

February 2018

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

The Leadership Academy lays emphasis on 'Organizational Sustainability'- As the Special Olympics Movement turns 50



Two Special Olympics Asia Pacific Leadership Academy Workshops were held in Kolkata, West Bengal in January 2018, led by Mr Denis Doolan, Chief of Organizational Excellence and Ms Olga Yakimakho Senior Manager, Organizational Excellence Special Olympics International. While 17- 19 January 2018 conducted the Leader I bringing on a fresh batch of participants, Leader III held from 21 – 23 January 2018 raised the

bar for participants who had qualified the previous two levels. The participants in both the Academies were from the Asia Pacific Region including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and India



Mr Denis Doolan: *Developing strong, inclusive leaders around the globe is of paramount importance for Special Olympics. We introduced the Leadership Academy to support implementation of the ambitious vision of Special Olympics to build an inclusive world. Special Olympics Asia Pacific region and the Bharat Program have been stellar supporters and pioneers of the Leadership Academy from its*

very beginning. We really appreciate their incredible effort and thrilled to bring the Academy to India for the third time!



The Special Olympics Leadership Academy provides perspectives and tools that help Special Olympics leaders to enhance their personal and organizational performance. The Inaugural Academy was held in December 2014 in India expanding to other countries, South Africa, Egypt, Canada etc and returning to India in May 2016 for the second module. The Leader III workshop held in January 2018 built on the content of the previous two Academies, exploring the subject of organizational sustainability and solidifying the foundations of the participants' leadership development via an experiential workshop format

Air Marshal (Retd) Denzil Keelor PVSM, KC, AVSM, vrc: *"I remember the historical moment when the very first Leadership Academy was inaugurated, in December 2014 in India. Seeing the Special Olympics Bharat program grow substantially, it was my deepest desire to build up on the existing leadership to bolster this growth with quality. This year which marks 50 years of the Special Olympics movement had the Leadership Academy starting the New Year by returning once again to India. This is a phenomenal platform to engage closer with the neighboring countries to impact lives of Persons with and without Intellectual disabilities beyond National boundaries. The enormity of the event stands beyond measure"*

Torch Run led by Special Athletes celebrates 50 years of Joy, Courage and Empowerment



1500 Athletes participated in a Unified Torch Run on 20 January 2018 beginning from the Victoria Memorial. The run was flagged off by Mrs Aruna Abhey Oswal International Director of Lions Clubs International and Founder of the Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust, carrying forward their commitment to create an expanded inclusive development platform across India to benefit children and adults with intellectual disabilities, their families and their communities

Earlier in the morning 15 bicycle Marshals, 6 Mainstream Athletes, 5 Special Athletes carried the torch from the Salt Lake Stadium to the Victoria Memorial North Gate culminating at the Brigade Parade Grounds. The event witnessed tremendous support coming from the Kolkata Police , the Eastern Command of the Indian Army , Media and most importantly all the institutions and the families. The mission of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) is to raise awareness and funds for the Special Olympics movement. This event, and others like it, lead up to our 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Special Olympics movement started by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968



Bibek Bardhan Vice Chairman, SO Bharat: *“We are honored that the Indian leg of the Special Olympics 50 year celebrations is beginning with the torch run in Kolkata moving on to cover the lengths and breadths of the country. We also look forward to this occasion for creating opportunities for more inclusive communities.”*

Unveiling the trophy with the Athletes- Pune Maharashtra

25 Athletes and 10 Coaches from Balkalyan Sanstha & Kamyani Vidyamandir , were part of an event which saw the unveiling of the Tata Open Maharashtra Trophy in Pune. Tennis players Arjun Kadhe and Benoit Paire unveiled the trophy with the Athletes from Special Olympics Bharat - Maharashtra at Shaniwarwaada on Dec. 29, 2018. The trophy was later carried to the Balewadi Stadium

It was exciting to host the athletes from Special Olympics Bharat for the trophy unveiling event of inaugural edition of Tata Open Maharashtra. Our aim in the first edition of this world-class event was to reach out to as many communities as possible across the state and country and awaken the spirit of sports through various initiatives, and the fact that the specially-abled athletes came for one of our prime activations was a matter of great pride. Without an iota of doubt, I would say that for the next year, we would look at engaging closer with Special Olympics Bharat. -- Mr. Sunder Iyer, General Secretary, Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA)



Tata Open Maharashtra is an ATP World Tour 250 series event hosted by Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) in association with Govt. of Maharashtra, Department of Sports and Youth Services, Govt. of Maharashtra. Earlier known as the Chennai Open, over the past two decades of the tournament, we have seen a variety of top players grace the event- Pat Rafter, Boris Becker, Guillermo Canas, Carlos Moya, Paradon Srichapan, Rafael Nadal, Mikhail Youzhny, Marin Cilic and Stan Wawrinka to name a few. Apart from that, the tournament has been a regular fixture for the Indian stalwarts such as Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi and more recently Rohan Bopanna

The largest participation of Athletes sets three records for the State of Kerala



The Kerala State Athletic Meet, in collaboration with the National Charitable Trust, titled 'Ekata', was held from 11-14 January 2018 witnessing participation of 10000 Athletes from 14 districts of the state

