



TOP STORY

✦ LIFE in PALNA in the times of the pandemic.



SPOTLIGHT

✦ Rohan

QUARTERLY UPDATES

✦ Details



AN APPEAL

WELL-WISHERS SPEAK

✦ Comments

OCT 2020, VOL 34

DCCWConnect



Life in PALNA in the times of the pandemic

Life in PALNA changed drastically with the new COVID-19 guidelines for keeping our little ones safe. Our daily routine of sanitising, thermal temperature checks, staff to shower and change into their uniforms, with head scarf, mask, and apron, overalls for quarantine children - and only then report to the rooms, is the new normal. MCD's role too is much appreciated for the regular weekly sanitisation of the entire premises. All this has been further intensified keeping in mind the warnings given by the health authorities that the COVID-19 would be more intense as winter approaches, and there is no room for complacency.

The COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions since March 2020 delayed both the adoption process - with courts being suspended - as well as the ability of parents who had completed all the formalities, to travel down to Delhi to take their children home. This resulted in children having to stay in homes / institutions through the last six months. This situation has now changed with courts reopening and cases being cleared, and with the travel relaxations for special cases, families will now be arriving and taking their children home. In September itself PALNA saw four little ones go to their forever homes, and more will be following suit in the coming months. This is a specially joyous time for the PALNA team, after the long wait.



Though the number of children coming to PALNA has not seen a significant increase in the last six months, what has increased is the proportion of ill infants and those with special needs that have been coming. This increases the pressure on our resources, especially at this time, but each such child receives the complete care and attention that he or she needs.

One interesting sidelight of the last few months has been the increased number of PALNA children reaching out to us in search of their roots. PALNA has always welcomed back children who started their lives here, and come back years later - sometimes carrying a photograph of a special bua (caregiver), wanting to meet and thank her. But there has been a sudden upsurge in the number of children (now grown up) or their parents asking for all details that were recorded when the child arrived at PALNA. We are able to tell them the day and time they came, how old they were, photos from that time, etc. The clothes a child arrives in are kept carefully and handed over at the time the child's adoption to the parents. Several have even been asking if we know their time of birth.

Nowadays when children are being taught about genetics in school, they are asked what traits they share with their parents, making adopted children feel different. We hope the education system becomes more sensitive in addressing these issues. PALNA team counsels children asking such questions to move forward with the beautiful life given to them, let go of the past, and look at the sunshine ahead.

Spotlight - Rohan

When Rohan (name changed) was left in the cradle at the gates of PALNA in mid-2018, he was a new-born, unknown, abandoned infant. As the baby's weight in the cradle set off the siren in the PALNA premises, indicating that a child had arrived, a nurse came and immediately took Rohan to our in-house Medical Crisis Unit. Like many other infants and children, Rohan arrived at PALNA in a precarious state of health. A preliminary examination by the PALNA medical staff revealed that the baby was underweight and had bilateral pneumonia. His treatment was started immediately, and he made a complete recovery.

At around six weeks of age, his echocardiography was suggestive of a tiny hole in the heart. His liver functions were also found to derange, and on further investigation at LNJP Hospital, Delhi, it was found that his liver enzymes are on the higher side. Overall he has been doing well clinically under the constant and loving care of the PALNA medical staff and caregivers, but he does require regular monitoring.

Rohan is now two years old and has grown into a happy, cheerful child, developing almost at par for his age, despite his health issues. He is sociable and enjoys playing with his friends here. He is also very fond of his caregivers. From the time he was received at PALNA, he has shown wonderful improvement and has been doing well overall, showing almost normal age appropriate growth and milestone achievements.

In a wonderful development, a family has come forward to adopt Rohan and make him their own. They are fully aware of his medical condition, as all the details have been shared with them. The entire legal adoption process had been completed, and Rohan was to join his forever family in March. However, due to the pandemic and the subsequent travel restrictions, Rohan's parents have not been able to come and take him with them. The parents pleaded their case, but they were not permitted to travel to India to pick up their son. But now, finally, travel has been opened for adoptive parents and soon Rohan will be able to join his forever family.



