

Greetings from Special Olympics Bharat

The LEOs and SO Bharat Athletes unify in thought and action



The SO Bharat Athletes in Chattisgarh were invited by the Lions members in Krishnapuram(Bilaspur)for an event hosted by the Lions Club in Chattisgarh. Twelve trees of Palm, Mango, & Neem were planted in a joint endeavour through the coordination of Ms Kavita Pujara, Nutritionist and parent of Simran Pujara, Athlete from Chattisgarh. Ms Pujara is currently the President of the Lions Club Women and plans to take forward joint activations with the participation of the youth leaders and the LEOs. A few activities have been planned including an eye check-up camp and Unified sports, before the end of this year.

Falling in sync through continuing inclusive sports



This is what you feel as you see Shubham and Honey together. Since we might want to understand who they are; while Shubham is a youth without and ID (Intellectual Disability), Honey is one who has an ID. When we view the sports-space they share and beyond, we realise that they are like any other two individuals who play together, share common goals and experiences; they spend time discussing strategies of their game/ skills, specifically these days Badminton, as Honey is preparing for an upcoming virtual Badminton competition. Unified sports, that has teams composed of players with and without ID, have brought Honey and Shubham together. Shubham is a passionate sportsperson playing multiple sports including Badminton and Football. Playing with Honey has brought him more opportunities to play and has also sensitized him towards differences and their acceptance. Before joining SO Bharat Shubham was unaware that sports



could be introduced to persons with Intellectual Disabilities, or whether there was a structured sports program for them at all. Shubham visits Honey's school regularly to train various other Athletes along with Honey. Honey has made Shubham aware about Special Olympics. The continuous engagements & interaction seem more comfortable and natural with every successive opportunity. Both belong to Bareilly, a city in Uttar Pradesh that has been able to reach out to over 250 schools, mainstream, special and integrated with the Unified Sports programming, since 2018, through the support of SNF (Stavros Niarchos Foundation). [More about Honey Singh](#)

Sensitization program for the Special Olympics Bharat Athletes in Assam



A sensitization program on the 'Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act' was conducted by Advocate Zenifa Khatoon of Guwahati High Court with the youth leaders and family members in Guwahati, Assam. The event was initiated by Ms. Rani Bonzo, a local Special Olympics youth leader and currently working as a counselor in Cotton University. Engaging with the Athletes of the Ashadeep day rehabilitation centre for children and adults with intellectual disability and associated disorder for a while now, she planned to conduct a session on the subject through her friend Advocate Zenifa Khatoon. Youth leaders over the age of twelve, with and without ID were invited along with a few parents. Priyanka, the UCS (Unified Champion School) program coordinator said, "The topic of safeguarding the athletes as much as anyone else has assumed prominence. It is a topic that is relevant to each and every person in the society. Seeing the response to this sessions by way of questions being asked from all, including an athlete leader, makes it important for us to plan more or rather regular sessions every six months or so." She is sure to plan more sessions in the days to come

Spreading Awareness to bring about Acceptance



Various schools and colleges, actively involved in the SNF-supported Special Olympics Unified Schools program, joined over 200 walkers in an awareness drive carried out in Kolkata. It was unique in a way that it had the Athletes from both Special Olympics as well as Paralympics, both of whom wanted to spread the message of Inclusion while also that they are two separate entities, united in their endeavours. The Civilian Welfare foundation partnered with SO Bharat to organize the walk. Everyone walked a distance of 2.5 kms together. These walks have in the past too, drawn attention of the society as they are organised in the heart of the city and get media coverage. This one was covered by the Ananda bazar Patrika, the most popular Bengali daily with over 10.5 lakh circulation per day, apart from the online coverage.

In the words of Renaissan Dutta, a youth leader without ID “It was a new experience for me, thought it will be a simple walk with athletes but it turned out to be such vibrant one, with athletes cheering, media persons taking our pictures, bystanders participating, random college students joining in, policemen with smiling faces participating and encouraging more people to join! The Athletes, as one of them said, felt like celebrities”

The National Coaching Camps keep the Athletes focussed on developing through Sports



A National Coaching Camp (NCC) is not just about upgrading sports skills but it is about forging friendships and striking a bond despite the diversities in the backgrounds. The month of September is witnessing participation of 280 Athletes and 103 Coaches from over 15 States of India across two National Coaching Camps, one of them underway. Supported by the Sports Authority of India and held in preparation of the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2023 Berlin, the Camps feature Athletics, Basketball, Badminton, Cycling, Football, Futsal, Powerlifting, Swimming and Volleyball.

As much as being opportunities for the Athletes to re-discover themselves, the NCCs draw attention of potential partners and supporters to the abilities of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.



While the Camp earlier this month was held at IIT, Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, another is unfolding at the sports complex which is a facility of the Bokaro Steel Plant Ltd in Jharkhand.

A typical Camp entails team & individual skill assessments, further shortlisting athletes as per their skill/tactics and knowledge about the game. Basis the criterion, groups are formed and inter-group games and competitions are held to enable them to get familiar with team

dynamics. The most important part of the Camp is left to the last, where the athletes are evaluated on specified criterion including their potential. The Coaches depart from the camps with the responsibility of staying connected with both, the athlete and the local coach, remotely, to ensure sustainable practise routines.



Celebrating the National Sports day underpinning Inclusion



The Jaypee Public School, Greater NOIDA celebrated its Annual Inter School competition - 'Concurrence 2022' on the National sports day, highlighting Inclusion. The Annual Mega Inter School Competition this year conducted Inclusive Cultural, Sports and Scholastic events witnessing participation of over 550 students from 30 schools including 70 children with Disabilities from the NCR (National Capital Region) region. Sports revelled in multiple shades including Table Tennis, Shooting, Badminton, Skating, Yoga, Fitness Skill and 'Chess in School' Chess Tournament 2022, in alliance with the U.P Chess Sports Association.

Ms Meeta Bhandula, the principal and Ms Neeraj Singh, HOD Sports, Jaypee Public School, continued to keep the Inclusion decibel high as they underpinned the role of sports in physical & mental development. Jaypee Public School is a Unified Champion School in the National Capital Region, and did not step back in keeping the students involved virtually as well, across different activities, even as the pandemic kept prolonging its presence.

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