

Japanese largesse for elder care



Mr. Kazuo Minagawa, Consul General of Japan, distributes walking sticks to needy elderly beneficiaries.

The Consulate General of Japan, Chennai, (under the People and Government of Japan) has been extremely supportive to the cause. An Elders Helpline Counseling room was inaugurated in Chennai along with a store room for medicines used for our MMU services and other infrastructure equipments & vehicles for age care services for the southern region offices, all supported by them.



Ms. Hema Ashok Hathangadi, VP & CEO of Conzerve Systems Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore, hands over a cheque of Rs. 50,000 towards 50 cataract surgeries to Mr. Rambabu, Sr. Manager (Bangalore), HelpAge, during the Conzerve Carnival. Conzerve is also supporting the cause through pay roll giving.

TIL CARING Day

World over older people deal with the problem of loneliness. Sometimes all they need is someone to show them that they care and spend time with them. Each year TIL India celebrates its Foundation Day, this year as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility program they observed TIL Caring Day, with TIL representatives spending some quality time with the elderly residents of Navanir Old Age Home in Kudghat, Kolkata. 10 volunteers from TIL visited the Home, with gifts for "Mashimas" and spent time with them, along with a special lunch, making it a memorable day not only for the residents, but also for them to cherish.

DIAL: 41688956 (EXT. 430) TO REACH THE HELPLINE

Celebrating the spirit of 60!

As India got ready to celebrate its 60th year of Independence, on its eve, on August 14, HelpAge launched its web resource for 60 plus seniors, in Delhi. Prominent senior citizens Mr. Chetan Chauhan, Former Cricketer, Mr. Ajit Pal Singh, Former Indian Hockey Captain and Mr. S.Y. Quraishi, Election Commissioner, who also turn 60 this year, were felicitated along with Ms. Anjolie Ela Menon, Eminent Artist. The evening came to a close with a spell binding Sufi performance by well known Sufi singer Dr. Madan Gopal Singh



Dr. Madan Gopal Singh, Sufi singer, enralls the audience with his performance.

Marking WORLD ALZHEIMER'S DAY



Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai (second from right), Regional Director (South) and Mr. P.R. Anbazhakan (right), Deputy Director-Resource Mobilization (Chennai), HelpAge, take part in the Memory Walk in Chennai, along with doctors of the Govt. Hospital marking World Alzheimer's Day on September 21. HelpAge supported Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India, Chennai Chapter to organize this walk. 300 people marched together to create awareness about the disease and showed their solidarity in their fight against it.



Mr. M.M. Sabharwal, President Emeritus, HelpAge, interacts with an elderly resident of Arya Mahila Ashram in New Rajender Nagar (Delhi) along with Dr. Arbind Prasad (second from left), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, during a visit to the home. Looking on is Mr. Prem Poddar (second from right), Sr. Manager, Helpline/ Knowledge Centre.

Ankita sings a different tune

In a unique tie-up with Sony Television, popular contestant of the famous talent hunt competition Indian Idol, Ms. Ankita Mishra visited HelpAge's MMU site in Mumbai and interacted with elderly beneficiaries, creating awareness about the cause. The programme was aired on Sony TV with the aim of sensitizing viewers.

THANKYOU

•KPMG Consultancy •S.M.S. Degree college, Mangalore •St. Xavier's School (Doranda), Ranchi •Holy Angels Convent ISC School, Trivandrum •Assisi Vidyaniketan, Ernakulam •St. Philominas High School, Trivandrum •Woodside School, Ooty.

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EDITOR Speaks

Dear Readers,

At HelpAge it has been our mandate to work for disadvantaged older people. Traditionally most of our interventions have been based on providing relief to poverty-stricken older people in rural & backward areas-whether in the areas of healthcare, shelter, welfare, or others.

But of late there has been considerable rethinking within the organisation on what constitutes "disadvantaged". Is not an elder neglected by the family and virtually isolated disadvantaged? How about someone living constantly with the fear of crime? What about those aged who have no means of involvement, and those who are made to feel useless and dependent?

It was in the context of such discussions that our rights-based advocacy programme began to take shape. As a small organisation with limited resources, we are only too aware of the fact that we can physically do only so much. But surely there is no limit to enlisting support of various stakeholders, and then leaning on it to make things happen.

And with the new direction we have forged, this is where we want to be in the hearts of schoolchildren, who will grow up to be sensitive adults. In the agendas of change-makers who will shape a better world for all generations. In the reckoning of corporate entities that are increasingly recognising social benefit. In the consciousness of families and communities, who must acknowledge the invaluable and continuing contribution of the elderly.

In this vein, we have in a study jointly conducted with the World Health Organisation explored how cities in India can be more "friendly" to the elderly. We hope the report will serve as a guide to urban planners and help them in designing living spaces where the elderly are not forsaken.

