

VINIMAG - September 2006

(Covering events during April – September 2006)

“Win hearts with Vinimag”

Issue No. 12
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We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made.

.... Albert Einstein.

Dear Friends,

This issue of Vinimag , is, as usual, packed with information about the work that the volunteers of Vinimay Trust have done in the past few months. We have combined the two quarters of April - June and July - September 2006 in this issue. Please do send us your contributions and /or feedback to vinimay@vsnl.com or to the postal address given at the end of this newsletter.

With regards

Jayashree Mukund
Editor- Vinimag

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1. MESSAGE FROM VINIMAY TRUST

Children would always model their attitude and lifestyle in the mould of the environment they live in. It is common knowledge that a child's character and values are reflected by the examples they are exposed to during their growing up period. Recently, Shri C. Subramanian (CS), one of Vinimay's long time members, circulated copies of the famous poem attributed to Dr. Dorothy Law Nolte (1924-2005) titled "**Children Learn What They Live**". This universally loved poem was first published in 1954 and offers invaluable guidance to people dealing with children for inculcating values through example. For Vinimay and its volunteers, these lines are particularly poignant and sum up the essence of our endeavor over the last twentyfive years with institutionalized children. These lines are reproduced here for the greater benefit of our readers.

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn,
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight,
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves,
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty

BUT

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness
If children live with fairness, they learn justice
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves, and in those about them
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live

While working with underprivileged children residing in institutions, the voluntary social worker comes across a spectrum of negative experiences already imprinted on children's minds due to the varied background they come from. One of the primary goals of the volunteers is to replace these negative emotions with their positive counterparts. As Dr. Dorothy Law rightly said, this can only be done

through constant encouragement, tolerance, friendliness, praise, acceptance of what they are, recognition of their efforts and above all unconditional love. This is not an easy task to accomplish but, not impossible either!

Very often, a voluntary social worker is found dispirited by the lack of visible or quantitatively definable progress in the institutionalized children he is working with. Most of our volunteers working with educational program (tutorial assistance) are often found asking themselves if they are doing enough. Sometimes, it appears to be an uphill struggle and self doubts like whether one is on the right track plague the mind. These issues have time and again been discussed in our monthly volunteers meetings. Here, it might be instructive to distinguish between conventional teaching and facilitation of the learning process through sharing of knowledge, experience etc. in an interactive manner. We must view Vinimay's work with children as shared learning. Then and only then it is possible to impress positive emotions in the mind of the child and minimise effects of any longstanding negative traits. Interactive learning and sharing the knowledge establishes a bond with the children and helps us in our longterm goal.

What does a Vinimay volunteer do during the course of the tutorial assistance program for the institutionalized children? He or she spends a certain number of hours every week teaching a particular subject to a specific group of children through the entire year. In most cases, the teaching is a shared learning process. In the couple of hours that the volunteer spends with the children the objective is to encourage every child, including the weakest, to learn the subject reasonably well and most of all to set a goal for each one of them to master. This gives him/her an opportunity not only to interact with each child individually but also to go through the entire process together. It has been seen that positive emotional influences have always worked wonders and paid rich dividends in the long run. We have seen seemingly unruly children turning in to model students not only in education but even in their attitude towards life.

Another program that runs through the entire year and provides ample scope for impressing positive emotions on children is the play center for smaller age group children. Here again, the volunteer gets ample scope for sharing emotions with children. The nature of play centre ensures continuous interaction, playfulness, laughter and bonhomie that tells the children that the world is after all a friendly place to live in.

Bravo Dr. Dorothy Law Nolte (May her soul rest in peace) for penning these immortal lines and may Subramanian Sir be blessed for reminding us of these beautiful lines.

So, any takers for teaching or play center programs?

