

VINIMAG – March 2007

(Covering events during Oct 2006 – March 2007)

“Win hearts with Vinimag”

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Dear Friends,

The Late Mr.N .A .Palkhivala in 'We, The People' said “All growth depends upon energetic activity. There can be no development without effort, and effort means work. The country can do with dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds.”

Several months have passed since our last issue, however that does not mean the work has stopped. Our volunteers have continued with their good effort and we continue to grow. Though this issue is for the period ended March 2007, we have included some events pertaining to April 2007 for the sake of continuity and completeness.

We would love to hear from you – so please do send us your contributions and / or feedback to vinimag@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

In 2007, Vinimay entered its twenty-fifth year of working with under privileged children from child welfare institutions. Youth welfare activities started much later. In August 1982, a group called itself "Vinimay" started helping the children staying at the Chembur Children's Home with their studies. Dr. K.V.Narayanan introduced this newly formed socially conscious group to the Chembur Children's Home belonging to the Children's Aid Society. The group that initiated this memorable journey consisted of Shri L.Venkataraman, Dr. D.Krishnan, Dr. P.R.Vaidya, Mr. L.Shridhar and Mr M.Sundaresan. Soon after, they were joined by Mr. K.V.Subramaniam (KVS), Mr.Chari, Ms.Kalpalata and Mr. Khanolkar. As Mr. Venkataraman has often articulated, for all of them the children were irresistible and it was not possible to limit themselves to tutoring alone. As years passed by, the informal tutoring, slide shows, story sessions, medical aid, newspaper reading expanded to more structured programs. The tutorial classes gradually catered to specific class and subjects. New programs like garden trips, supplementary nutrition, trekking, play centre, camps, karate lessons, first aid service, tenth standard outing, hula, birthday programme, new year's eve at Chembur Children's Home, Annual get together at Balkalyan Nagari, Bal Mahotsav, etc. were initiated and they have been astounding successes. Many new volunteers (Sirs & Didis) joined these activities, a great many continued, few made their appearance and fell out. By and large, this journey of twenty five years has been extremely satisfying. We have seen intense happiness interspaced with moments of grief, depression and self doubt at failure to do better. But like all things that are inherently good, well intentioned and sincere, Vinimay's work has survived the test of time. It is no small matter that a purely voluntary non hierarchical, social work organisation could sustain such a growth of activities for 25 long years and still continues unabated.

Vinimay has often been compared with a river originating with a few mountain streams that came together to form a flowing body of water. Gradually many more streams joined and strengthened it to a river that flows deep and wide providing solace to everybody in its path; everyone who have been touched by its aura. In the true sense of sharing, everyone including the volunteers, the donors, the people who support Vinimay in myriad different ways, the child welfare institutions and the children have contributed to the effort and simultaneously been enriched in the process. As we near the landmark of completing the twenty five years of child welfare, we would like to say a big "THANK YOU" to all. At this juncture, "the Vinimay volunteer" must find a special mention. As our programs grew, the need for volunteers also grew phenomenally. To cite a few examples: programs like Bal Mahotsav had a need of more than hundred volunteers working continuously for the designated five days. The Tutorial assistance program needed volunteer commitment of about

100 volunteer hours per week for nine months in a year. Programs like the play centre and the supplementary nutrition used about 20 volunteer hours each per week all round the year. All these programs and many more have been run successfully because of a large number of kind, generous, inherently good and unassuming people who accepted Vinimay as part of their lives. On this occasion we respectfully salute all our past and present volunteers for being there with the children.

2. Events Review

2.1 Tarapur Camp

A week -long camp supported by Tarapur Atomic Power Station was organized from 24th to the 30th of Dec. 06 at their staff colony at Boisar. *This camp was a special event for us because it was the 25th such camp organized by us.* Forty-seven girls from three child welfare organizations [viz. A. D. Bawala Female Orphanage, Bal Kalyan Nagari and Seva Sadan Society] participated. In all 1122 children have participated in a total of 25 camps.

