

Message From The Founder



It is with great pleasure and pride that we inaugurate this bulletin.

As we grow from strength to strength, our story is becoming interesting and inspiring. Our family is growing fast and now stretches from Adyar to Orange County. So now we have this short bulletin to tell everybody what everybody else is doing.

This newsletter is for you to read as well as to contribute to. Let us hear what you are doing, and we will tell you what we are doing.

D K Patel Hong Kong

From the Desk of Ramani



My Journey with Help The Blind Foundation

After a long innings of 37 years in Banking Industry, I retired in 2010 wondering what lay ahead. Is it going to be continuation of fast paced commercial pursuit or something else? Where would I be living? Will it be Hong Kong where we had lived for 20+ years or, in India, my own mother land?

Two years passed, when I spent time ruminating about how to chalk out a meaningful path in the future wherein I would be able to contribute in my own small way to society, the answer to my question came with Mr D.K. Patel prompting me to join the HTBF.

Initially reluctant as I was not aware what I was getting into, I visited St.Louis School for the blind in Adyar, Chennai.

I was amazed to see the visually impaired children doing their work, managing their routine on their own just like other normal students. I also visited Loyola college, Chennai, to talk to a few such students and it was an eye opener to hear about their ambitions.

I then realized, given an opportunity for higher studies these visually impaired children are capable of achieving great heights in life. It also dawned on me that it would be a rewarding experience to play a small part by assisting them in their relentless pursuit of success in life.

Contd... Page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Message from The Founder
From the Desk of Ramani
- 2** My First Year as Volunteer with HTBF
Memories 2016-17
- 3** There are good people around – Erase Poverty HK
From the Desk of Ramani (Contd.,)
- 4** FAQs

• Help the Blind • Foundation

VISION FOR LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

(In Association with Kishinchand Chellaram Educational Trust)

My First Year as Volunteer with Help The Blind Foundation

“The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know”

- Albert Einstein

It is a little more than a year since I started volunteering for Help The Blind Foundation and this one year has taught me so much about the lives of the visually impaired. It is an entirely different world where there is no need for pity or sympathy but a greater need for empathy. With proper help and understanding, these people can greatly contribute to society, its productivity and quality of work and fill up the gaps in the skilled manpower requirements of the country.

Through this one year, I have learnt of the enormous work done by the other NGOs in the field of education for the visually challenged-from mere academic education to skills training to developing talents in fine arts like music and dance and then in sports and entertainment – individuals working on tech areas such as building up the indigenous version of Braille or better screen readers or apps for voluntary scribes or for indexing audio/Braille books or housewives mobilizing scribes- these works never cease to amaze me

Am I overwhelmed by these stories with the feeling that so much has already been achieved by such high spirited individuals and what can I do at this old age ?

Yes and No. Look at the data on the blind people in India and there are 15 million of them. The problem is huge but I cannot rest on the premise that one person cannot do much to help these many people. I probably have to be the proverbial squirrel of Ramayana and do whatever tiny little bit that I can and hope more such squirrels would join and bring relief to a major part of the 15 million

-N.Sivaji Rao Bangalore



Volunteers' Meet Chennai Nov 2016



Donation from SBM with MD Mr. N K Chari



At Andhra Loyola College Vijayawada with the Volunteer, Warden and Students

New Academic Year has already started

Intending Visually Challenged Students for college courses, please do not waste your time

Please complete the formalities and get the Admission process completed

And if you are eligible, please contact the nearest volunteer of HTBF (See our website for details)

And apply for scholarship

The Last Date is fast approaching

From Ramani's Desk

Erase Poverty, Hong Kong

In our endeavour to spread the message of providing education to the visually challenged and while sourcing for funds, we come across different types of people and charity organizations who are already involved in similar activities and sometime much beyond what HTBF is doing.

One such organization we came across recently is Erase Poverty Hong Kong a NGO based in Hong Kong and involved in helping to providing quality education, health services and skills development services to socially and economically backward communities of India

Mr Dayal Harjani of Erase Poverty HK was in India and was generous to support our cause. In fact, he went beyond supporting our core cause viz., extending scholarships to blind students for their college education. He also offered to support our schemes for providing job oriented skills education to these students so that they can get jobs easily and stand on their own feet

Thank you Mr Harjani and Erase Poverty Hong Kong

And that is when I decided to take up the opportunity offered by Mr. Patel to be a part of HTBF. Since then it has been a very satisfying experience, though fraught with challenges. It has been a learning path for last 4 years full of interesting experiences arising out of interactions with students. I will share these experiences in the forthcoming issues of the news letter.

Starting with a modest number of students in a single college, HTBF has now grown into an international organization with a large number of volunteers, student beneficiaries, donors , colleges and well wishers.

We have a long way to go, but are confident of making impact at least in the lives of some if not all visually impaired children in India.

J V Ramani Trustee India

Statewise Distribution of Students assisted by HTBF During 2016-17

No	State	No of Colleges	Female Students	Male Students	Total Students
1	Andhra Pradesh	2	5	14	19
2	Delhi	18	125	231	356
3	Gujarat	15	58	59	117
4	Karnataka	7	14	16	30
5	Madhya Pradesh	2	13	2	15
6	Maharashtra	23	59	93	152
7	Punjab	3	1	6	7
8	Rajasthan	7	6	12	18
9	Tamil Nadu	39	118	180	298
10	Uttar Pradesh	3	7	42	49
	T O T A L	119	406	655	1061

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FROM THE DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE

1. Who can give donation to HTBF?

Any individual or corporate can make a donation to our Trust. They would have to give ID proof along with the donation.

If the donation is made by a foreign individual or entity, then in the case of individuals a copy of the passport and for a corporate entity, a copy of Registration Certificate from the revenue authority is mandatory under FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) requirements.

2. How do we make a donation to HTBF?

A donor can send a donation by a cheque drawn in favour of the Trust and send it to its registered office in Chennai. If a donor wants to remit the donation directly, then our office in Chennai or any of our volunteers can be contacted to get the bank account details of the Trust.

3. Is there a minimum amount for the donation?

No. There is no minimum or maximum amount that can be donated. All helping hands are welcome.

4. Can a donor specify the purpose for which the donation is given?

Yes. The donors can specify their wish to donate for a specific purpose. For example, they can say that the amount is to be used to purchase laptops or study guides like Angel Readers. Otherwise they can choose a specific college and give donation for a group of students studying in that college or to build facilities like a library or music room for the visually impaired students.

FROM THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

1. Who is eligible to apply for our scholarship?

Any visually impaired student pursuing under graduate course in a reputed college having proper disability certificate can apply for scholarship through their college and to be submitted to our Trust's volunteer together with attested mark sheets for the class 10 and 1. Generally the last date of applying for scholarship will be August every year. But last date will be displayed in our web site.

2. Will the scholarship amount be the same to all the applicants?

No. Students staying in college managed hostel are eligible for a scholarship amount of Rs.25000/- per annum payable in two instalments. For students staying in private hostel and day scholars, an annual stipend of Rs.5000/- for male students and Rs.10000/- for female students is awarded.

3. Are students pursuing Post graduation / professional course or other advanced courses eligible for scholarship?

Yes. Visually impaired students pursuing Post graduation / professional course are also eligible for scholarship, provided their average score of marks in graduation are equal to or more than 70%.

4. Will the HTBF help the blind students for employment or help prepare for competitive examinations ?

As of now, the focus of HTBF is education as the main tool for empowerment but we are aware of the importance of skills training and propose to take up such efforts in future.

