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# Roshni

A monthly newsletter by Prabhat Education Foundation

## 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

Sunny lives in the industrial belt of Ahmedabad. He was born with an orthopedic disability because of which he had never attended any school. Sunny was identified by Prabhat through a door-to-door survey. His parents work hard and want their child to have an opportunity of learning like other children, but they had no idea that Sunny could join a regular mainstream school and they said they could not afford any specialized institution. We asked his parents to bring him to the Prabhat Centre for rehabilitation services which includes therapy and learning. In almost 3 months Sunny was ready to join a mainstream school! A quick learner and very calm and patient. Prabhat got his admission in Sun English School, which is close to his home and this is also where Prabhat has been closely working for a few years and several children with disability are now studying there. His parents were concerned about him being bullied and teased, we made them visit the school and talk to the students and teachers there. They also got witness how other children with more severe disabilities were being treated at the school and they were very satisfied and happy. Sunny joined the school in grade 5, we provided him with remedial classes after school, to bring him up to speed with his regular curriculum, especially with English, math and science. He is now in grade 8. His parents are very happy and are looking forward to a bright future for their son. Curriculum based assistance was challenging for us as well, especially certain topics. Me and my colleague Keyur started reading up from various websites to first understand the topic and then started developing easy to understand material for all Prabhat children attending mainstream schools. On weekends we use to send assignments over phone to Sunny and also the other children who have been mainstreamed, so that we could help them bridge that gap, we never realized an off-shoot technique we used to bring these children at pace with their academic learning, would actually become a formalized form of education during this pandemic! Sunny enjoys drawing and painting. In a school competition, he won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, he immediately came and said "sir, thank you, because you always encouraged me to draw and colour, I have been able to win this prize today". While giving the award the Principal of the School commended Sunny for his efforts not only in art but in his academic performance as well. The pandemic took a toll on Sunny who started showing signs of depression through his irritability. He would always talk about wanting to go back to school and meet his friends, we were counselling him on a regular basis and started giving him small assignments like - to spread awareness in his neighbourhood, regarding corona virus and precautions to take. These activities along with academic assignments kept his spirit up. He is one of the first to submit all his assignments. Seeing Sunny's progress off late, despite the lockdown, the Principal of his school presents him as a fine example to other students. It gives us immense joy to see him grow so well and we look forward to his bright future, where he is financially independent.

**By: Hardik Chavda**  
Special Educator

Today's post we are doing something different – inspiring nevertheless. Today we honour those who have played the role of a mother in the life of a special needs child. Today we honour those who have stepped up to be their primary caregivers.

Ever since the day I found out I would become a grandmother, I was overjoyed. My little one, was going to have his little one. Nine months later, I held baby Ali in my hands and felt so fulfilled. It was at the three-month mark when he went into an epileptic shock. The attack left him with nerve blockages and a compromised brain.

For a long time, I prayed to GOD each day to make my grandchild just like other normal children. He looked just like normal children, walked just like them, ate just like them. But, he banged his head against the wall sometimes, would get uncomfortable around people and took a long time to learn his ABC's.

From the start, I was his main caretaker. My son and daughter in law never truly understood the care a special needs child requires. They could not understand his tantrums, his behavioral problems, and his developmental issues. I would spend my entire day taking care of him and then some. My friends always used to blame my daughter in law for birthing such a child, some even thought I made up his disability so I could get money from my son for Ali's medicines. But I never let these comments bother me.

Our family dynamic was far from ideal. As Ali grew older and older and as his developmental problems increased, the atmosphere in our home grew tense. My son would sit and talk to his older one about his day, and expect the same from Ali. My daughter in law would ask her elder son for help with groceries and expect the same from Ali. They would grow frustrated when they would realise he was not the same.

Soon, my husband and I moved away with Ali...

At my age, one looks forward to spending time with one's spouse and one self. To be rid of responsibilities of the youth as the child now takes care of the parent. But for me, I was a mother again. And a child, meant financial responsibility. A responsibility I had not prepared for but nonetheless ready to embrace.

So we started small. My husband started driving auto rickshaws and we started earning our daily livelihood. It was difficult. Some days there was barely enough for one meal and some days, not even that. But our priority was always Ali. The doctor had emphasised the importance of nutrition for the sake of Ali's improvement.

So now my days consist of taking care of Ali who is growing up too fast. We go to Prabhat together in his grandfather's auto rickshaw. Sometimes I stick around with him. I stick around to speak with other struggling mothers who often look up to me. I counsel mothers who have children with debilitating conditions that may never recover. I count my stars each day that my Ali can walk and eat on his own.