- 2.1.1 The volunteer-base involved in this activity increased with Dr. Shankar, Sharada Satpute, Shankar Kadam, Shaikh Hamid and Hiren Sarvayya getting involved in the Camps Program for the first time. It is noteworthy that all of them, except for Dr. Shankar, are ex-students of child welfare institutions. Shankar Kadam and Rajendra Magare, ex-students of child welfare institution, shared their life-experiences with the participating children.
- 2.1.2 Subhash Savardekar (Camp Leader), Asha Kedar, Sharada Satpute, Shankar Kadam, Ms. Sabera Thyagarajan, Ms. Jayashree Raveendran, Bharat Oswal and Mr. L. Venkataraman were full-time volunteers in the camp. Ms. Mhdira Sen and Mr. Kher stayed full time during the first four days.
- 2.1.3 Follow-up visits were made to the institutions to get a feed back from the children. Small gifts were presented to children at some institutions while at some other institutions volunteers shared icecream with the children.
- 2.1.4 A special silver jubilee camp carry bag was gifted to the participating children. Mr. Nilkanth Kadam, a staff member of Chembur Children's Home (also a well-wisher of Vinimay) designed and screenprinted a special logo on the bags at a very short notice of just two days for which we are extremely thankful to him.

2.2 New Year Eve Cultural Program at Chembur Children's Home (CCH):

As usual Vinimay celebrated the arrival of the New Year with the children and staff of CCHome. *Students of SNDT University helped the children to put up cultural programs. They even cancelled their vacation for this sake!* Of course there was the customary buffet dinner arranged by Vinimay. A speciality of this year's program was that the newyear celebrations were preceded by a Dandia program for the children of CCH and Bal Kalyan Nagari (BKN) which was organised on 30th December. Snacks were arranged for children on this occasion. Vinimay revived this dandia program after a gap of few years and the event was celebrated with a lot of energy and joy.

2.3 Cultural Program and Dinner at BKN:

The twin-sister of the New Year program at CCH is of course the Annual Cultural Program and Dinner at BKN which was conducted this year on 24th Feb. A cultural program by the children had been arranged in January on some other occasion, and Vinimay did not want the children's energies being diverted from studies too often. Hence the program was modified and consisted of a quiz, a collage painting session, screening of children films and of course a grand buffet dinner.

3. NEWSABOUT US:

- Monthly meetings of volunteers were regularly held.
- On behalf of Vinimay, volunteers Mrs Mukta Mahapatra, Mr Umesh Mahapatra and Mrs Suganthi Padmanaban visited staff of CCH and BKN to convey our greetings on the occasion of Diwali.
- Bombay Community Public Trust had organized a meeting regarding employment opportunities for under-privileged children in retail outlets. Mr. Atul Shah attended the meeting on behalf of Vinimay.
- Students of Nirmala Niketan organized a meeting of different NGOs at BKN. Mrs. Mukta Mahapatra represented Vinimay in this meeting.
- A new volunteer Mr. Ajit John started teaching to English for a boy of CCH studying in 12th std. Mr Manas Das who had joined as a new volunteer in July '06, restarted classes at our hostel (Tarun Sadan.)
- Our long-time volunteer Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy fell sick and was admitted to a hospital. Many volunteers visited her at the hospital. Mrs. Vasantha has now recovered from her illness and is back in action.
- Mr. Sudhanshu, son of our volunteers Mr. Umesh and Mrs. Mukta Mahapatra, got married on 30th Dec. '06. Many volunteers attended the marriage and blessed the couple. All of us in Vinimay wish Sudhanshu & his wife a married life full of bliss.

4. REWIND – Oct. 2006 to Mar. 2007

4.1. Relating to children

Education

- Another successful academic year ended with the annual examinations held in April. About 14 Vinimay volunteers put in more than 1600 hours in all to teach English and/or Mathematics to standards VI to X at CCH and standards VII to X at BKN. Vinimay volunteers met the SSC children a day before the examinations to wish them best of luck. They also presented the children with pens and geometry instruments.
- Like every year, after the SSC examinations, Vinimay arranged a picnic for the 22 SSC students. The students along with a few Vinimay volunteers travelled by local train to Belapur Mango Gardens. After all the hard work and examination tension, the garden full of trees and shrubs, the beautiful pond with variety of aquatic birds helped to relax the children. As usual, Mrs Mandira Sen had meticulously planned the eats, cold drinks and the program. There was the guppa gosthi, jokes session and of course Antakshiri. There was a career counseling session by Mr Venkataraman. It was a pleasant surprise to see many of the children having already given serious thought to what they want to do with life. Time with children is always quality time. Suddenly we found that it was three in the afternoon and everyone was hungry. All of us moved by train to Vashi, had “Masala Dosa” at the Dosa Corner and then visited “Centre One” (a huge mall) for another round of eats. The escalator ride was exciting. As we reached the third level i.e. the “Food Plaza”, the children were told that they are allotted a certain amount of money per person (just sufficient for a filling meal) and they were asked to plan a meal within that. The volunteers were available to guide. What happened next was simply great. The children made a detailed survey of the shops and the menu offered by each, noted down the prices and grouped together in such a way that they could have a share of all the things they found good and attractive. Seeing them at it was extremely fulfilling. Due to judicious planning and sharing they saved part of their allotted money and returned it to us. We had ice cream on the ground floor. After some hulla gulla, it was late afternoon and we started back. We were lucky to get a long distance ST bus with a very kind conductor who allowed us to get in at Vashi and stopped for us to get down at Agarwadi stop. The children were escorted back to the respective institutions and the picnic was over. For all the volunteers (Mr Venkataraman, Mr. Mithapara, Dr. Das, Mr. Kher, Mrs. Mandira Sen, Mrs. Purandare) and the children it was time well spent.
- The results of the examinations of all classes up to 8th std. (SSC results are awaited) have been excellent. Vinimay shares a great sense of fulfillment along with the institution and the children.