2. FEATURE ARTICLE: PRAFUL'S STORY

Tarun Sadan is a treasure-house of real life stories that are very often sad, humbling and instructional. Praful's story is one these that provides a glimpse into the life and mind of an adolescent youth who has been exposed to the harsh realities of human life in his formative years. Praful was a street child. He had no memory of how he came to be on the street and his earliest memories did not recollect either a father, mother or relatives. While roaming on the streets of Mumbai as a child, he was put into an institution by the local police. Since then, he had spent a considerable amount of time in child welfare institutions. As he approached the statutory age of eighteen, he had to get out of the institution and get integrated in to the society at large. In this context, he had applied for admission in to Tarun Sadan so that he could find a shelter, food and support beyond the age of eighteen. For him, it was just another institution, another set of people and onset of a new struggle for survival. He was told that he had to appear for an interview where people who ran Tarun Sadan would decide whether to admit him or not.

For the readers benefit, a few words about Tarun Sadan and the admission process is perhaps necessary. Tarun Sadan is a hostel that provides care for underprivileged youth primarily from child welfare institutions. The boys selected for admission are those who have no other place to go and need support for standing on their own feet. The idea is to provide shelter, food, job - skills, psychological support, etc. until the youth is ready to face the world. Admission process is one of the very first step in joining Tarun Sadan. The Trust gets applications from various institutions for admission. The boys are then invited for an interview. Initially, the boys are provided copies of the rules and regulations of the Tarun Sadan. The interview is held in a congenial atmosphere where we try to get to know the young man better. This helps in devising ways and means to provide optimal help to the youth. Based on the interview and other available information the boys are granted/ denied admission to Tarun Sadan.

It was one of those interview days, the Tarun Sadan committee, consisting of the superintendent and a few volunteers, interviewed Shri Praful Londhe. A reasonable period of time was spent discussing his experience at the institution, skills that he has acquired, his likes and dislikes, hobbies, friend circle, his health, the rules of the hostel and what are his expectations from the hostel. Praful responded to all the queries quite competently. He had no back up support structure who could take him in and help him to stand on his feet. He was very frank about his past experiences. However, what struck all of us as a little odd was his deadpan expression, unsmiling face and serious demeanor throughout the interview. All our attempts at establishing an emotional link at a lighter level had fallen flat. He just refused to smile. Suddenly one of us asked, ***“why don't you smile? Consider us as your friends and give us a smile”*** After a pause, his reply jolted us; – ***‘On what basis do you expect me to sport a smile? I am not sure if I will be provided admission, I am not sure what's next in my life’***. Before we could recover from this, he looked at us with perhaps a trace of moisture clouding his eyes and added ***‘You are one of the few people in my life who have spoken kindly to me’***. These few words spoke volumes. This was an humbling experience

for all of us in that room. There was a stunning silence. One of us recovered enough to tell Praful that his interview was over and wished him a good day. Then our Superintendent Mr. Andure summed up this encounter with his typical one liners : ***“This is precisely why activities/programs like Tarun Sadan must be reinforced”***. Though in reality, Tarun Sadan is a drop in an ocean, this was a sort of acknowledgement of Vinimay’s rehabilitation path – it strengthened our faith and Praful secured his admission at Tarun Sadan.

After staying in Tarun Sadan for about 8 months, Praful started getting accustomed to his new way of life. One evening, he requested if something could be done to fix his protruding teeth. It was a heartening sign because it indicated his caring about his self ! He along with Mr. Andure visited the dentist, to explore the possibilities of correcting the situation. The dentist (who is also a well wisher of Vinimay) suggested an action plan and the expenses involved. Perhaps, Praful had also managed to overhear the plan. The story took an interesting turn here. After 2 days of visiting the dentist, our friend Praful ventured out and did not return to the hostel. A police complaint was registered. We were given to understand from one of the boys at the hostel that he might have gone to the Crawford market area, near Mumbai VT.

