

•: Help the Blind •: Foundation

VISION FOR LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

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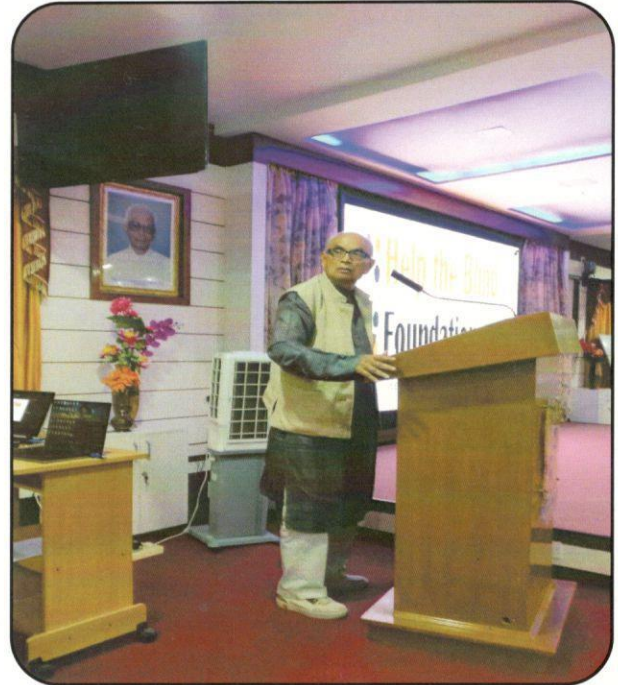
Annual Meet 2017

The annual meet of volunteers and well-wishers of HTBF was organised in Chennai on the 25th & 26th of November 2017. Some of the key issues discussed included new ways of helping the V I students like providing them with assisted devices, getting scribes for their exams and revising procedures for processing scholarships more effectively.

The meet was addressed among others by our Founder Trustee

Mr D K Patel, and

Rev. Dr. M. Arockiasamy Xavier, S.J., Principal, Loyola College. Our foundation has had a long association with Loyola College. It was the first institution, where in 2010, HTBF started providing scholarships to 9 visually impaired students for their university studies. Loyola college has also been providing venue and other amenities free of cost for our Annual Meet every year.



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HELP THE BLIND FOUNDATION

New No 50/5 Old No 69/5, Bazullah Road, T.Nagar, Chennai – 600017, Phone : 9003330197, & Volunteer HTBF

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It was decided during the Annual Meet that the year 2018 be designated as “Jobs for our Students” and all efforts made to explore avenues for getting jobs for as many of our graduating students as possible by providing them, where necessary, job oriented skills to make them employable.

Thanks to the efforts of Mr Nataraj, one of the Volunteers, “ Majestic Exports” a garment manufacturer donated 5000 T-Shirts to be distributed to our students and volunteers so as to spread the message of HTBF around.

Meet Ms RajniChouhan, our Volunteer at Lucknow, a Lady for whom Challenges are child's Play

MsRajniChouhan, HTBF Volunteer at Lucknow is a lady who has braved several challenges in her life. Affected by polio immediately after birth, one of her legs stopped growing and she had problem in walking. Thanks to her mother, she had medical attention and has been able to attend to her duties all by herself. She started helping the deaf and mute children with Sign Language education. She runs an NGO with the name SampurnaSamarpan Foundation which has signed an MOU with Mahindra Coaching for helping the deaf and mute students for competitive examinations. Thanks to these coaching efforts, 2-3 students of hers have already got government jobs.

In 2014, she joined Dr. Shakuntala Mishra University as a sign language interpreter and has been working in the Commerce Department. In the evenings after returning from her work in the University, she helps the deaf and the mute students for their competitive examinations.

In 2017, she joined HELP THE BLIND FOUNDATION (HTBF) as a volunteer in Lucknow and helps visually impaired students in colleges get the scholarship from HTBF. She continues to work as a sign Language Interpreter in the University as well as helping the deaf and mute students for their competitive exams in the evenings.

Truly, Rajni wears many hats – all for the benefit of the physically challenged- and wears them effortlessly and brings happiness in their lives.

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Importance of Employment for VI youngsters

It was January 1, this year. I was coming out of the Prayer Service at the Cathedral in Vijayawada and a voice from behind caught my attention. "Ayyagaru (Sir), I am taking treatment help me!". There was an elderly woman asking for alms. I was shocked to see Lakshmi who was visually challenged, standing beside her. I knew that she was a student of B.A Course in SRR College, Vijayawada. It is then that I realised that to Lakshmi and other such persons with disabilities struck with extreme poverty, it would not be sufficient only to support their studies... what about their life after that? What is a degree after all, if it does not help get a job and decent income to lead a respectful life?

I wondered if we could find a solution to this problem. I thought that as a lecturer, I could help them by enhancing their technical computer skills. Such training could be an added asset for computer knowledge has become 'a must' for all kinds of jobs and would be a good supplement to the financial assistance given. Students with visual impairments could find a livelihood through such skills and have a self-sustained decent life.

I also became aware of so many other realities from a meeting organised by Enable India in Bangalore during Dec 14-16, 2017 in which one of our Trustees Sri Sivaji Rao and 36 others who are leaders in visual impairment sector attended. During this consultative meeting, I learnt that the persons with visual impairments, are employed in corporate sector in large scale. The type of jobs emerging are not just the conventional

ones but specialised ones like, Fire-fighting auditor in a software firm, Spam detector in an email provider, Implementing engineers and so on. All these jobs in corporate sectors require persons with good communication and interpersonal skills to work in a group. In fact, Enable India provides nine month-long trainings on these skills for persons with visual impairments and helps get the trainees placed in corporate sector. Another point which received significance for discussion in this meeting was that HR personnel of various employers must be made aware of the assistive devices that could transform the lives of persons with visual impairments.

Perhaps this model can be implemented in educational institutions wherein skill enhancement training can supplement the Degree Programme or soon after the Degree programme. It is also equally important to bring in a lot of sensitisation initiatives to highlight the abilities of PWDs. I strongly believe that the Volunteers and Trustees of HTBF can bring substantial change in society through sensitisation initiatives. Sharing of such knowledge by the members of HTBF acquired through rich experiences in Banking and financial services, would be a high motivating factor for younger generations. I feel privileged to be a volunteer of HTBF and be a part of their great mission.

Dr.G. Sahaya Baskaran,

Coordinator, Higher Education for Persons with
Special Needs (HEPSN)
Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada

We have moved

to a more spacious office Kindly note the change of Address

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The volunteers took time off from the scholarship distribution work to come to Chennai to attend the Annual Meet and returned to their places to continue their work of the scholarship and Laptop distribution. The distribution work lasted the entire month of December and in some cases moved in to January also. Here are some of the memorable moments when we saw the smiles on the faces of our students while receiving the scholarship cheques / laptops at Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Pune, Nashik and Chandigarh. Giving T-shirts helped in bonding with the students and the colleges .



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