Quarterly Updates

Update on programmes

Due to the regulations laid down by the government to deal with the Covid-19 outbreak, we are still unable to run the programmes that require young children to come to our centres. As a result, this last quarter, the status on our programmes has been as follows:

- ✦ PALNA, our home for abandoned children, continues to operate in full force - details in our top story.
- ✦ **Educational Sponsorship programme:** In keeping with the unlock guidelines we propose to disburse the next sponsorship amount starting in the first week of December, by giving specific timeslots to parents to come to our Janakpuri Centre which has ample space to enable maintaining adequate distance. Processes have been defined to avoid contact and interaction. Also, sanitizer dispensers along with masks and temperature checks would ensure safety.
- ✦ We are all set to re-start our Vocational Training Programmes at two of our centres from 1st October, based on which we will look at re-starting the programme across more centres. We have prepared the centres as per government protocols and standard operating procedure. We are splitting the batches to ensure social distancing, and stringent sanitisation regimes have been put in place. Posters of the protocols, marking of workstation positions, consent of parents, and staff in overalls is the new routine for the team.
- ✦ We tried to run the tuition / supervised homework scheme programme online in August and September, but without much success as our beneficiaries do not have easy access to smartphones or computers, and so had to discontinue the attempt.
- ✦ We have closed down our Bal Chetna rehabilitation programme for special needs children, as that is a programme that cannot be run in the foreseeable months ahead, given the age and medical condition of the beneficiaries.



The senior management and the board are regularly monitoring and evaluating the situation.

To help our financial situation, we have been fortunate in running a successful fund-raising campaign for PALNA in partnership with GiveIndia, in August-September 2020.

The new Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) amendments proposed by the government, which came into effect on 29th September, have had an impact on our functioning, including receiving donations through our website. We are looking into getting this resolved on priority.

A donor has come forward to fund the re-development of the PALNA garden / playground, which has been unusable since the Metro returned the area back to PALNA, as it is uneven and full of rubble, and therefore not safe for children to use. The work of clearing the area and levelling it was started in September.

The Annual General Meeting of Delhi Council for Child welfare was held as an online meeting on Friday 25th September. The Annual Report for 2019-20 including the audited annual accounts was released to the members. The deep impact of the pandemic on the programmes and finances was also presented and discussed.



An Appeal

The pandemic has made life challenging for every organisation, institution and individual. Not unexpectedly, NGOs have found their funding deeply impacted, especially as institutional and corporate funding has come to virtual standstill these last few months. However expenses are rising, and existence itself becomes a challenge.

We are deeply indebted to the generosity of our well-wishers – both old and new - who have stepped forward during this time to support us of their own accord. We take this opportunity to thank the Mulani family, Mr Muskan Thacker, Mr Sanjeev Dhody, Mr Nitish Goel, Mr Rajesh Khanna, Prof Shreekant Gupta, Mr Punit Makhija, Mr Umang Saran Bhatnagar, Mr Indranil Banerjee, Mr V Venkateswaran and several others for their generosity this last quarter. There have also been some well-wishers who have been making smaller but regular contributions, and they have become our invaluable partners. It is all these people who make PALNA possible.

We appeal to everyone to help us through this difficult time. No amount is too small as every little bit goes a long way.

You can make a donation through <https://dccw.org/donate.php>

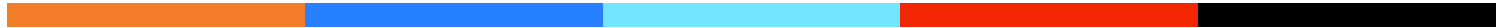
Well-Wishers Speak

Kumar Aggarwal, Sep 2020

I have tears in my eyes that I cannot do more. May god bless all the wonderful and pure work that everyone at PALNA is doing!!

Sanjeev Dhody, Sep 2020

Dear All at PALNA - You are doing a great job for humanity. Pray God bless all the children at your shelter, and they be successful in their lives. Though parents cannot be replaced, but with your love for the children, this void can be filled up to an extent.



Delhi Council for Child Welfare (DCCW) is a Registered NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), established in 1952 to care for children who had been displaced during the riots that took place after the partition of India. Since its inception over 50 years ago, DCCW has grown, its services expanding and diversifying to keep pace with the changing needs of Delhi's less fortunate children. Today, DCCW provides a range of services for underprivileged children living in and around Delhi,



DELHI COUNCIL FOR CHILD WELFARE
QUDSIA BAGH, CIVIL LINES, DELHI 110 054, INDIA
WWW.DCCW.ORG