

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

Shrey Kadian honoured with the 'Remarkable Achiever' Award by the School of Open Learning



Very recently, the School of Open Learning honored Shrey Kadian, SO Bharat Athlete leader, a member of the Special Olympics Global Athlete leadership Council (GALC), with the 'Remarkable Achiever' Award as the International Sports Athlete, on the Occasion of the 60th Foundation Day of the institute. The award was presented by Dr. Vikas Gupta, Registrar of University of Delhi at the

University of Delhi Sports Stadium on 5th May, 2022. The event coincided with the nation-wide Azadi Ka Amrit Mahostav celebrations under way.

The announcement for Shrey at the occasion upheld his achievement of a Gold Medal in Softball at the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2015, LA, USA. [View here](#) Through the accolade Shrey has made it to the Delhi University, School of Open Learning Magazine, alongside few other recipients. Proudly donned in the Special Olympics outfit he received the award and later ensured to make all his well-wishers a part of the honour, including Special Olympics who he thanked for supporting his ascent. Shrey is currently, preparing to represent the Asia Pacific region at the Global Athlete Leadership Council (GALC) to be held parallelly the USA Games in June 2022. He is looking forward to sharing his thoughts and experiences around Unified Leadership and also deliberate over the existing barriers to Inclusion



Ribbon Day unfurls Sports bonanza



Between 26 April and 6 May 2022, 1800 Athletes between ages 6 and 12 competed in Athletics, Bocce, Baggo etc. also participating in a few recreational activities, through the support of Herbalife Nutrition. The Ribbon Day celebrated the Special Olympics Developmental Sports module in 34 districts across 21 States. The pandemic and the subsequent lock down kept the Coaches and the Athletes connected through virtual sessions and video assessments which culminated in an in-person event that splashed joy and color across the states in India.

It may be pertinent to note that the Young Athletes program that expanded extensively through the support of the IKEA Foundation few years back, carved a path for the Athletes to escalate to a more focussed sports training through **Developmental Sports, made possible by Herbalife Nutrition.**

Developmental Sports helps Young Athletes transition to an age-appropriate introduction to sports for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 6-12 years old. There is a known gap of participation between Young Athletes (sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7 years old), and Special Olympics sports. By emphasizing sport skill development in a structured sport environment, Special Olympics can focus on retention of participants and development of athlete skills.



With the support of Herbalife Nutrition SO Bharat has successfully implemented Developmental Sports in many states of India, since March 2020 impacting nearly 7000 Athletes.

Viewing the world through the eyes of our Children



Bryne and Janice Rodrigues are parents of Joanne (14 yrs) and Brydan (12 yrs), both on the Autism Spectrum. They joined SO Bharat in 2020, when the world was engulfed by the pandemic. Joanne and Brydan were actively engaged in several unified activities and interactions held virtually. Their first in-person participation came during the National Health fest where while Joanne and Brydan got screened, Bryne and Janice volunteered to assist the Thane / Mumbai (Maharashtra) team for the event. Being also the lifeline of the monthly SO Bharat Family Cafes, the Rodrigues family,



as they sign themselves, churn out one ice-breaker after the other that has been instrumental in bringing the group together through joy & laughter. However, their experiences have not always been 'joyful'. They went through the shock of a diagnosis not once but twice. They fought through stray and hurtful comments from people who hastily categorized their children. Nevertheless, drawing strength from their children, the two professionals who were at the prime of their careers, relocated themselves to India with development of Joanne and Brydan being the prime focus.

Joanne Rodrigues, recently won an online Live cooking competition. She stood first in a competition that kept her productively engaged whilst preparing for the competition. While her victory brought a moment of jubilation, the journey leading to it was a result of the involvement of the whole family making every moment an opportunity of struggle, strife, joy and amazement.

As Bryne and Janice count their blessings, Joanne and Brydan look forward to participating in Swimming & Skating and have already connected with Ms Sneha Jadhav, the SO Bharat Coach in Mumbai.