I think life throws a lot at us. We all have a picture-perfect idea of our lives, but almost always, it never goes to plan. So that is not in your control. But what is in your control is how you respond to that situation.

Whether you take it in your stride, or whether you let it tear you down. Take it from a new mother at 66, life and it's surprises are a beautiful beautiful thing.

**By: Yamini Mehra**  
Volunteer



**Online education:** This month as we all enjoy the monsoon season, the academic learning conducted was also surrounding monsoons. Starting from how to dress for the season, how to protect ourselves from all monsoon related health issues, seasonal fruits and vegetables to eat during this season. The story of independence was also shared with the children, a drawing competition for the same was conducted. Another interesting topic that was touched upon was understanding a family tree.

**Door to door survey:** a door-to-door survey conducted in August helped identify 18 children with special needs in the Shah-E-wadi area. This required immediate and urgent intervention.

**Reigniting old methods:** Prabhat has started adopting the dehlu concept in a large way post covid, as the situation is still volatile. The dehlu aims to provide some normalcy in the lives of the children it serves. The new dehlu at Shah-E-wadi provided academic learning through play, pre-vocational training along with all forms of therapy, focusing on physiotherapy. The team is trying hard to fill in the growth gap which has occurred due to the pandemic.

**Celebrated sibling hood:** The children at Prabhat look forward to festival celebrations and Prabhat takes this as an opportunity to teach valuable lessons to the children. This month Rakhi was celebrated with great fervour and joy.

**A day out with a 'man's best friend':** Prabhat is gradually trying to revive all old networks, especially those who provided unique opportunities of learning and therapy. One such wonderful intervention was the Animal assisted therapy with Qi to happiness. This month they were kind enough to host our children at a fancy hotel in the city and present them with a day full of fun and off course their wonderful therapy dogs were a part of it. The children enjoyed their day out with their loving, loyal 4-legged friends.

**Assistive services:** To provide for some semblance of normalcy in the lives of those with special needs the facilitation of assistive services is very essential. This month the field team has been able to provide- medical certificate – 5, UDID-15, ST pass-29, aids and appliance scheme- 21, pension yojna – 56.

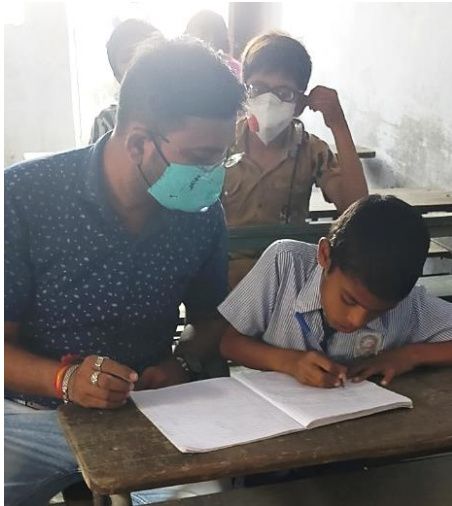
**Vocational aids distribution:** The pandemic has hit all of us, it has been very difficult especially for those living in urban slums and more so for those with special needs. Prabhat had realized the urgency of providing for vocational aids since last month, thus resources were put together and well-wishers reached out to, to provide for these needs. Prabhat is happy to announce that we have been able to provide for 31 beneficiaries. They were distributed different types of lari (carts) and sewing machines.

**Towards better health for all:** For all those who have been following our update, must know Prabhat has partnered with Oowamniya to conduct a series of workshops and health awareness camps in the community, focusing more on women and young girls. The organization has been striving towards spreading awareness on menstrual hygiene and related topics. Saathi an organization making eco-friendly sanitary pads have also partnered with Prabhat for distribution of free samples in the community.

**Working towards Early identification:** Prabhat has always stressed upon the importance of early identification of disability and providing the rehabilitation course from then on. This has had proven benefits on the overall development of a child. Towards this Prabhat regularly collaborates with aanganwadis to train them on various forms of disability and on identification of the same. This month Prabhat networked to build partnership with 5 anagwandi in the Shah-E-wadi area.



## Snap-shot of the month



Sunny in one of his remedial class



Oh the joy of meeting their old, trusted friend!!



Getting ready to get her aadhar card!



Therapy in session by our in-house expert



Children enjoying a session at the Shah-E-wadi dehlu