Some of us tried to search for him near Crawford Market. The lead was correct, he was a frequent visitor to one of the hotels at the traffic signal of Crawford market, but we couldn’t locate him. We were afraid for him, that he might be living on the streets and subjected to its own laws. Fortunately, we met one of his street friends Nilesh. Nilesh told us that Praful was extremely troubled by the fact that Vinimay was willing to spend a fortune to set his teeth right. Since he did not want to pose this burden on to Vinimay, he made the decision to move away from Tarun Sadan ! Nilesh also indicated that Praful was unhappy living on the streets. From Nilesh, we also got some insight regarding **“living on the streets of Mumbai”** – how they sleep on the sloping walls of the bridges near Crawford Market or if it’s raining then under some shop roof; use the Sulabh Shauchalaya facilities for bathing and toilet needs; wear one pair of shirt and pant and the remaining two pairs are given at the nearby laundry for washing as well as safe-keeping!; earn about Rs. 1500/- per month doing odd jobs here and there and eat when hungry at a nearby hotel for free! The free food is part of a fascinating concept of ‘Anna daan’ that provides food to the hungry and needy from funding provided by the donors (people passing by the hotel near the traffic signal or by people waiting in their cars/scooters at the traffic signal). The donation can be in multiples of Rs.10/- or Rs. 15/- or Rs. 20/- and accordingly requisite number of persons waiting outside the hotel are invited by a hotel employee to have hot piping food. Nilesh also added that life was tough, many times they were rounded up by the police, beaten up, etc, etc.

Continuing with our friend Praful’s story, a message was left with Nilesh that Praful should contact Vinimay and that Vinimay was concerned about his well-being. We wanted him out of the streets and back at the hostel. On receiving our message, Praful did call up the hostel and spoke to Mr. Andure. Mr. Andure spoke to him with kind and pleasant words, inquired about his well-being and requested him to come back to the hostel. Something clicked in Praful’s mind and

he came back. Later he would tell us that this conversation inspired him to return. Had there been slightest hint of a reprimand for having run away, he would not have returned. Praful began his second inning at the hostel after about 10 days of 'life on the streets'. During his stay outside the hostel he worked as a laborer, he said that life was very difficult on the streets.

In keeping with one of the objectives of Tarun Sadan, Praful has been provided some job opportunities but he has not been able to sustain in any of the jobs. Praful wants Vinimay to provide with him with jobs that will enhance his skills, he feels that house-keeping jobs (cleaning of cars, disposing of garbage..) doesn't require much skills – one can get such jobs at any point of ones life. His preference is a job as a helper (cutting vegetables) in a canteen.

A few weeks back, Praful along with some other boys were reprimanded and were told among other things that they should take up any job that comes their way. His reaction was swift and quick – that he didn't want to burden Vinimay and felt that he should quit the hostel. With tears flowing down his cheeks, he mentioned that his past was troubling him, that he was not able to concentrate on a job and that he was convinced that his life was going to be full of miseries. Without forcing ourselves on him, he was explained again, the benefits of Tarun Sadan, that he can be treated for the troubling memories of the past, and that he, of course, has the right to go out of Tarun Sadan - hoping that he would not leave the hostel.

The saga with Praful continues with his struggle with the demons from the past and the yo-yo of his life would continue to move up and down until some stability is incorporated. Vinimay has been treading carefully in dealing with him as we do with most of the boys at Tarun Sadan. He has probably been given a little more latitude because of his background.

Why is this story important to us? Though Tarun Sadan is an institution, each of it's member is a distinct individual with his own history, characteristics and aspirations. It has been Vinimay's motto that each boy be individually cared for. However, while running a hostel with more than 25 – 30 adolescent youth, there is always a temptation to treat them as a collective group and implement one set of rules and regulations applicable to all. Therefore, the easiest path would have been to strongly reprimand Praful for having run away. Then we would have lost him forever. That path was not taken.

In retrospect, it reaffirms the fact that Tarun Sadan should always be a place with unconditional love, acceptance and concern for its boys. The foremost thought that comes to the mind is that there are so many children on the streets. It is difficult or rather almost impossible to accommodate them all in one Tarun Sadan and rehabilitate them. However, the reverse should definitely not happen i.e. a boy from Tarun Sadan should not go back to live life on the streets. Some introspection folks!