"We do not blame society and their thought process – as we strongly believe that till we do not advocate and expose our kids, they wouldn't be able to understand our Challenges and hence won't be able to react in an appropriate way. Its only when this understanding is developed in society, there would be total acceptance which leads to inclusion in the real sense" – Bryne & Janice Rodrigues. [There is more to talk about this amazing family](#)

A Partnership that bloomed during the National Health Fest

Sharing their desire to give back to society S.R.Gopal Rao ,with their partner Essilor Vision Foundation (EVF), they have collaborated for several initiatives, the most recent event was the Special Olympics Bharat on World Health Day. Meghana Manay, Chief Operations Officer, S.R. Gopal Rao attended the event in Ahmedabad, commented, *“It’s a pleasure for us to partner with two prestigious organisations that are working for the larger good. It is not easy for us to create such a large impact on our own. We are honoured to be vision partners for the Special Olympics Bharat, alongside Essilor Vision Foundation and will continue to do so in the years to come.”* .

Together, S.R.Gopal Rao and Essilor Vision Foundation donated 7,500 pairs of sunglasses and several prescription eyeglasses to the Athletes who participated in the National Health Fest



The eye examination of the Athletes would be incomplete without the support of partners such as the Essilor Vision Foundation and S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians. Their support in providing eyewear substantiates their commitment towards care with quality. Inclusive health is a space that Special Olympics has been creating for many years recognizing the commitment of organizations through the Golizano Awards. It is a matter of pride for us, that Essilor Vision Foundation and S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians received this much-deserved honour in 2021. Both are playing a prominent role in widening the space of Inclusion in Health in India, and we trust to traverse a long way ahead together, in transforming lives of Persons with Intellectual Disability- **Dr Mallika Nadda, Chairperson, SO Bharat.** [Click here](#) to read a blog post written by S.R. Gopal Rao

The Path ahead of the festival for Chattisgarh



83 out of 100 Athletes in Durg were presented a learning kit by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) at the National health fest, that brought the two organizations together for the first time. The Area Director, Dr Pramod Kumar Tiwari plans to connect with them for a more strategic planning in future. Similarly, Chattisgarh deliberates outcomes of the event on different counts that could be long-lasting.

'Safeguarding' as a prominent subject is something he upheld, saying that this initiative is likely to increase sports participation of the Special Athletes as it would raise the credibility of Special Olympics and give a re-assurance to their parents of it being a safe space. The electronic media' attention to the event was drawn due to the scale in addition to the content. The event broke the inhibitions that had been building up in the parents owing to the pandemic. It got them prepared to bring back their children to sports. The digital platform has created an enormous data which promises a higher participation of Athletes in the days to come. Across the three districts of Chattisgarh, namely, Durg, Raipur and Bilaspur, at least 10 new special schools have entered the Special Olympics arena through the advisory issued by the department of social justice & empowerment. All eight Unified Champion Schools developed by the state, through the support of the SOI-MBZ grant saw their students participate whole-heartedly in a variety of lead roles.

Gateway to Special Olympics through the Athlete leaders



Taking their roles very seriously, the Athlete leaders have been practising to lead Special Olympics Orientation sessions held at mainstream schools and colleges. Earlier this year Siddhant Nath and Yashika Bhatt led a session at the Lady Irwin College, and now Siddhant and Shivam

Verma led one at the Navjot Institute, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi.

After having held multiple sessions inclusively, both in-person as well as virtually, they are now conducting the sessions independently. Siddhant and Shivam enlightened a group of 11 potential volunteers/Youth leaders introducing them to the Special Olympics movement worldwide and in India, reading out the mission while also defining the differences between Special Olympics and Paralympics. Their role doesn't end here. Siddhant Nath, like last time, concluded the assignment by submitting a report complete with facts, pictures and names of the participants. As Sid would be spending a lot of time in Goa, he plans to lead Youth Activation there, prepared to guide the youth leaders without Intellectual Disability, in this endeavor.

