

# Roshni

Reaching Out to Serve Humanity with New Initiative

## About Prabhat

The Prabhat Education Foundation reflects a journey that began in 2003 through the identification and nurturing of children with learning difficulties struggling in mainstream schools. In time, Realizing the need for education and learning of this group and particularly of children, Prabhat conceptualized an institutional facility to provide systematic learning and rehabilitation services that could be accessible for those challenged by poverty and mobility. Working with and through local communities is Prabhat's hallmark.

What started as a modest beginning, with one child in 2007, has now reached to 3000 persons with special needs in Ahmedabad as well as to their families, neighbours and communities.

### An experience

Progressive disabilities are very hard to deal with. Ankit Shah a 15 year old who was losing his vision little by little, did not let that get him down. The only child to his parents, they tried to reach out to different doctors, who had the same things to say, that he would need a complex surgery or will lose vision completely, disheartened as they could not afford to pay for the surgery, they kept him busy on their vegetable cart. Due to meagre income they could not send him to school either.

During a survey conducted by Prabhat in 2015, the team met Ankit, he was with his parents sitting on the cart and bagging some vegetables for a customer. The team started talking to the parents and kept observing Ankit, on close check they figured out his vision problems. They started talking to him and realized he was very sharp in his thoughts and quick with his responses. The parents were asked to visit Prabhat. A complete physical and intellectual assessment of Ankit was conducted at the Centre, which proved that his IQ level was at par, but because he had not had any formal education there were obvious gaps. The team then decided to seek his admission in a regular school. But before that we had to prepare him with basic academic learning and some life skills. He came to the Centre regularly for a couple of months. Simultaneously we started talking to one of the schools which was close to his residence. The school initially was a little hesitant, but when heard that Prabhat would provide remedial classes for him after school they agreed. A series of sensitization workshops were conducted with the school staff and also the children. At the Centre, we started with basic academics like making standing lines, alphabets, numbers, etc. at the Centre it did not take him long to catch up. Ankit is sensitive, calm and disciplined. He was finally admitted into the school in grade 3. He was shy and nervous at first, but the joy of sitting with other children and learning with them was exciting for him.

Today if you ask Ankit what he likes most about his school, he happily quips "Learning so many new things, especially math, because I can help my parents, by doing calculations fast when a customer is at the cart. I also like the laughs which I hear all over the school during lunch time". He is now in grade 6 and studies math, science, English, Gujarati and Hindi and also helps out his parents at the vegetable cart.

The School Principal says "if this bright child would not have joined the school with the help of Prabhat, he would have wasted away his childhood doing odd jobs.

Hardik Chavda  
Special Educator



A hero is ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure despite overwhelming obstacles.

-Christopher Reeve

Today we share with you the story of Rekha, who always has a packed day with tailoring work, managing the milk and vegetable stall along with looking over her 2 naughty kids. Her day starts with giving instructions to everyone around in the house to get everything done systematically and on time! Last month when Prabhat organized awareness workshops on menstruation, we called Rekhaben first to find out whether these camps were doable, her instant reply was, that it was the need of the hour and has to be done in as many areas as possible. She got down to work, going door to door to tell people and asking them to join in, her calliper or crutch never stops her from walking in the narrow and uneven gullies in the community. She was instrumental in getting a good number of women for the workshops. Now whenever she gets time she does some follow up work with them.

Any new government scheme that comes for those with disabilities, she creates awareness in the community about it, she helps Prabhat in filling out forms, gathering required information for the beneficiaries. She is a strong community level support and an ambassador for Prabhat. We are so motivated seeing her strong will and her perseverance.

By: Kishore Vaghela  
Special Educator



**Awareness workshop:** Early Intervention for Children with Special Needs is essential, so that targeted care and rehabilitation can be provided sooner, which in most cases results in better development both physical and mental. Towards this Prabhat conducts regular workshops for people/members working in the community providing strong linkages. As things work towards normal, Prabhat is also picking up where we left off. Series of awareness and sensitization workshop have begun for anganwadi and social workers, who further help Prabhat to increase the reach. The workshops include sensitization on various forms of disability and training on some basic principles on identifying children with special needs. In February Prabhat reached out to almost 100 anganwadi and social workers.

**Survey:** The team has started the survey for identification of children with disabilities in new areas within the Vatva ward. 34 children with various disabilities have been identified. Awareness material has been circulated and further steps on counselling and rehabilitation will be conducted after a follow up.

**A book on change:** Riverside has always been a steady partner and supporter for Prabhat, the Buddy Interaction initiative even after 11 years does not stop from surprising us! Every year a new batch of students from Grade 7 who become a part of the initiative come up with such innovative ways to express their gratitude and warmth for the children of Prabhat. This year the batch took it up several notches, they compiled a book called 'Similarly Different', which encapsulates beautiful different stories/poems of change that have taken place in the lives of the students from Riverside School after having interacted and spent time with Prabhat's children. We thank the grade 7 students for such a heart-warming gift! Prabhat organized a book lunch for the same, few parents and children were invited to the Centre to be a part of the celebration. The book is available on Prabhat's website.

