



MESSAGE



SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA SEVA KENDRA is privileged to impart special education to hearing impaired children, who have difficulty in their ability to communicate verbally. Although children look absolutely normal, they find themselves in a situation which causes tremendous concern. The parents are also unaware of the remedial course of action.

With the availability of new technology and teaching methods, it is now possible to restore the ability to hear and speak for children with hearing difficulty. They can now join their peers in the normal school system of education once they go through special training to regain their ability and confidence.

Such a situation needs a lot of support from philanthropic persons and organizations. Our plan to construct a new campus requires huge funds to create the infrastructure needed.

We are confident that we will receive all the assistance required. We take this opportunity to thank our donors, staff members and well wishers who have helped us in continuing our mission of providing special education without fees to those who are challenged by God to overcome the disability thrust on them for no fault of their own.

Mr. P. K. Laheri

Chairman

DEAFNESS IS AN INVISIBLE DISABILITY. Deaf children look like all other children and therefore do not arouse any concern or empathy among the public. Yet, severe to profound deafness has some of the most debilitating effects on a person as it affects the areas most vital to all human beings and to life itself, that is the ability to think, acquire language and speech and communicate. The ability to communicate with people around us using the medium of language and speech is perhaps the most defining of all human qualities. Language is the core of life and the basis for our thought and education. So vital is it to our existence that the infant brain is able to master its entire complexities primarily through listening in the first few years of life.

Deaf children do not acquire adequate language naturally and easily. The process of language acquisition is long and difficult for them. This has far reaching consequences emotionally, socially and academically. Nothing in life has as profound an impact on an individual as his ability to acquire language. According to the 2001 census:

- There are over 12 million deaf persons in India of which 81% live in rural areas.
- There are over 300000 deaf children between the ages of 0-4 years in the country.
- 1 out of every 1000 children born is born deaf. 25000 deaf children are born every year.
- There are only 530 schools for the deaf in the country, mainly in urban areas mainly up to standard 7. 50,000 children between the ages of 5-18 years are educated in these schools.
- 68.8% of the children get NO education.
- 19.5% study up to primary school. 7.6% study up to middle school.
- 2.5% study up to secondary school. 1.1% study up to higher secondary school.
- 0.9% study up to graduation and beyond. 1% get employment

It is obvious that the education scenario for deaf children within the country is in a pretty dismal state. The situation in Gujarat state is even more depressing. Many districts like Porbandar have no services at all to cater to this population. The first schools for the deaf in the country were started over 100 years ago but progress in this field has been painfully slow and unsatisfactory.

Education is the cornerstone for human development. It opens up and provides avenues of opportunities that would otherwise be closed. Empowerment to make informed choices about ones life comes through meaningful education alone.

It was this dream to provide the best value based education possible to deaf children in Gujarat, so that they too could be integrated into the mainstream of life as equal members of society that was the guiding principle in starting the Institute.



GENESIS



A DREAM... A BURNING DESIRE... A WISH... and then a dream come true with the help of Shri Shantikumar Kothari and his wife Taraban Kothari.

The Institute was born on 3rd March 2001 as 'The Shantikumar Kothari Education and Research Centre for the Hearing Impaired.' Divyaben Raval, the chairman of the Saraswati Education Trust, Gandhinagar was kind enough to allow the school to function at their school in Motera for the first few months.



Left: Function at the formal inauguration of the school by the Governor of Gujarat.

Right: Extension wing housing the pre-primary section.

Facing page: Corridor of the school at Fatehpura.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Mr. Dineshbhai Raval soon came to the rescue and offered the school premises in one of their municipal schools in the city. The school then moved to its present premises in Fatehpura in May 2001. The municipal corporation had spared 6 rooms on the ground floor of this large and lovely building. As the rooms were insufficient, we partitioned some of the large rooms with soft boards so as to create more area for the classes.

June 2001, and the school started with 32 children and 6 staff. The school grew at a speed and rate beyond our wildest dreams and expectations.