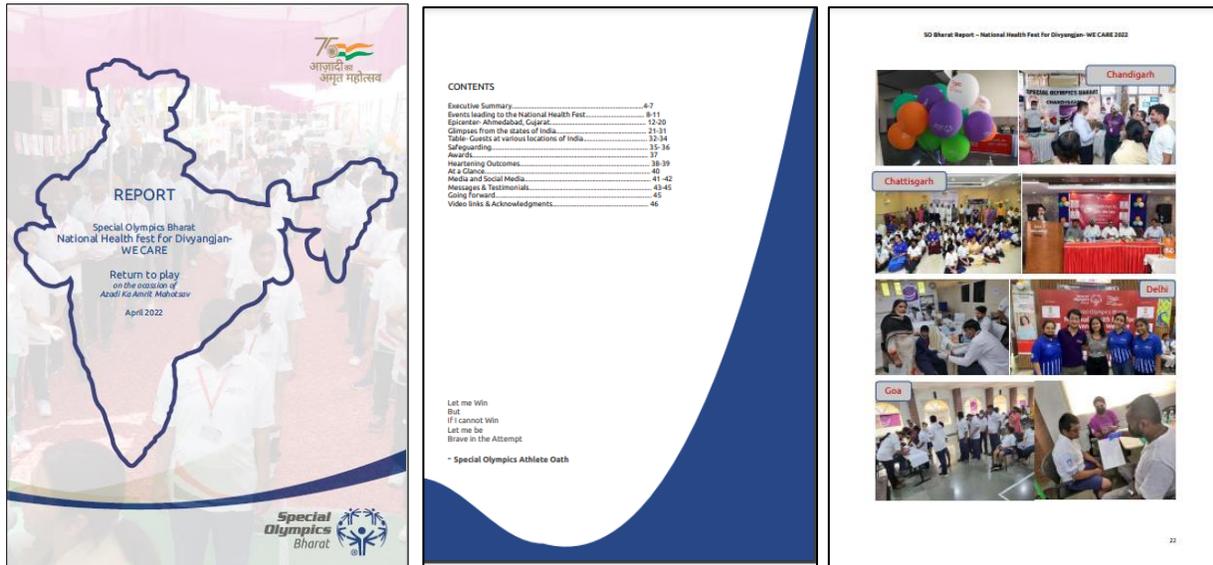
The Father and Son duo see the sun rise from the top of the World



"We prayed every morning to the magnanimous Mt Everest to allow us to visit her. Before that we had our roles clear; I had told Avnish that his responsibility is to reach the top safe and fine, and hold the flag of India, and I would take care of all the logistics" – says Aditya Tiwari. What the duo aspired for is no regular feat. They decided that they would scale Mount Everest. On 19 April 2022 at 7:45AM, Avnish, 7 yrs, became the youngest child to reach an altitude of 5,500 Meters (18,200 ft) at Mount Everest, world's highest peak. On the day, the sky was clear, the view majestic, there were no clouds and no gusts and the two stood dazed in victory

Avnish is a child born with Down Syndrome. He was given up for adoption by his biological parents and was blessed to be adopted by a single parent, Aditya Tiwari. Preparing for the mountain was a journey by itself. A couple of months earlier, Avnish started with his daily training of an hour- running and going up and down the stairs. Being a resident of Indore, Madhya Pradesh, travelling to Gulmarg, was part of the training that acclimatized him to low temperatures. According to Aditya, his medical well-being was priority. He carried nearly 10kgs of medicines, a nebulizer etc., fortunately, none of which was required throughout the journey. The grit of the father and his decision to turn down dissuasions by the consulting doctors, and the excitement within Avnish made the dynamic blend that spelt achievement. A driving force to achieve the feat was to change the perception of the society about persons with special needs. "I learnt that courage is not absence of fear, but triumph over it"- Aditya Tiwari, father of Avnish. [View](#)

Report – National Health Fest for Divyangjan – WE CARE



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