

50
YEARS



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
INDIA

A loving home for every child

SEPTEMBER 2016



NO CHILD SHOULD GROW UP ALONE

SOS MESSENGER



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Nurturing talents and dreams to thrive



Success is subjective, the perception of which varies vastly for different people. APJ Abdul Kalam, Former President of India, conjectured “Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough” and I couldn’t agree more! This relentless spirit and will to succeed is aptly displayed by our children here at SOS India every single day. They constantly remind us that all circumstances, no matter how difficult, can be made favourable with sustained hardwork, diligence and the will to be happy. Happiness is a choice that helps us find positivity! While every child in the SOS family is really special, this edition of the messenger is dedicated to recognizing few of them and showcasing their individual talents; these young prodigies being the artists and their achievements being their masterpieces.

SOS Children’s Villages of India provides a nurturing platform to all its children to play and thrive. The cumulative positive impact of sports in holistic development of children needs no reiteration. It gives me great pride to introduce Vidushi, Kiran and Mansi from the SOS Children’s Village in Khajurikalan, which serves as a unique example of the SOS Children’s Village model in India, dedicated to the care of children with special needs.

In February 2016 the National Floorball Championship was organized at Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh. Nearly 500 athletes with special needs (male & female) from 20 states participated in this National level Competition. The girls of the floor ball team of Madhya Pradesh comprised of eight players namely, Lakshmi, Kiran, Mahalakshmi, Shruti, Pawli, Mansi, Vidushi & Manimeghlai. All the eight players are from the SOS Village in Khajurikalan. The team reached the finals and won the gold medal for the state of Madhya Pradesh. Thanks to the hard earned Gold medal for the State, Vidushi, Kiran and Mansi have been shortlisted to represent India in the Special Olympics World Winter Games, to be held in Austria in March, 2017. They are children with special needs who have been able to overcome many odds and emerge as a store house of sporting talents and we couldn’t be prouder! They will be joined by Diksha from our Latur Village and Dulfisha from Jaipur Village in the same Team, selected for the Special Olympics.

Behind all the glory and success lies the stalwart support of all our benefactors. On behalf of the entire SOS Family, I would like to thank you, our donor, for your kind, generous and continued support towards our work. Your help goes a long way in giving wings to the dreams of children like Vidushi, Kiran, Mansi, Diksha and Dulfisha. When you take a step forward in giving, they take leaps forward in fulfilling their aspirations. Your support helps them achieve their goals and we are ever so grateful for it. After all, true happiness results from what you give!

With warm regards and season’s greetings,

Anuja Bansal
Secretary General

Aiswarya scores a perfect 10!

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity”

– Albert Einstein

It is easy to get bogged down by punishing state of affairs. True grit is only tested in the face of grueling circumstances and this little star from SOS Children's Village in Aluva passed with flying colours. Aiswarya came to SOS Children's Village, Aluva, Cochin, with her little sister Arya, when she was just 11 years old. Aiswarya is an intelligent and smart child with an inquisitive nature who is fond of reading books and novels. She is now well adjusted with her SOS family and is very close to her SOS brothers and sisters. She is a responsible and helpful young girl who supports her mother whenever needed.

Aiswarya, now 16 years old, completed her class 10th and scored CGPA 10 in her CBSE board exams and topped her school. She was honored with the 'Best Student Award' for the year 2011. She was also selected as the Best student for 3 consecutive years,

between grades 6 and 8, marking a proud moment for everyone in her village and family. She is ambitious and aims to become an IAS officer in future. Aiswarya is currently studying in class 11th and has taken up the science stream. She has been admitted to the Vidhyadiraj Vidhyabhavan School, Aluva and has also joined coaching classes that will help prepare her for medical entrance examinations.

Aiswarya is an all-rounder and is equally inclined toward sports. At the School Annual Sports Day at her previous school, she won the first prize in 200 m and 100 m sprinting events and was also selected to participate in the inter-school sports competition. She has received many awards across varied disciplines such as elocutions, debate competitions, essay writing as well as declamation. Aiswarya is an extremely confident child and has hosted many occasions and functions



held in the village and her school. She is very bright and self-disciplined and we are certain she will succeed in whatever tasks she chooses to undertake in the future.

LEAD STORY

SOS Girls from Khajuri Kalan Village chosen to represent India in the Special Olympics Winter Games, Austria, 2017

Sports and outdoor activities assist in balanced physical and mental development while simultaneously improving an individual's lifestyle. The importance of games and sports can never be minimized, they provide lessons that cannot be obtained in a classroom. We at SOS India constantly support and encourage our children to engage in outdoor sports activities.