Health

- Supplementary food was arranged for the children of CCH on 10 occasions and BKN on 26 occasions. Of these, expenses for six events were borne by AKKK Sabha of Anushakti Nagar. Volunteers of Vinimay cooked the special food at BKN on almost all Saturdays
- In addition, a pav each for the children of BKN were provided **daily** as part of their breakfast. At CCHome 4 litres of milk was provided for weak children daily. Milk was provided for all children of CCHome (40 litres) once a month.
- Karate classes continued at CCHome; average attendance was 22 which rose to 65 around February.

Clothing and Others

- In addition to a pair of new clothes to each child of CCHome on their birthday, Vinimay also collected and distributed used clothes (418 nos) to the children. Dr. Ganguly, Dr. Shankar, Mr. Nadre, Mrs. Mukta & Mr Umesh Mahapatra and Gorappa participated in this program. We thank Bal Bharati Public School, Kharghar who collected a large number of used clothes for this program.
- Thirteen fans and 32 tube light fittings (both used items) were given to CCHome and BKN courtesy Mr Hitesh Malavia.

Recreation and Social Functions

- Birthdays of children of CCHome were celebrated every month with prayers, cakes, songs, story telling and breakfast for all the children.
- Three more recreational trips for 51 children of CCHome were organized. With this, all the children of CCHome under the age of 12 have been covered under this Program. Mr. Kher was the co-coordinator for this program and personally led all the trips; other volunteers who participated were: Ganesh Parvate, Fakira Shaikh, Ramnath Dhumal, (all three are ex-students of child welfare institutions assisted by Vinimay) Mrs. Mandira Sen, Sushma Iste, Mr. A.N. Purandare, Dhanashri, Mr. Atul Shah and Karishma Shah;
- Play centres at CCHome and BKN were continued, twice a week at each place.

4.2 Relating to youth:

Meetings & Other Events

- Tarun Vinimay Meetings: Regular monthly contact meeting for ex-students of child welfare institution were conducted. The January meeting was on Republic Day and participants joined the flag hoisting ceremony at Tarun Sadan. In addition to subjects like problems at workplace which are of immediate interest, wider subjects such as evolution of human beings and history of India were also discussed in these meetings.

- A training course on Siddhi Samadhi Yoga was organised for Tarun & Smit Vinimay members on four consecutive Sundays starting from 26th March '07 in which 12 persons participated. All the members who attended felt that it would prove very useful in their day to day life. Besides this pranayam which was taught during the course too was very useful in tackling stress in day to day life.
- Mrs Mukta Mahapatra, Mrs Suganthi Padmanaban and Mrs Mandira Sen visited many members of Tarun and Smit Vinimay on the occasion of Diwali.

Education:

Jayesh Bhoir, a Tarun Vinimay member, was given a scholarship of Rs.4400/- to continue his ITI studies.

Jobs:

Two Tarun Vinimay members, Imam Shaikh and Hiren Sarvayya, whom Vinimay had helped in education, got jobs in a government department. (B.A.R.C)

One more Tarun Vinimay member, Kiran Pathare, whom Vinimay had helped to get training in an engineering field viz. NDT, got a job in a gulf country.

Two more Tarun Vinimay members, Pappu Bansode and Sunil Jadhav, were given employment in the field of NDT.

Santosh Satpute got a new job with a handsome increase in salary, through the efforts of Mr.Chintamani Purandare of Vinimay.

