months (April to June 2014) of these 19 children went to local families.



Pre – adoption meeting:

A pre – adoption meeting was organized on June 19, 2014 between 10 am and 4 pm. About 22 prospective adoptive parents were present. The meeting started with an orientation about the services offered by SOFOSH and Tara followed by the introduction of the staff members. Thereafter sessions on different aspects of adoption were conducted by different staff members through the day. Covering issues like the process of adoption, health evaluation and care of the children at SOFOSH, preparation for adoption etc.

Laurels!! –

Atharva Bakshi, studying in 9th std. was adopted from SOFOSH when very young. He stood first in the city and third in the sub junior group across the State of Maharashtra in the State level Carom competition held by the Maharashtra State Carom association in Mumbai. Very soon Atharva will play at the National Level event scheduled at Banaras. Well done Atharva and wish you all the best!!

Manisha Cooper, now aged about 23 years, adopted into the Cooper family, is today the brand ambassador of their engineering business. Manisha completed her business studies from the Sterling University at Scotland and she returned to India to join her family business. Her parents feel so proud that today she travels across the country holding press conferences and dealer meets! Her profile was covered by the Satara edition of “Sakal”. She believes that when given the right opportunities women can soar to great heights in any field. We are proud of you Manisha!!

Patient Support Services

A) Nutrition Clinic and Health Education Center:

Nutrition Clinic:

Information about the Nutrition Clinic was shared with the patients of the TB and the pediatric ward and 7 new patients were registered for the Nutrition Clinic.



Statistics:

A total of 63 patients were served by the Nutrition Clinic this quarter.

Programs conducted during the quarter:

Programs and talks were organized for the patients and their relatives during this quarter relating to:

- a) **Health care measures during summers and monsoons and preventive measures against illnesses:** This session was organized by the students of CYDA, Pune University, along with SOFOSH.



b) Family planning, Birth Control and Immunization:

A detailed talk on the different family planning and birth control measures as well as the importance of immunizing the child with different immunizations till the age of 5 yrs was given.

B) International Thalassaemia Day:

May 08, 2014 was celebrated as International Thalassaemia Day. A fun filled program was organized by SOFOSH and Sassoon Hospital's pediatric ward for the children. About 60 children and their parents participated in the program. A drawing competition, magic show and different fun games were organized for the children on the occasion by an NGO called "Mitra". The gifts were organized jointly by SOFOSH, Mitra, Dhyaas Social Foundation, Charitra Foundation and Win Club.

Dr. Arti Kinikar (Thalassaemia Unit in – charge) briefed the parents about Thalassaemia and Dr. Sandhya Khadse (HOD, pediatrics department) briefed the audience about the care of the patients who are suffering from Thalassaemia Major.

A parent who was referred to the Ruby Hall Hospital for bone marrow transplant of their child diagnosed with Thalassaemia shared her experience with the audience. The treatment had proved fruitful for their child and he did not require any blood transfusion thereafter. Another parent shared the experience of going through an antenatal check up for Thalassaemia in case of their second child.

Dr. Kinikar, Dr. Khadse, members of the Nafisa Kakajiwala Winclub, staff of the Dhyaas Foundation, Mrs. Madhuri Abhyankar and social workers of SOFOSH were present for the program.



Statistics for the Thalassemia unit:

Total patients	237
Play therapy given to	180
Counseling for investigation for iron chelation therapy	150
Investigated for Sr. ferrition	66
Counseling to relatives regarding the treatment, the side effects and the follow up investigation	26
Orientation about the Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayini Yojana	100
Submission of the form for the Rajiv Gandhi Yojana	20

Special counseling sessions for pediatric patients:

G.B.S – Guilin Barry Syndrome	2 patients
Cancer	2 patients
NRC – Nutrition Rehabilitation Center	20 patients

C) Milk bank:

Sassoon Hospital started the Human Milk Bank last year, a unique initiative to support the survival of underweight infants who are deprived of mother's milk. SOFOSH started counseling sessions for the patients from the last month. The statistics are as follows:

Number of mothers capable of donating milk	475
Number of mothers covered under the counseling program	280
Number of mothers who donated milk	119

Due to counseling the response from lactating mothers has been really encouraging, offering a life line to frail neo-nates who are deprived of their own mother's milk.

A Case of assistance to a Burns patient:

23 years old Suresh was working in the kitchen of a private hotel, when he got burnt with hot cooking oil. His employer rushed him to Sassoon Hospital for treatment where it was found that he had 40% burns. He was an Orphan child brought up in the Boys Remand Home. He had no family. He had studied up to 8th standard in the school. Then he took up this job with a caterer.

SOFOSH Social Worker gave full support to Suresh through his lonely ordeal. He required intensive counseling, emotional support as well as material support by way of Nutrition and Medicine for his treatment. SOFOSH organized assistance for his care while he was hospitalized to help him with hygiene, bathing etc. He required a great deal of encouragement, needed to ventilate his feelings of loneliness, isolation and fear. Finally with active interaction from SOFOSH Social Workers, he came to terms with his feelings and was helped to plan his future. He walked out of the Sassoon Burns Ward with a new found confidence and he is doing well now, with active support from his employer.



A Case of assistance to a Cancer Patient:

Geeta, an 11 year old child from a village near Ahmednagar, came from very poor economic background. Her father expired and her mother struggled as a daily wage earner, bringing up her 3 school going children. As Geeta had severe abdominal pain, she was referred for treatment to Sassoon Hospital and found to have an abdomen tumor.

She was operated at Sassoon Hospital and SOFOSH Social Worker was called for assistance. They gave emotional support to Geeta and her grandmother, who had accompanied her to Pune. The Social Worker helped them to ventilate and accept their feelings of despair and fear. They received much needed warmth and empathy and were explained about Geeta's condition and the Chemo Therapy Treatment.

Geeta received full support to pay for investigations and Chemotherapy. She was given toys and books for recreation during her time at Sassoon Hospital. Timely treatment has given Geeta a new lease of life.



Conclusion:

We sincerely thank those of you have enabled us to reach out in times of crisis to all patients whom we serve. It was only possible because of your helping hand!

SOFOSH: The Society Of Friends Of Sassoon Hospitals

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SOFOSH's services are entirely supported by voluntary donations and sponsorship by individuals and organizations. Donations to SOFOSH are exempted from income tax under Section 80G and 35AC of the IT Act 2000.

Donation cheques may be made in favor of 'SOFOSH'.