(P. Thyagarajan & Dr. A.K.Das)

3. EVENTS REVIEW

KHANDALA CAMP:

The 24th week - long camp for children by Vinimay was conducted from 24th to 30th June '06 at R.C. Church camping site, Khandala. Forty-five boys from five different child welfare institutions (Thelma Tata Anand Kendra, Anjuman-e-Mufidul Yatama, Bal Kalyan Nagari (BKN), Chembur Children's Home (CCH) and D.N. Sirur Balakashram) participated. The camp was run mainly by volunteers (eleven of them) who had spent their childhood in child welfare institutions and are now well settled in life through Vinimay's youth development program. Naturally, they could empathize with the participating children and for the children these volunteers were admirable role models. For the first time the kitchen was entirely managed by volunteers and we could dispense with paid cooks. A new experiment during this camp was to take up a theme for the camp "Happy Life". It was brought out through a series of lectures that to be happy in life one needs, in addition to material comforts, good physical and psychological health. As usual, volunteers visited the institutions after the camp for feed back and shared ice cream with all the children of the institutions.

Some of the comments by children recorded in their review report:

- ***"Cultural program taught us how to work in a group".***
- ***"Before the camp many of us did not enjoy participating in cultural programs. During the camp we learnt to enjoy it"***
- ***"Volunteers gave us their personal clothes for make-up. They treated us like their own children."***
- ***"You need not employ persons for vegetable cutting and vessel cleaning. We boys will do it. This will save money!"***

Children from D. N. Sirur Balakashram joined our Camp for the first time this year and Mr. Prashant M. Javere, Hon. Secretary, Bombay Prarthana Samaj (which runs D N Sirur Balakashram) writes: ***"It was a very novel experience for our boys and they learnt a great deal. We congratulate you for holding such a camp with imaginative ideas for self-development, and look forward for more such experiences."***

We would like to thank Fr. John Barretto (Director, Diocesan Youth Centre, Mumbai) and Mr. Anand Prabhu, a well-wisher of Vinimay, through whose kindness we could get permission to use the camping site at concessional rates. Our thanks are also due to the authorities of the Water Park at Khandala (run by Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation) who gave us a substantial rebate on the entry tickets for our children.

4. NEWS ABOUT US

- 4.1 Mr. Andure, Mr. Thyagarajan, Ms. Sabera & Mr. Venkat attended the annual day function of Institute of Psychological Health held on 25th June '06.
- 4.2 Seven Vinimay volunteers attended an eight day long course on "Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy" organized by Institute of Psychological Health and conducted by Dr. Anand Nadkarni. The knowledge and insight gained through this program will help us to a great extent in our youth development programs.
- 4.3 Regular monthly meetings of volunteers were held.
- 4.4 On 16th Sept. this year we lost one of our senior members, Mr. N.P.K. Krishnan. His enthusiasm and fighting spirit were an inspiration to all of us. In addition to his involvement in Vinimay, he was involved in multifarious activities with Spastic Society of India, Advanced Local Management program of the municipal corporation, etc. He also used to help many needy individuals in his personal capacity. We convey our condolences to Mrs. Krishnan and other members of his family.

5. REWIND – April – September 2006

5.1 Relating to children

5.1.1. **EDUCATION:**

The tutorial classes for 2005-06 ended in April and Vinimay is happy to have contributed to the overall good performance of the children of CCH and BKN in their annual examinations. The tutorial program for 2006-07 started bang in June, as soon as the schools started. Sixteen volunteers will be handling children of 7th to 10th std. of BKN and 6th to 10th std of CCH. In addition a volunteer will run an informal English class for 5th standard at CCH on an experimental basis. Vinimay arranged to get painted the black boards in the tutorial rooms of CCH and BKN. We also provided school stationery worth Rs.11,000/- to BKN.

5.1.2. Tutorial classes at CCH and BKN were continued .

5.1.3. Each year Vinimay felicitates boys of CCH who pass their SSC exams in a function in which all students of CCH are present. This function also gives confidence and inspiration to the younger children. This year 8 boys who had passed SSC were felicitated and were given gifts of their choice.