Medical Assistance

- ***Surgical Operation for bone-TB:***

A youth, under Vinimay's care, has been suffering from backache for many years and was diagnosed with TB affecting the hip bone. With assistance from Dr. Chandu Vartak, and Dr. Sundaram, an orthopaedic surgeon and Dr. Rekha Vartak, Vinimay got him admitted to Inlaks hospital. After two months of treatment he got tremendous relief but medical examinations showed that a surgical operation was inevitable. This was carried out successfully by Dr. Sundaram – the orthopaedic surgeon and presently he is recuperating at Tarun Sadan. ***We thank the doctors and the management of Inlaks Hospitals*** who gave a substantial concession in the charges. The bill still amounted to about Rs. 40,000/- after the concessions by the hospital. When we were wondering how we are going to manage it, a donor (who wishes to remain anonymous) bore more than half of the bill! We would like to express our sincere gratitude on behalf of the youth and Vinimay to the anonymous donor.

- ***One more serious medical case on hand:***

The wife of one of the Tarun Vinimay members is suffering from drug resistant T B and medication per month amounts to Rs.3000/-. Vinimay has decided to bear these expenses. Investigations have shown that she may need a surgery which may cost up to Rs. 70,000/-.

Help in grief

The father of a Smit Vinimay member passed away at native place far away from Mumbai. A member of Vinimay bore a major part of the expenses of travel for the girl and her mother.

A lot of personal good news

In addition to jobs, there was a lot of good news on the personal front of Tarun Vinimal members.

Shabbir married Saima; Mr & Mrs Atul Shah attended the marriage.

Somnath Pilger married Usha; the marriage was conducted at Shirdi.

Shankar Sunil, an ex-student of our Tarun Sadan Hostel, became the proud father of a cute girl

Kasturi, a girl whose marriage Vinimay had arranged, is expecting a child. The function of seventh month of pregnancy was celebrated at Mr Atul Shah's house. A large number of Vinimay and Tarun Vinimay members attended the function with their families

4.3 TARUN SADAN

Six students joined and five students left Tarun Sadan during the period of this report. The current strength is 33.

Birthdays of boys were celebrated.

Republic Day was celebrated with flag hoisting by Mr. C. Subramanian, a senior member of Vinimay.

Family Traced: Vinimay had one more miraculous success in our efforts to trace the families of youth who had got separated from their families in early childhood. Mr. Andure of Vinimay located the parents of Madanlal who has been a student of our Tarun Sadan Hostel. Taking off from what Madanlal remembered, he had to roam around a few villages in a particular locality in interior Maharashtra before he could locate the family. There was a great re-union as in a movie! Madanlal is in touch with his parents regularly.

Starting with a batch of 8 boys in 1999, the strength of Tarun Sadan has gone up to 33 and is expected to reach 50. To share the work load which has increased many folds Mr. Datta Jadhav has been appointed Asst. Superintendent of Tarun Sadan on a temporary basis from Oct. '06.

5. WINNING MOMENTS

Ruchika is the 13-year-old niece of Mr. Thyagarajan, our volunteer. During diwali of 2005, she happened to speak to her class-mate Madhura about the social involvement of her uncle and the Balmahotsav-05 (a sports and cultural festival for under-privileged children) to be

organized during diwali vacation. The basic goodness which resides in every human being expressed itself through Madhura: she decided to forego her diwali crackers and contribute the money for Balmahotsav. Her parents appreciated her noble feelings and offered to buy her crackers in addition to giving her money for contribution to Balmahotsav. Madhura said 'No' because in that case she was not giving but her parents were. So, she gave the money to Balmahotsav sacrificing crackers that diwali. At that moment we remembered what Sister Barbara, the Superintendent of Maa Niketan (at Thane) had once told us: "You don't really give unless the giving hurts" meaning that you really give only when you sacrifice something

Why do we remember it now, more than a year after it happened? *Because we got donations from Madhura and Ruchika again this Diwali (2006)!'*

A Clarification

Quite often our supporters ask why we spend money on couriering our Vinimag and receipts for donation while ordinary postage would do. Vichare Couriers (through whom we send our material) charge very nominal rates (Rs.5/- per item) from charitable institutions, thus in their own way supporting social work.

While clarifying this point, we also record our deep gratitude to Vichare Couriers

6. CONTACT VINIMAY

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DID 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. 3000 you could sponsor a week long camp for 5 children
- For Rs. 1000 you could sponsor supplementary nutrition programme for 300 children

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