Meanwhile, our trustees Mr. Shantikumar Kothari and Mrs. Taraben Kothari resigned due to age and ill health in May 2004. Mr. Prafulbhai Lakhani then stepped in to take over the financial responsibility of the trust and a new trust and board were constituted. The school was formally inaugurated as the 'Umang' School in April, 2005 by the Governor of Gujarat.

Soon, the allocated space in the building was insufficient. The municipal corporation came once again to the rescue of the school by building a small extension with 6 more rooms on the same grounds. Mr. Jayprakash Desai helped us considerably in this venture.



MISSION

- Our mission is to provide the best possible education to these children so as to create informed, socially conscious, thinking deaf individuals, empowered to live lives that are dignified, independent and fulfilling .
- We believe that true empowerment is only possible when individuals have choices which they can exercise, and that comes through proper education alone.
- We strive to bring about this change in the most marginalized the poor, deaf girl child.
- We believe that learning is a joy and that given the right learning environment, deaf children can learn language and to communicate.



The school continues to grow fast and we thank the AMC and Shr Manubhai Raval for their continued support.

Today, we have an early intervention centre catering to 18 young children and their families, a pre primary section (Nursery and KG) with 33 children, a primary section up to class 7 with 59 children. We have informally started class 8 as well. The staff strength has increased to 19 of whom 3 are deaf. Our staff is aided by parents and volunteers. We hope to slowly add to the programme each year until we reach class 12.

MOVING FORWARD

The year 2009-2010 has seen many changes in the organization. Some of the trustees of the board namely Mr. Praful Lakhani, Mr. Kumarpal Desai and Mr. Bipin Maniar resigned on 16-9-2010 (due to lack of time). We thank all previous board members for all the time and effort that they have donated to the cause of deaf children and their education. On 19-9-2010 a new board was appointed and approved. The new board consists of:

Mr. P.K. Laheri

Chairman (Rtd. Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat)

Mr. Nandalal Manseta

Managing Trustee (Eminent. ENT Surgeon,)

Mrs. Brinda Nanavati

Trustee (Special Educator, Honorary Director)

This new board faces the challenge of helping this fledgling Institute develop into one of the leaders in the state in the area of services to the deaf and other differently-abled.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TRUST

- To provide services to deaf children in the form of a model school and resource centre. The school will contain an Early Intervention Programme (0-5 years), a Pre-Primary Programme (Nursery and K.G), Primary, Secondary and a Higher Secondary School for the deaf. The resource centre will cater to the needs of deaf children studying in regular school who need additional help especially in the areas of language and speech development as well as children outside the city who are unable to attend the school.
- To set up a cross disability vocational training centre and provide pre vocational, vocational and management training in appropriate skills to young deaf adults and other differently-abled adults so as to enhance career and employment prospects.
- To conduct research and prepare materials to create awareness of the problems of deafness, the necessity of early intervention and also research, develop and disseminate innovative materials for use by schools and parents to improve educational services provided to deaf children.
- To initiate early intervention and preventive programmes in rural and urban area through community based programmes and also initiate programmes for safe motherhood and maternal health.
- To establish a modern, state of the art diagnostic and prescriptive centre for the early detection of deafness along with a habilitation centre for cochlear implanted children and children fitted with conventional hearing aids.
- To start a mobile diagnostic unit that can go to rural areas to aid early identification and habilitation of deaf children. Effective early intervention greatly reduces the debilitating effects of profound deafness on a person's life by helping establish good communication and language skills.
- To start a centre for the training of professionals in special education, audiology and speech therapy, counseling, interpreting and parent education.
- To start a financial initiative to help deaf individuals and their families get funds for hearing aids, education, setting up their own business, implants etc.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR...



...LEARNING AND CHANGE

THE EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME caters to children below the age of 4 years, and their families, on an individual basis. Parents come from in and around Ahmedabad once or twice a week to learn how to become partners in their child's education.

THE REGULAR SCHOOL PROGRAMME (Nursery and currently to Class 8) lays a lot of emphasis on the holistic development of the child and includes activities like intensive language, speech and auditory training; music, rhythm and dance; yoga, computers, drama, sports, and art and craft along with numerous field trips and celebrations of different festivals and culture. A few of our children have undergone cochlear implants and we regularly prepare a few others to enter regular mainstream schools. A number of our children have already been mainstreamed into inclusive programmes.