The SOS Children's Village at Khajuri Kalan, one of the 32 SOS Children's Villages spread across the country,

is great example of SOS India's belief in wholesome development of children in our care. A large number of children from Khajuri Kalan are athletically gifted sportspersons and have successfully made their mark. Amongst them are the 8 girls in the Floorball team of Madhya Pradesh State, all from the Khajurikalan SOS Village, who recently won the National Championship organized at Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh between 2nd and 7th February 2016. The team defeated Punjab by 3-2, Gujarat by 3-2, Orissa

by 3-2 and reached the finals to defeat Himachal Pradesh by 2-1. Kiran & Pawali's goalkeeping performances were excellent in the final match. Five children played in the final match & won the Trophy of the Championship. The Floorball event was added for the first time in Special Olympics, Bharat (SOS).

On 26th April, 2016 the village director SOS Khajuri Kalan received verbal information from the Area Director, Special Olympic, Madhya Pradesh about the three girls from Khajuri Kalan, Mansi, Kiran and Vidushi being shortlisted for participating in the Special Olympic World Winter Games,

2017 in Austria. Additionally, Kiran was also nominated to represent the State of Madhya Pradesh in the game of Floor Hockey.

The Special Olympics, Bharat (SOB) and SOS Village, Khajuri Kalan share an amicable relationship and therefore, SOB extends full support in creating

opportunities for our children so that they may perform at the state, national and international levels. SOB plans to hold a press conference on 17th May, 2016, where this news can be publicly disclosed. The conference can also serve as a platform for elaborating on the achievements of last year where 3 of SOS India's special champions-

Vijay, Shruti and Dolly participated and won medals at the Paralympics held in Los Angeles. Another agenda of the meet is to get the Chief Minister of Bhopal to attend the Press Conference so that he can personally introduce the children and the Madhya Pradesh government can also be requested to sanction award money to the medal winners.

Wishing Vidushi All the Best

It is well recognized that hearing is critical to speech and language development, communication as well as learning. Children with this disability continue to remain an underserved part of our population. Vidushi was brought home to SOS Children's Village Varanasi as a 4 day old baby in 1999. Later it was found that little Vidushi suffered from vocal & hearing impairment. She was given the best possible treatment but, unfortunately, there was little improvement in her condition. Gradually, it was found that Vidushi is mentally challenged as well. Due to these challenges, she was moved to SOS Children's Village, Khajuri Kalan at the age of 8. After years of training Vidushi is now able to express her views and feelings through sign language. She is not keen on

academics but takes immense interest in sports like swimming, basketball, cycling etc.; swimming being her favorite. She is currently studying in the 6th standard in Asha Niketan. Vidushi participated in the State Level Swimming Competition, stood first and thereafter, won many other prizes in competitions held at the school level. She got the 5th rank in the National Level Swimming Competition organized in 2015 with the collaboration of MYAS (Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India) held at Odisha. She had also attended the training program of National Championship Camp, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana organized by Special Olympics in year 2015. In 2016, she participated in



the Football National Championship, Vilaspur, Himachal Pradesh in which she lead the team of Madhya Pradesh and won a Gold Medal. Her position at the International Competition (Winter Games) to be held at Austria in March, 2017 has already been confirmed. SOS India is proud of her achievements and wishes her good luck!

Kiran overcomes all odds

Kiran won the Gold Medal in National Football Championship which was held at Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh in 2016. However, this incredible feat in Kiran's life is preceded by years of struggle and hardwork. Kiran was brought home to SOS Children's Village, Latur as a day old baby in 1996. As she started growing up, it was found that she can hear but cannot speak and

has a problem of drooling too. She finds chewing difficult too. Due to these issues, she was moved to SOS Children's Village, Khajuri Kalan at the age of 8. She has recently appeared in the class 10th exam from SVM High School, meant for regular children. Since her childhood days, she has shown interest in both studies as well as sports. She started taking part in sports at the age of 10 and started



Mansi, an Outstanding Performer

Mansi joined SOS Children's Village, Khajuri Kalan, at the age of 5 after losing her biological parents. She used to stay in an Orphanage in Vaitul district. She has delayed physical development and mild mental retardation. Initially Mansi had trouble adjusting to her new environment at the Village but after getting the care, love and affection she needed from her mother, aunts, brothers and sisters she is now at home with her SOS family. At school Mansi has always had lots of interest in dancing, singing, sports especially running, Floor ball and Floor Hockey. She always participates in sports and cultural activities conducted by the school and organization.