**Specialised Therapy:** Prabhat had the opportunity of partnering with Dr. Jaini Damani, pursuing her Masters in Physiotherapy (focussing on Neurological and Psychosomatic disorders). The focus of her research was to find out the effectiveness of standardized walking obstacle course (SWOC) in children with downs syndrome". She conducted therapeutic intervention in physiotherapy for improving Gait, Locomotion, and Balance in Downs Syndrome. She worked with 45 children of Prabhat having Downs Syndrome over a period of one month. Her detailed research analysis would be submitted by the year end. These specialised services help Prabhat to provide qualitative improvements in the lives of children with special needs.

**Animal assisted therapy:** Prabhat's association with Qi to Happiness (Sugar Rush Outdoors) has been revived and they are equally excited to get back to Animal Assisted Therapy with Prabhat's children. The therapy is planned to being in April 2021, before that the team from Qi are acclimatising the dogs they use for therapy to the Centre and nearby areas. They have also taken this opportunity to let the dogs and the expert interact with the parents and the staff of Prabhat, so that they are all comfortable once the sessions begin.

**Assistive services:** Assistive services are an integral part of Prabhat's outreach to children and people with challenges. This intervention includes assistance in procuring essential documents like medical certificates, identification documents, ration cards, benefits of various government schemes for health and travel. In February Prabhat's CBR team assisted 35 people in getting their state transport passes, 7 people were assisted for applying for aids and appliances and 43 forms were filled for UDID.

**Learning continues:** The school program team have started offline sessions with children who are a part of the Resource rooms (children from Prabhat who have been mainstreamed). As Prabhat works with over 25 schools in the community, the team tries to cover 2 schools every day, meeting over 30 children in a month. Each session is scheduled for two hours where a new topic is introduced and assignments based on it are given. The previous session's assignments are also looked over and queries answered. Parents are encouraged to be a part of these sessions, as at home rigour is also an important part to bridge any learning gap which may have occurred. All covid-19 protocols are in place when the students are called for these sessions. This month the team met 20 children from 3 different schools.

**Interesting partnership:** A 12<sup>th</sup> grade student of Mahatma Gandhi International School (MGIS) is conducting a series of events which is a culmination of various art forms over the course of 5 weeks. Ajay selected Prabhat to be a Charity partner for the show. All proceeds from the event named 'Shukan' will be donated to Prabhat. It is very interesting and heart warming to see young adults being so attuned to social needs of the society and providing avenues to strengthen the ground level efforts.

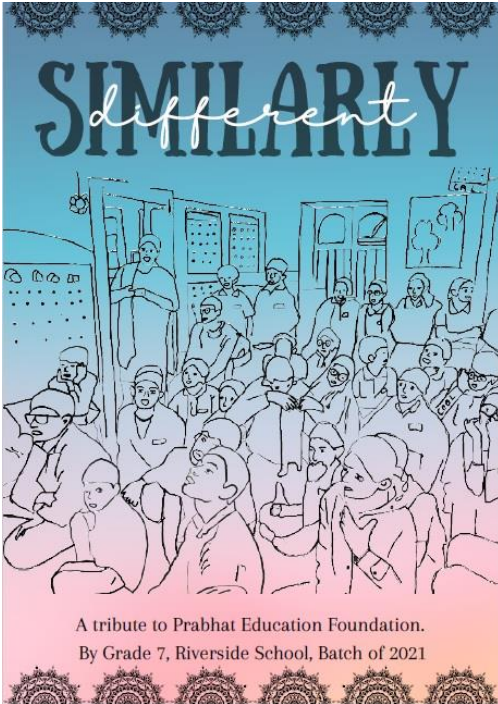
**A Meet and Greet:** A virtual meet and greet for our long-time volunteers Denise and Robert Davis was organized in February. They have been a part of Prabhat for almost 2 years. The idea of the webinar was to understand their perception of Prabhat's work and also the similarity and differences of the lives of those with special needs in India and United State of America. It was a very interactive session where they discussed their roles at Prabhat and their experience in the US.

**Visit:** Ms. Ila Patel, ex prof. of IRMA and a supporter of Prabhat, visited the office for a discussion on the impact of the lockdown and the way forward. Her experience will help Prabhat chart out its further course of action based on the changes the covid-19 has brought about. Regular discussions with sector expert have helped in capacity building of the organization.





## Snap-shot of the month



A gift from our Riverside Grade 7 students



Training with anganwadi workers



Specialised therapy for Down syndrome children



Acclimatising the therapy dogs to the space at the Centre

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