The State Games were a bonanza of Unified activities preceding the Athletic events. The attempt of the state to form the largest Human Santa hat gained entry for Special Olympics Bharat in the prestigious space of Guinness World Records. The next day too won accolades for the state organizing the largest Unified Buddy Walk and for holding the largest Athletic Meet for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities marking entry into the Asia World Records

The Torch run commenced from the district of Kassargaur on the 1st of January 2018 , celebrating 50 years of Special Olympics to kick start the State Athletic Meet, travelling through all the 14 districts, reaching Trivandrum on 10 January. Approx. 20,000 Athletes, Coaches, professionals, govt officials, law enforcers participated in the event with over 1000 persons walking unified in each district. In a vibrant display the city came alive with participation of the Bike Riders, Skaters, Mounted Police, Band Team, SAI LNCPE trainees in the walk held from Kawadiar to Kanakakkunnu



The Republic Day upholds Achievements of the Athletes



The 69th Republic Day of India felicitated Special Olympics Bharat Athletes from three states upholding their achievements in the sports arena. 6 Athletes from Anand , Gujarat (*Rakshit V Patel, Jay B Patel, Niren M Patel, Sneha T Thakkar, Maulik J Parekh, Akshar K Prajapati*) were honoured by the District Magistrate for their victory at the National Games in Powerlifting, Table Tennis, Judo and Roller Skating. 6 Athletes from Punjab (*Shamsher Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Raju Rajinder, Jasvir Singh, Akashdeep Singh & Poonam*) were felicitated by His Excellency the Governor of Punjab for their participation at the SO World Winter Games 2017 Austria in Snow Shoeing and Floor Hockey. *Ranveer Saini*, the Golfing Champion of SO Bharat- Haryana was

recognized as 'Golf Champion of the state' by the State Education Minister

Naveen Joseph- Story from Kerala



Naveen had contained himself in a world of his own, detached from everyone, conspicuously unhappy with people around him, not willing to reach out to others. Before he turned 9 his parents attempted to make him join quite a few schools, but each time he refused to go back after a couple of days. Naveen faces difficulties in communication. He was unable to write or even read.

According to his parents this heart breaking pattern continued until he joined the Sneha Deepthy School for Mentally Retarded Children, Mannuthy Kerala. The geniality of the school succeeded to break the pattern cocooning Naveen in its warmth. Belonging to an average economic background it was a respite for Naveen's parents to have a facility like this for their son. They prayed that he settled, which he did, bringing happiness to his father who is a small time contractor and his mother, a homemaker.

At Sneh Dipthi he was introduced to the Special Olympics Program, dance, art and to computers through his Mentor and Coach, Victor. He was given an opportunity to participate in quite a few sport disciplines to assess his final forte. Participating through Athletics, Bocce, Basketball and Badminton he attempted cycling too. [Read More](#)



IKEA Foundation- Lets Play for Change *Exclusive*

Measuring Impact with the Amity University NOIDA



A training program was held at the Amity University NOIDA on 15 January 2018 led by a team from SO Bharat led by Mr Victor R Vaz and the Amity University led by Dr Kalpana Sharma. While the SO Bharat National office team oriented the participants to the Special Olympics program as well as the Young Athletes curriculum, the Amity team outlined the deliverables of research which would include pre, 8 wk, 20 wk, 40 wk and 80 wks impact. 24 persons including SO Bharat local heads, program managers and the Amity research team who would be active participants in the research activities, participated in the meeting

A team of three members from AIT, Bangkok Thailand arrived in New Delhi on 23 January 2018. From 23-26 January 2018 discussions were held outlining Research specifications with teams from SO Bharat and Amity University. The discussions included locations of research, time spent on individual assessment of each Young Athlete's progress against potential challenges and optimal utilization of the strengths. The Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand is assisting Special Olympics to evaluate the impact of the Young Athletes Program. Amity University is the local partner of the project conducting research to establish the impact of the program Pan India with the required support from SO Bharat.

Development & Change through Play- Pranavheer is happy to follow the Path

Story from Punjab



Pranavheer's mother had no idea how to look after a child with Downs Syndrome. She was speechless and anguished when the diagnosis of her son's condition was revealed to her. When Pranavheer was 6-7 months old his milestones were not up to the mark. The doctor counselled his mother to motivate and strongly support her son and only that would impart him the best quality of life. He belongs to a sound family background cocooned in the love of his over protective sister and his parents, both of whom are working. However, his aggressive behaviour was becoming a concern for his mother. In the year 2016-17 Pranavheer joined St Joseph's Convent, Jalandhar, Punjab.



Rekha, Pranavheer's mentor recalls how he had been so difficult to control in his first session. He had to be checked for flinging the equipment across and for misusing it. His restive behaviour often called for individual attention of the supervisors. 3 Months on Rekha says, *"The changes in his behaviour are tremendous. He is not only compliant but also tries to help his co-athletes. Holding the ball, throwing, walking , jumping- all this and listening to instructions is a great achievement. Group sessions have improved his behaviour"*

Pranavheer looks forward to these sessions as they make him very happy and has brought him closer to his Mentor- Rekha Kashyap and her team which includes Sr. Rosi, Navjot Sarup and Mamta Sharma. Every morning his mother only has to take any one name and that's enough to see him dress on time!

SO Bharat Young Athletes [Facebook page](#)

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