From left to right:
Mathematics through live experiences. Individual attention to each child.
Investigating and discovering the principles of Science





Play time – Holistic development of the child.







Learning language through meaningful activities

Language work in a Higher Class.



Individual speech lessons with the speech therapist.





Above: A Trip to the Kankaria Zoo and a joy ride in the train!

Below: A Visit to Gandhi Ashram

Facing page: World Disability Day Function





શિક્ષણ વિભાગ

સર્વ શિક્ષા અભિયાન મિશન

અને

નગર પ્રાથમિક શિક્ષણ સમિતિ

આયોજિત

“અજબ બાળકે અજબ પાઠકે”





Yoga and Meditation



TOYS AND BOOKS LIBRARY



MOST OF OUR CHILDREN COME FROM FAMILIES

that cannot really afford to buy many toys and games to help them work with their child. Yet play is what makes learning fun and it is through toys and play that the children learn the maximum. Recognizing this fact, we have a class library and we have also started a lending toys and books library. This was inaugurated on 12th October 2008 and is actively used by children in the early intervention and pre primary sections.



CHOTI SI AASHA... JOY OF GIVING



WE BEGAN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR WITH AN IDEA

and an experiment of introducing an emotional literacy and values education component into our regular curriculum. In an increasingly more violent world, understanding emotions and developing strong values, tolerance and empathy are exceedingly important for all children. To support this, we have prepared a series of stories and materials to be used with them. This naturally led to us participating in the Design for Giving Contest.

This contest was organised by Riverside School - Ahmedabad as part of the Joy of Giving Week (27th September to 3rd October) sponsored by Give India. During this week all of India was engaged in conscious acts of giving. Over 1000 schools from all over the country participated too. Our children presented the work they have been doing at the "Shrimati Maniben Tribhovandas Matrugruh" embodying the thought 'Be the change you want to see in the world'.

I am proud and happy to say that the children were among the top 20 participating institutes and were one of the winners of the Disney Outreach prizes.

This is now part of our curriculum and the children have been widening the concept of sharing and giving to include other differently-abled people and children too.



DONATION OF A COMPUTER LABORATORY



LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY requires a whole set of special skills especially computer literacy skills. In order to make this a reality, our old friends from The Lodge Fellowship No. 140 donated a computer laboratory with 8 computers and a printer and all the required furniture on 18th September 2009. All the children from class 1 onwards have started learning to use the computer.



PRE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME



OUR CHILDREN GROW OLDER AND THE TIME HAS COME for us to consider and expand our activities to include pre vocational training. Apart from computer literacy classes, we have introduced informal sewing and embroidery, ceramic painting as well as beauty parlour training for children from grade 5 onwards. We hope some day soon we will be able to have a fully fledged vocational training centre as well.



Various types of training in progress



EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT





In 2007-8, with generous support from International Deaf Children's Society, now Vaani- Deaf Children's Foundation, we prepared a kit - Help Your Child Learn, containing materials to help parents and teachers work with deaf children. We have been distributing this material free of cost to parents of deaf children and to Institutes working with deaf children all over the country.

The 2nd kit 'Help Your Child Learn - Part 2' sponsored by another very generous grant from Vaani-Deaf Children's Foundation, is now ready. We will be holding workshops and distributing this from the next academic year.

We have also in the process of developing a Complete Early Intervention Kit along with Parent education material. We hope that we will be able to publish this and make it available to all as was possible for the earlier two kits.

RESOURCE CENTRE

WE HAVE BEEN PROVIDING SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE and speech services to the children whom we have earlier mainstreamed into inclusive schools. We believe that they will always be part of the Umang family. We are planning on starting a language therapy centre for deaf children, cochlear implanted children as well as others with language development delays.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHER EDUCATORS





Right: Similar workshops were held in Rajkot for parents of deaf children and for teachers at the Ferrando Speech and Hearing Centre, Meghalaya. Over the last two years, we have trained over 500 parents and teachers from 25 or more institutes around the country..