5.1.4. Eighteen tube lights were donated to BKN for use in the study rooms.

5.1.5. Twenty-seven pairs of new footwear, donated to Vinimay by a well wisher, were distributed to girls of BKN.

5.1.6. **HEALTH:**

5.1.6.1. Supplementary food was provided for children of BKN on 10 occasions and children of CCH on 12 occasions. On two occasions, this program was extended to the rescued child labourers (about 70 in number), temporarily housed at CCH.

5.1.6.2. Against request received from BKN we started supply of pav (bread) as supplement to the breakfast provided to children by the institution. This program started from June and costs about Rs.10,000/- per month @ rupee one per child per day.

5.1.6.3. Karate classes continued. 15 boys attended two tournaments and won 10 medals. Mr. Freddie Bilimoria, our Karate master, got sponsorship/ waiver of tournaments fees amounting to Rs.4500/- .

5.1.6.4. A surgery of the ear was arranged by Vinimay for a boy of CCH. The boy had been suffering from hearing loss as well as secretion from the ear for a long time. Mr. Kher handled this program with support from Mrs. Rekha Vartak. Mr. Kher made more than a dozen visits to the hospital for preliminary check up, pathological tests, etc. When Mr. Kher was at the hospital attending to the boy after his operation, Mr. Makhija, a friend of Mr. Kher and a supporter of Vinimay came to know about it. Eager to participate in this activity of Vinimay he brought hot home made food for

the boy! The boy has now recovered completely and the ear operation has been successful.

- 5.1.6.5. Extra nutrition (by way of Protein milk powder & bananas) to one of the boys of CCH suffering from TB was continued.
- 5.1.6.6. The mother of a boy of CCH was to undergo a hysterectomy operation and he was very worried. Mrs. Mukta Mahapatra & Ms Dhanya took up the case, pleaded with the Rajawadi hospital authorities for reduction in their charges. They succeeded in bringing down the cost substantially and after consultation with the C.C.Home authorities, financial help to the tune of Rs. 1000/- was also given to the mother for her hospitalization expenses. The entire process involved several visits to the hospital during the course of the treatment.
- 5.1.6.7. Supplementary nutrition program (through which additional food is provided to children) was conducted on 22 occasions at BKN and 18 occasions at CCH; [CCH occasions include milk one day per month] Of these expenses for two events were sponsored by AKKK Sabha of Anushakti Nagar. In addition, breakfast was provided for 70 rescued child laborers temporarily housed in CCH on one day.
- 5.1.6.8. Against request from CCH, from 20th Aug., we started providing 4 litres of milk per day for sick children.
- 5.1.6.9. The total cost of supplementary nutrition programs for two quarters (April – June & July - September) amounted to approx Rs.1,08,000/-

5.1.7. **RECREATION AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS:**

- 5.1.7.1. Birthdays of children were celebrated every month in CCH with usual gaiety.
- 5.1.7.2. Come summer vacation and the children of CCH and BKN eagerly look forward to the Children's Film Festival organized by Vinimay. This year too children's films produced by Children's Film Society of India were screened on five successive Saturdays. The children were also treated to snacks on all the days during the screening of the film.
- 5.1.7.3. Play Centres continued to be run at CCH and BKN twice a week. The movie 'Iqbal' was shown to the children on one occasion. The children also enjoyed a liberal application of prickly heat powder provided to them at the play centres during the summer. Play Centre is one of the most popular programs of Vinimay and the present set of volunteers running this program is overwhelmed by the attendance. Gorappa, a destitute youth whom Vinimay has supported and who is well settled in life with a government job, is a volunteer for the play centre program. He recently got married and his wife Vidya too has now become a volunteer for the

same program! However the need for more volunteers is constantly felt in this program.

- 5.1.7.4. Recreation trips: this program [See Vinimag # 02] which was discontinued since the last few years, was revived due to Mr. Kher's enthusiasm. He has taken up the responsibility of running this program. Three trips were made to the Belapur mango garden in which a total of 32 children participated. Along with Mr. Kher, Mrs Vasantha ramaswami, Asha Kedar, Mrs Mandira Sen, Ms. Nirmala and Kasturi participated in this program.
- 5.1.7.5. Vinimay sponsored the expenses of hiring costumes for CCH children participating in the 'Children's Meet' arranged by Our Children Trust on 1st May at Shanmukhananda Hall.
- 5.1.7.6. Our volunteers active at CCH participated in festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmasthanami, etc. celebrated at the C.C Home.

