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DCCWConnect



Getting back into our stride - slowly and carefully

The new year brought joy to us at DCCW - like everywhere else - with the pandemic showing signs of tapering down slowly. We were delighted as our programmes could restart and our centres would be bubbling with the chatter and laughter of our little beneficiaries, who in turn were eager to start a new phase after pandemic restrictions were relaxed. The DCCW outreach team started re-connecting with parents to inform them that we were restarting after the long hiatus. The children's excitement was clearly felt and many parents too were eager that the children would be off their phones and finally be back to physical learning in the classroom with social interactions. They all uniformly felt that their children's learning had been deeply impacted via the online mode, as their limited infrastructure for online classes was a constraint, combined with the fact that they could not help the children with their school-work.



The programmes were started in February, in a staggered and gradual manner, and it took about three weeks for the programmes to gather momentum. The vocational training programme targeted at adolescents had a faster start and numbers increased quickly, whereas Palna WeeKids (for pre-school children) and the Supervised

Homework Scheme, where the beneficiaries are younger, were slower. Many parents are waiting for the schools to reopen in April, after which they would enrol their wards. In just six weeks, the number of beneficiaries is already at more than 60% of full capacity. All Covid-19 protocols are being maintained at the centres.

The only programme that is yet to be restarted is the BalChetna Outreach programme providing day-care and rehab therapies for special needs children, as the logistics for this programme need a more conducive environment. If the pandemic situation remains under control, we will restart this programme, one centre at a time.



We have however started providing physiotherapy sessions at our Janakpuri centre in a small way, and this will continue to be expanded.

Despite the pandemic Palna was operational in full steam throughout. Our donors ensured that in these difficult times the children were not left wanting for anything. The Educational Sponsorship Programme has also continued throughout. Due to the pandemic, some of the beneficiaries had dropped out as their families migrated. But now many new registrations are taking place, and we again have over 900 beneficiaries.

Spotlight: Anil - Truth is stranger than fiction

In mid-1996 Palna received a seven-year-old boy found by the Delhi Police at the Inter State Bus Terminal, Kashmere Gate. The child only knew his name (Anil) but was unable to give his home address or any other detail which would help in finding his family. So, Anil began living in Palna and soon made friends with other children his age. Within two months of coming to Palna, Anil and two of his friends were found missing. It was finally concluded that they had run away by managing to jump over the rear boundary wall. This had never happened before in Palna. The staff on duty were alerted and launched a search in nearby areas, and also filed an FIR. But the boys were nowhere to be found. They are the only children to have ever run away from Palna, before or since.

After a couple of months, two children in ragged clothes arrived at the Palna gate saying they lived in Palna. The guard could not recognise them, but a staff member did. They were the two boys who had run away with Anil! The boys were joyously welcomed back into the fold. They had found survival in the city very difficult, and were not treated well. What they missed most however was the Palna food, and that became the driving force for them to find their way back! They knew the name of the home, and that helped them make their way back. But Anil had gone off on his own in between, and neither of the boys knew where he was. Within a year both the boys were adopted and joined their forever families.

Anil remained Palna's only runaway child and was never found.

In March 2022 a young man came to Palna and walked around the compound before entering the office. As soon as he saw Loraine Campos who is in charge of Palna, he recognised her. He told her that he was a boy who had run away from Palna over 25 years ago! It was Anil!

He then gave his side of the story. He had left home after being reprimanded by his father for a misdeed, and got onto a bus which brought him to Delhi. Here he was found by the police and brought to Palna. After running away from Palna with his two friends, he started yearning for home after being out in the city for a few weeks. With the help of some good Samaritans, he eventually found his way back to his home and family in Punjab. His father and family were thrilled to have him back and since then Anil has been living with his family.

Then, suddenly, five years ago he started thinking about the time he had been away from his family in his childhood. He had no recollection of the name of the home he had stayed in, but it became important for him to find it. It took him five years of searching whenever he happened to be in Delhi, before he eventually reached Palna! He was very elated and as there were still people in Palna who knew of him!

Reconnecting with Palna worked as a catharsis and closure for him. He asked about the two boys who had run away along with him, and was happy to learn that they had made it back. He carried good memories of his time in Palna and his aim in returning was to give back in some way for what he had received. He went around Palna with Loraine and was very moved, and has promised to return and help Palna in any little way he can.

Anil's return has been nothing short of miraculous and has been a healing balm to everyone at Palna. The prodigal son had finally come home.

GiveIndia Fundraiser for Palna: The pandemic period of the last two years has been a difficult time the world over. We at Palna felt the pinch and pulled back on our expenses, doing only what was essential to meet our children's needs. Our donors stepped in to meet our basic requirements but maintaining our quality of service and care became a challenge, with increased expenses to ensure covid precautions and protocols. Aware of the struggles that NGOs like us were facing, GiveIndia stepped in with a full-fledged fundraising campaign for Palna. The video of our medical requirement and care & support for little ones struck a chord with people across the world who donated generously for our cause. Our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to GiveIndia for their support to us which would take us a long way in meeting the needs of our children, and helped Palna end the year with a smile!



Critical repairs at centres: Some critical repairs at our centres which had been pending for long aggravated by disuse for last two years, which could not be attended to due to careful financial spend as well as the fact that we did not want to endanger the children with outside workers coming in, were finally undertaken as it was becoming unsafe to leave them unaddressed. We still have more to do in this area, and



that will be undertaken over the coming months. We are grateful to our donors for providing support for the same, reducing the load on DCCW.

A generous donor stepped in to revamp the Palna classroom which was in very bad shape. The children are loving the bright transformed room and making sure that they keep their classroom shining.



Faculty training: DCCW has a sponsor partner in Godrej for its vocational training course in Beauty Culture. As part of upgrading the instructors, Godrej organized a one-week training program for the instructors at their centre in Mumbai. Our complete team of ten Instructors were rigorously trained in both theory and practical by their experts, and were rigorously evaluated at the end of the course.



Workshops for Vocational Training beneficiaries: Godrej held a workshop on Nail Art for our Beauty Culture course trainees in March – this has been added to the curriculum some time ago due to its value to the participants.

Self-Defence Training: As they have been doing for several years now, Delhi Police conducted self-defence training for our girls at our Janakpuri and Pandav Nagar centres.



This quarter, **Republic Day, Holi, and children's birthdays** were celebrated with much enthusiasm!

Donors Speak

Your messages and words of support. They keep our spirits high.

Narinder Kumar: *Thank you very much for helping children who need help. Best regards to all team members and supporting staff of PALNA.*

Kam and Peter Hummel: *God bless your work for helping children in need!*

Sanjeev Pawar: *Thanks for the good work you are doing for society. Much appreciated.*

Monika Bhat: *God bless each and every child*

Rahul Kumar Garg: *Wish you a lot of success in enabling bright minds of future.*

Richa Hira: *Keep doing the great work.*

Marianne Malay Pota: *We thank you for your tremendous efforts in taking care of our abandoned children. May God bless you always.*

Anis Farooqui: *Thank you for your humanitarian work.*

Mayur Kala: *Keep up the good work. God is with you.*

All donations to Delhi Council for Child Welfare get tax exemption under Section 80G of the Income tax act of India. To donate, do visit our website <https://dccw.org/donate.php>

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.



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