Facing page: Earlier in the year, we also helped the Government of Gujarat to set up the programme and trained the teachers of the Government School for the Deaf in Rajpipla.

A 3-DAY WORKSHOP TO TEACH TEACHERS and master trainers the use of our language enhancement kit “Help your Child Learn” was held in Indore. Later in Ahmedabad, in collaboration with Handicap India, another workshop was held for master trainers from Amreli, Junagadh, Porbandar and Ahmedabad. This workshop also included live demonstrations on the use of the kit at different levels and for different purposes in the school.



OUR SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS



Sudha K.Menon
Ahmedabad
Bela Jagdishbhai Patel
Ahmedabad
Uttam Lalchandani
Ahmedabad
Hareshbhai Maganlal Patel
Ahmedabad
Robert Pleuse
Vallabh Vidyannagar
Khodabhai S Vaghela
Kalyanpur
Kwik Metal Industries
Ahmedabad
Mrs. Panna Rajji
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Shri Chhotalal B Charitable.Trust
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Purna Maharashtra
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Megha N Manseta
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Parikh Info. Solution
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Handicap International
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Yashwant D.Ahir
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Amrutlal K Patel
Ahmedabad
Dr.Mark Kerner
U.S.A.
Dr.Sudarshan Nanavati
Ahmedabad

THE FUTURE...



THE AHMEDABAD URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES (AUDA) has recently very kindly allocated to the trust a plot of land on which to build and conduct its various activities.(T.P.S. No.1, Vejalpur, F.P. No. 205 Plot No. B. Area3922.18 sq. ms.). We are in urgent need of new buildings to enable us to expand and carry on the work as we envisage.

It is our aim to build a model school and programme for the hearing impaired population of the state and in a larger way the country incorporating all our requirements and meeting international standards in our spe- cialized area; one which would embody the true spirit of education and be a landmark building in the city of Ahmedabad already well known for its architecture.

We hope that we will be able to soon put up a world class institute offering all services to the deaf commu- nity as well as parents of deaf children and professionals working in the field in all areas - diagnostic and counseling, educational and vocational.

OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION AND THANKS TO ALL our friends for various donations especially of their valuable time.

To our old and dear friends from the Lodge Fellowship No. 140 for their generous donation of a computer laboratory.

Smt. Kinnari Shah. What can we say! No words are enough to thank you for the dedication with which you look after the early intervention program.

Smt. Dakshben Shah. Your dedication and commitment have helped us to strengthen our Mathematics department. We would be lost without you.

Smt. Khyatiben Bhatt. Your help in the pre-primary section has been invaluable. Thank you so much for sharing your time with us.

Smt. Krupaben Shah. Thank-you for all the time you have given us.

Mrs Tarneem Jhariwala. You have taken so much on yourself to teach our children mathematics and sewing.

Mr. Hitendra S Patel who took all our children for a picnic to Tirupati Garden, near Visnagar with his entire family. A very big thank-you to all of you.

Mr. Umang and Mrs. Panna Shah along with their children Nidhi and Jainam, who have recently been cochlear implanted, and who were previously in our school, who had a lovely Diwali, Christmas and birthday parties with our children.

Ms Kiran Sethi, Ms Parul Shah and all the staff of Riverside School for their continued association with the school and their encouragement.

Dr. Naren Vora for the donation furniture.

Mrs. Sangeeta Choksi for innumerable big and small things. You are always there when we need you. God bless you!

We sincerely apologise to the many others who have given of their love, time and energies who we have not mentioned here.

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mr. P.K. Laheri (IAS)

Chairman

(Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat)

Dr. Nandalal Manseta

Managing Trustee

(Eminent Professor and E.N.T. Surgeon)

Ms. Brinda Nanavati

Honorary Director (Special Educator)

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UMANG

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Public Trust Registration No. E/16767.

Donations to the trust are tax exempt under 80G of the
Income Tax Act.