She is currently studying in 4th standard of Hermann Gmeiner School. Here she has excelled in many extra curricular activities and was also given the opportunity to train in Floor Ball at Yamuna Nagar. At the Floor Hockey State Level Competition held in Himachal Pradesh, Mansi won the 4th prize and came in first at the National Level Floor Ball competition held at Solan, Himachal Pradesh in 2015.

winning prizes and medals. In 2013, she took part in the Football National Championship (Special Olympics), Hissar, Haryana in which she lead the team of Madhya Pradesh and won a Bronze Medal. After that she won Silver Medal in Badminton with her wonderful performance in National Championship Camp held at Mumbai in 2014. That year she did not get selected for World Winter Games but that didn't dampen her spirits or confidence. She kept training hard and went on to win medals at various levels. Noticing her keen interest in



At the National Championship held in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh in February 2016, she performed very well wherein her team won the gold medal and she was facilitated as 'The Best Player' of the match. After this achievement she has been nominated in probable World Winter Games-2017 Special Olympics, Austria. Additionally, her performance was outstanding in the First Preparatory Camp at Hyderabad which was organized in preparation of World Winter Games-2017 Special Olympics, Austria.

sports, her coach suggested that she undergo football training. The opportunity for this soon came knocking on her door and in 2015, she got the chance to go for football training to Yamuna Nagar, Haryana and came out as the winner at the National Championship. Seeing her glorious performance in National Championship Games, Special Olympic Bharat (SOB) has confirmed her position in International Competition (Winter Games) which will be held at Austria in 2017.

Story of Joshua

'Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness, to pull another's into the light.'

Through the work done by SOS India children get a second chance at being part of a loving family, the warmth and safety of a house and the security of a good education. Investing fully in children

Continued to page 7





Message from the President

“There is no substitute for hard work”

-Thomas A. Edison

Dear Friend,

This edition of the Messenger highlights some of the extraordinary stories of SOS children in our midst. These children are indeed a testament to the fact that no obstacle is insurmountable in the face of hard work and true grit. It is a matter of great pride for me to discuss and bring to the fore the achievements and successes of our own during the last few months.

At SOS Children’s Villages of India we invest a significant amount of resources and efforts toward nurturing our children and ensuring that they receive the best possible care and opportunities in life. It is through our Family Based Care (FBC) Programme that we are able to care for and raise children who have been abandoned and/or lost their parents. As of 2016, the FBC Programme supports over 6700 children in the country. Additionally, this year we have also made a significant impact through our Family Strengthening Programme (FSP), reaching out to over 17,500

beneficiaries. Child abandonment due to financial constraints is one of the foremost reasons for the significant number of children deserted every year. Our FSP model helps address the root cause of this problem. Through the Family Strengthening Programme we aid families in developing and augmenting their livelihoods which in turn helps stabilize their incomes and prevents abandonment on account of abject poverty. The programme aims to save families in order to save children. This publication of the SOS Messenger is dedicated to lives of those children who have managed to turn their lives and circumstances around, inspiring everyone in their wake. A story that particularly stands out is that of wKhajurikalan who recently won the National Floor Ball Championship for the state of Madhya Pradesh. They have since been shortlisted for the Special Olympics World Winter Games to be held in Austria in 2017. The Khajurikalan village in Madhya Pradesh is dedicated to the care of differently abled children and their

victory, in light of their difficulties, is ever more glorious. Madhu, also from SOS Children’s Village in Khajurikalan, has made us proud by winning the National Balshri Award for creative art. Congratulations are also in order for Aiswarya from SOS Children’s Village in Cochin who managed to secure a perfect score of 10 as her Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Examination for Class 10th , demonstrating that hard work does indeed conquer all.

These children, among many others, are trailblazers who are inspiring generations around them. Success is a rubik’s cube and the key to solving it resides in a complex combination of hardwork, belief in self, clarity of goals and strength of will. We can only change that which is under our control and our children are the perfect examples of that. They serve as our beacons of hope and strength, always reinforcing our will to continue our work despite all odds.

Behind all the glory and success is the excellent support of all our benefactors. I would like to whole heartedly thank you, our donors and well-wishers, for your kind, generous and continued help for the work done by SOS Children’s Villages of India. Your support goes a long way in transforming the dreams of these children into realities. When you extend a helping hand in generosity, you make a lasting difference in their lives. You help them hope, dream and achieve! I sincerely look forward to your continued commitment which enables us to reach our dream of self-sufficiency and helps fulfil the dreams of our children, current and future.

Warm Regards,

S. Sandilya
President

SOS Children’s Villages of India

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today ensures the well-being and productivity of future generations. One such story is that of Joshua Shadap, living in SOS Children's Village, Shillong.

Joshua was brought home to the Village in December 2008. His SOS mother Mistina recollects, *'When he came in his health was very poor. He was then given medication, proper care and was even admitted to the hospital several times for the treatment of his ailment. When he was young, he was insecure and weak. He would hold the edge of my sari and follow me everywhere. Over the years, he has grown up to be a confident boy and all my efforts seem to have borne fruit.'* Joshua is the apple of his mother's eyes, loved dearly by all his siblings.