5.2 RELATING TO YOUTH:

- 5.2.1. Regular monthly meetings, the main platform for the youth for whom Vinimay works, were continued. To bring in more transparency and also involvement of the youth in Vinimay's activities, our income, budget, methods of fund collection were discussed in one meeting. In another meeting, Dr. Anand Nadkarni of Institute of Psychological Health addressed the youth. While praising the youth as heroes since they are struggling against heavy odds, Dr. Nadkarni gave suggestions to handle problems at work place. In another meeting two physically challenged persons Mr. Sukhdev and Ms. Archana, who have fought against odds and are running their own business, shared their experience. They have also employed three of our destitute youth in their printing press.
- 5.2.2. A rain walk trekking trip to Matheran was arranged for the youth and 48 members participated in this program. The volunteers who joined the program were Mr Thyagarajan & Mr Andure, .
- 5.2.3. Scholarship was awarded to one youth (Rajkumar Yadav) for pursuing ITI technical training (fitter trade). This will amount to Rs.7000/- per year for a period of two years.
- 5.2.4. Medical help for dental problem was given for one Smit Vinimay (girl) Sushma Iste. Mr. Kher co-coordinated this activity
- 5.2.5. As mentioned in Vinimag #10, the aim of Vinimay's youth development program is not just to provide jobs or loans to the destitute youths. The main thrust is on providing parental support and opportunities for socializing. Some examples:

- ◆ A loan of Rs. 25,000/- was provided to a Tarun Vinimay member (Raja Pujari) to help him to purchase his house . A loan of Rs. 2500/- was granted to another member (Raju Bhim Babar) to repair his house.
- ◆ Mr. Andure and Ms. Mukta visited a Tarun Vinimay member (Fakira Shaikh) at hospital where he was admitted for kidney stone problem.
- ◆ Ms. Mukta and Mr. C. Subramanian attended to another Tarun Vinimay member (Suresh Nimbalkar) who was hospitalised for surgery on a cyst.
- ◆ Mr. C. Subramanian guided a Tarun Vinimay member (Tanaji Mane) and accompanied him to consult expert doctors for his urinary infection problem..
- ◆ Dr. Mrs. Rekha Vartak and Mr. Venkat continued follow up of a Smit Vinimay member undergoing long-term treatment for TB
- ◆ Ms. Asha Pandurang Sakpal and Ms. Laxmi Dey were provided employment by Mr. K.K. Sen in his own office.
- ◆ Ms. Mukta attended the marriage of Gorappa and Mr. Venkat attended the marriage of Shankar Sunil. Gifts were presented to them on behalf of Vinimay.
- ◆ Mr. Atul Shah and his family had dinner with Mani and Kasturi on their wedding anniversary.
- ◆ Robert had invited many friends for a dinner on the occasion of Easter festival. Many Vinimay members joined the party.
- ◆ A Tarun Vinimay member had a marital problem and sought help from Mr Venkat. He was out of town for a long period on official work and someone called him up to say that his wife was having an extra marital affair . He was totally shattered & approached Mr Venkat for guidance. Mr Venkat took up the case, spoke to his wife and finally came to the conclusion that this was the mischief of some relative. He advised the youth not to get worked up by information from just one source and asked him to verify the facts from friends & reliable persons. The boy did just that and eventually came to realize that what he got was a false alarm. Eventually things returned to normal and alls fine with their marriage.
- ◆ A Tarun Vinimay member was about to lose his job due to absenteeism and disobedience. Mr. Kher, through whose efforts the job had been arranged, intervened and talked to both the youth and the employer. Thanks to Mr Kher's intervention, the boy was able to continue with his job.
- ◆ Mrs.Charu Shah visited Dhiraj and Mahalaxmi (whose marriage Vinimay had arranged) at Pune. She also visited Ravindra Bhunde who besides being a Tarun Vinimay member is a also a great help to Vinimay for any work to be done in Pune. Mr. Atul Shah visited Savitri (whose marriage too was arranged by Vinimay) at Talegaon.
- ◆ Ms. Charu and Mr. Atul Shah hosted a party at their house for a group of Tarun and Smit Vinimay members living in Navi Mumbai. Each member prepared and brought one dish for the party. The group also went for a movie.
- ◆ A small flat belonging to Mr.& Mrs Atul Shah at C.B.D.Belapur, Navi Mumbai was used to accommodate destitute girls leaving child welfare institutions and needing shelter. Run for the last 10 years, this program has benefitted

six girls who stayed there for varying periods before they finally settled down in life. Three of the girls were married through Vinimay's efforts while one got married on her own, The remaining two have also recently moved out and are staying with their friends. During their stay at this flat the girls were not charged any rentals & had to spend only for their actual expenses, so also share the society maintenance charges, water & electricity bill, etc. between themselves. The flat served the purpose for which it was bought – it gave the girls a secure palace to live in without the fear of deadlines dangling over their heads to vacate the house. Also, it enabled them to save some money even from the modest salaries with which most of them started their careers. Besides, it taught them to live together like a family through thick and thin, share workloads, and learn to adjust with each other. As Vinimay has its hands full with the boys hostel (Tarun Sadan) & its many other activities it was felt that we were not able to devote sufficient time to this program for senior girls. Hence it was decided to discontinue this facility for girls for the time being.

5.3 TARUN SADAN

Tarun Sadan, as usual, had several admissions and farewells this quarter – there were 9 new admissions and 5 fond farewells. The current strength is 32. The seventh annual day of Tarun Sadan was celebrated on 21st May. Mr. Kapil Kumar Sen, a long-standing member of Vinimay, presided over the function. Boys leaving Tarun Sadan were given a warm farewell while those newly joining were given a hearty welcome. There were games, cultural programs and quiz competitions. At the end, dinner was arranged for the students and ex-students of Tarun Sadan, Vinimay members and well-wishers. Mr. Andure, Mr. Thyagarajan, Mrs.Mukta Mahapatra and Mr.C.Subramanian ably organized the function.

Excerpts from the report of Mr. D.N. Andure, Superintendent, Tarun Sadan:

- ♦ *“Of those who passed out, nine are married. Six of the ex-inmates have their own houses”*
- ♦ *Tarun Sadan is their home even after they have been discharged. They can come back to stay here in case of medical emergency or when they are employed outside Mumbai and come to Mumbai on vacation.*
- ♦ *We are learning from our experiences and constantly modifying the way the hostel is run. We are moving towards less parental control and towards allowing the students more freedom and time to choose their jobs and goals.*

HIGHLIGHTS OF EVENTS AND NEWS AT TARUN SADAN:

1. **GLAD NEWS:** The number of youth accommodated in Tarun Sadan has been steadily increasing and a need has arisen to complete the construction of the hostel so as to enable us to utilize its full capacity. We are extremely happy to inform you that, at the right time, Mr Bimal Desai, a well-wisher of Vinimay offered to build the balance structure of the hostel at his own cost and currently construction is on in full swing.
2. **EDUCATION:** Two students of Tarun Sadan (Sunil pawar & Sanjay Patil) have passed their ITI exam. They are currently undergoing apprenticeship training in reputed companies. Mr. Manav Das, a new volunteer, conducted coaching classes for students of Tarun Sadan preparing for SSC examinations in October.
3. **SOCIAL FUNCTIONS :** Independence Day was celebrated. Dr. P.R. Vaidya, a scientist from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, hoisted the flag. Dr. Vaidya has been a volunteer of Vinimay right from 1982. Rakshabandhan was celebrated and our volunteers Mukta and Mrs. Neerja Purandare tied rakhis to the students of Tarun Sadan. Birthdays of the students were also regularly celebrated. Tarun Sadan also hosted all the monthly Tarun/Smit Vinimay meetings
4. **VISITORS :** Prof. Tejaswini Uzgare and students of Nirmala Niketan School of Social Work visited Tarun Sadan for getting first hand information on our youth rehabilitation program.
5. In one of the previous issues of Vinimag, we had reported that we could trace the relatives of one of the students (Bapu Sawant) of Tarun Sadan. He wanted to experiment staying with his relatives and see if he could completely integrate with them. We happily agreed with him but also told him that he can always come back to Tarun Sadan if he faced any problems. He stayed with his relatives for a month and got positive feed back from them. He has come back and we will be working towards his full integration with his relatives in stages.
6. Two ex-students of Tarun Sadan, both destitute, were put up at Tarun Sadan for a few days each to recuperate from their illness. One was suffering from malaria (Ganesh Parvate) and the other from kidney stones (Fakira Shaikh). One of the residents (Shankar Kadam) secured a government job outside Mumbai and has been lucky enough to get living quarters too.
7. Six months after a successful eye transplant operation (arranged by Tarun Sadan), Rohit Patil developed some problem. He was immediately referred back to Leelavati Hospital and the problem was solved with the help of Dr. Mrs. Rekha Vartak. We thank Dr. Manish Shah who attended to the problem immediately