Currently, Joshua is studying in grade 4 in Christ International School in Shillong. His teachers say that he is very intelligent and smart. He likes to sketch, he is artistic and is also good at speaking the English language. In his free time, Joshua likes to stay at home and be around his mother. He is a multi-talented boy, who sings very well. Above all Joshua has one unique talent; Joshua is musically gifted and can even write as well as compose songs at such a young age! In addition to his musical genius, Joshua is an excellent student and has been scoring over 95 percent marks in all his subjects for the past three years. Understandably, Joshua is extremely ambitious and has big dreams for himself.

Happy stories like these of the children we support keep us going and that is one of the reasons we share the same with you. Your generous contributions play a big part in bringing smiles on the faces of children like Joshua.

Madhu Meshram

Wins National Balshri Award for Creative Art

Madhu won the State Balshri award about a year ago in August, 2014 when she was 17 years old. She was studying in class 6 of Asha Niketan Higher Secondary School for the deaf. Madhu is a very creative and talented girl who is fond of painting, dancing and other creative pursuits. Her winning streak began when she was nominated for the "Balshri Award" in August, 2013 at the primary level. She later participated at the zonal level at an event held in December, 2013 organized at Jawahar Bal Bhawan, Bhopal and won the first prize Balshri Award. This led to her participation in the final national level Balshri Award held in August, 2014 in New Delhi. She went on to win the award at the national level in her category of deaf and dumb children.

It all started with Madhu coming to the SOS Children's Village in Khajurikalan from New Delhi when she was just 8 years old. Madhu is speech and hearing impaired since birth.. She was with her maternal grandmother for a while but her grandmother was quite old and was not able to give her long term care. That is how she came to SOS Children's Village, Khajurikalan. At the beginning she had no knowledge of sign language and had never attended any school. She was admitted to school in July, 2007 in the Government Deaf and Dumb School, where she learned to communicate through sign language. She can now use it very well and gets great marks in class. Once she came to Khajuri Kalan, Madhu's development sped up significantly and she started participating in many extra-curricular activities.

Since the very beginning she always displayed a proclivity

and talent towards drawing. In the past, she has participated in painting competitions organized by the Regional Museum of Natural History (Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India) in November, 2008 and won the 1st prize (cash prize amount Rs. 2000/-). This news was widely covered by local newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar, Patrika and Raj Express. She was also interviewed by Doordarshan channel in Bhopal for her achievement.

Additionally, Madhu secured the 3rd position in a painting competition held during the 56th International Week of the Deaf-2013, "Colours of Silence" organized by Deaf Can Foundation, Bhopal on 22nd September, 2013.

Madhu's story is a testimony to the fact that when special children are offered the right opportunity and guidance, they can excel in life. The support Madhu has received from her SOS Family, friends and her benefactors has given her a second lease at life!



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Gunti Sirisha

wins third prize at the Skill India Mechatronics Competition, 2016

When a child is born, the first thing they seek out is the warmth of their mothers' touch. Thereon, everything the child imbibes and learns is on account of the sights and sounds of the environment they are exposed to by their parents. Imagine the trauma of a child abandoned at such a vulnerable age. Such is the story of Gunti Sirisha. Gunti came to the SOS Children's Village in Hyderabad when she was only 5 years old. Soon she became an integral part of her SOS family, actively participating in all household duties and helping her younger brothers and sisters. Sirisha is a very caring and accommodating person, adjusting easily to the environment around her. She is extremely hardworking and puts in her best effort into whatever task she chooses to undertake. Now at the age of 18, Sirisha has grown up into a smart and responsible young woman.

She is currently enrolled in a 3 year diploma course in Mechatronics at the KIKI centre for Technology, a German based institute in Manesar, Gurugram. Recently Sirisha was selected to participate in a regional workshop in Electronics. This was organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry(CII) for North region. It was the 29th Regional Work Skills Competition held at the Advanced Training Institute (ATI) in Ludhiana. Various competitions were organized over 3 days as part of this event and Sirisha won the 1st prize in one of these which was held amongst the girls.

It was a proud moment for SOS India when Sirisha, subsequently, won the "Skill India 2016" Mechatronics Competition (Northern region) held at Pragathi Maidan in New Delhi between 14th and 17th July 2016. She along



with Avinash one of her class mates created a mechatronics model and exhibited it in the display competing with students of B. Tech and M.Tech from Jamia Islamia University and Manava Rachana University. They reached the finals to compete with Volkswagen and Toyoto and won the 3rd prize in the 'Skill India 2016 Mechatronics Competition'.

Once Sirisha completes her course, she would like to gain some qualitative work experience. It is her dream to secure a placement in Germany and she has already started learning the German language. We, at SOS India, continue our efforts to support Sirisha in all her endeavours and wish her good luck!