6. YOUR POINT

A Letter received from Mrs. Jaishree Pawaskar-Singh, Pune.

THE VINIMAY EFFECT

I don't know how I should describe myself in context to Vinimay. A well wisher, volunteer, fan or maybe all in one at various stages in my interaction with Vinimay since past 18 years.

I still very vividly remember the day I was introduced to Atul Shah and how he so passionately and eloquently spoke about Vinimay (he still does!) His compelling desire that lots need to be done for the underprivileged children sparked the desire to stay in touch with him. As destiny would proscribe, I was transferred to Deonar office as an Accountant in 1988 and it was the beginning of my Vinimay connection. There was sheer joy of being with these innocent children. Be it a garden trip or a trek in the rains or cutting those tear generating onions during the supplementary nutrition programme or bathing the young ones or attending the New Year Eve's Buffet Dinner. Even doing administrative work was not cumbersome where Vinimay was concerned. I used to look forward to my periodic visit to Mr. L Venkat's home for updating the Donor Database as if it was a picnic day. I remember my mother (who was then alive) commenting to me that the mere word "Vinimay" added a spring in my step and lit up my eyes.

After associating with Vinimay I was never at doubt how a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world of those who are less fortunate than us.

I haven't done much for Vinimay but I can say without any hesitation that Vinimay moulded me into being a better human being. It shaped my character and took me far to be a good daughter, sister, boss, friend and now a wife! More important I have learnt to share, care and do all things efficiently, albeit with kindness and humility. It has helped me develop happiness and peace within myself. To quote Mark Twain "Kindness is the language which even the deaf can hear and the blind can see"

Today when I live in Pune and away from Vinimay, CCH, BKN, Tarun Sadan, etc., yet not a day goes by when I don't think of Vinimay and the magic world it has woven for children, volunteers, well wishers and donors. The time spent with Vinimay takes me through another day with great hope and cheer.

The joy of listening to anyone who is touched by Vinimay is worthy of publication and I would request Vinimay to dedicate a small place for such musings if possible in future issues of Vinimag.

May Vinimay grow from strength to strength from a small seed to a mighty tree .

7. CONTACT VINIMAY

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DI D YOU KNOW THAT

- For Rs.2000 you could sponsor monthly expenses of one boy at Tarun Sadan
- For Rs.3000 you could sponsor the Annual get together dinner programme for 50 children
- For Rs.2500 you could sponsor the birthday of 25 children
- For Rs. 6000 you could sponsor a week long camp for 5 children
- For Rs. 1000 you could sponsor one supplementary nutrition programme for 350 children
- For Rs. 10,000 you could sponsor one pav (bread) per child per day for a month for 350 children

DONATE GENEROUSLY

Donations to Vinimay Trust are exempted under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

Vinimay Trust is also authorised to receive donations in foreign currency and is registered under the Foreign Contribution Act.

Cheques may be drawn in favour of “Vinimay Trust”

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VINIMAY TRUST'S

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