Nidhi Raj Kapoor
Nidhi Raj Kapoor

South Asian floods

HelpAge reaches relief to neglected elders

Since July 2007, flash floods created havoc in Uttar Pradesh and parts of eastern and north-eastern India, with heavy casualties to life and livestock. There was extensive damage to infrastructure, human lives, livestock, crops, property and assets.

As is often the case, it was the poor who bore the brunt of it, having to make do in extremely difficult conditions, with their houses damaged, destroyed or submerged in flood waters, their belongings and livelihood opportunities lost and having to live in cramped and inhospitable conditions due to scarcity of dry ground.

In the first couple of weeks, there was no food or water either, and later the specter of epidemics loomed large.

•HelpAge is providing health care facilities in the flood affected states of Uttar Pradesh, Assam & Bihar, to the elderly who are usually neglected in disaster situations. Mobile Medicare Unit (MMUs) conducted health camps in several areas to prevent diseases and to administer medical aid to the flood-affected persons.

•In Bihar, healthcare has been provided in the districts of Darbhanga & Madhubani. 11 health camps have been conducted in 12 villages and 6076 persons have been treated (all sponsored by ECHO) while in Assam healthcare was provided in 17 villages in Nalbari district and 1200 persons were treated.

•In Uttar Pradesh, MMU Lucknow was shifted to Bahraich district where it covered 34 villages and 4096 persons received treatments, while MMU Varanasi started operating in the flood affected areas in Mau.

Respite for elders in AP

Focusing on providing benefits to the poor in Andhra Pradesh (AP), Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, Chief Minister of AP, launched the Indiramma Welfare Programme for the Poor, in front of a massive gathering of 20,000 people at a function organized by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The Chief Minister released Rs. 100 crore for the development of women, widows, physically challenged and older people. Under the launch of Indiramma Welfare Programme for the Poor, elderly were given privilege ID cards which will help them receive various benefits. HelpAge mobilized its MMU beneficiaries from Indiranagar and Musheerabad (AP) to receive these ID cards.

For all those senior citizens in Hyderabad who have no one to turn or talk to in their hour of need, they can now just call 1253 to seek HelpAge assistance on the telephone. The number connects them to a helpline launched specially for them in collaboration with GHMC. The Helpline functions from the GHMC office and is managed by HelpAge with assistance from other support groups. There are three functional lines - in Telugu, Urdu and English.

The services offered are:

- Shelter Assistance (rescuing people from the roadside and admitting them into old age homes/ hospitals/ short stay homes.
- Immediate medical assistance. •Police Intervention. •Protecting older persons from Abuse. •Information referral service to older people and general public. •Legal services such as settling legal issues, guidance and counseling. •Creating a database of elders.
- Assisting older persons to obtain Identity Cards.



Flood affected Bihar



Medical Health Camp at Village Suklarahi in Madhubani district, Bihar. The international community responded actively to appeals; in the picture is Mr. Godfred Paul (second from right) from HelpAge International, who visited the area.



HelpAge teams in Assam consult with elders during relief efforts.

HelpAge releases "watchdog" report in suicide-hit Yavatmal

Yavatmal district in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra is among the worst-hit by the agrarian crisis; burdened with loans they cannot pay back, each day sees a farmer suicide, sometimes two. Those left behind are struggling to survive.



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In such circumstances, medical care is unthinkable. After a survey in the region, HelpAge started to provide medical facilities in 3 blocks through its Mobile Medicare Units. Ten villages have been adopted. Eight health camps have been held where 3,752 persons have been treated.

Working to benefit the community in more ways than one, the MMUs provide not just medical care, but also give information regarding the relief packages announced by the Prime Minister (PM) and the Chief Minister (CM) packages, about available job opportunities under the Prime Minister's "Swayam Rozgar Yojana", and self employment and vocational opportunities for the youth.

HelpAge has also compiled a Social Watch report, which details the prevailing conditions and impact of Government intervention, which seeks to apprise policy-makers and support them by providing relevant information.



Mr. Arun Firodia (centre), Chairman, Kinetic Engineering, Pune, releases the Social Watch report. Looking on are (from left): Mr. John Thattil, Regional Director (West) and Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive, HelpAge, Dr. S. Gokhale, President, ILC (Indian Longevity Centre) Pune, Mr. Kishore Tiwari, Founder, Vidarbha Jan Andolan Sanstha, Yavatmal and Mr. Mangesh Kulkarni, Sr. Executive (Pune), HelpAge.

Good news!!

In an encouraging move the Tamil Nadu State Government has appointed **HelpAge India** as a Member for "An integrated Programme for Older Persons" committee for forwarding proposals to the Government of India for release of grants to NGOs.

A hands-on approach to village development

Since October 2005, HelpAge has been mobilizing Elder Power in 900 villages of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, through its Poorest Areas Civil Society programme. The results are now visible in more ways than one. The programme has succeeded in influencing Panchayats to include aged-related issues in their meetings. On their part, older people's groups are coming forward to contribute to their communities.

By returning to roots, village elders show the way forward



KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE:

A naturopathy session in progress in Mandla's Munu village, initiated by Village elders.

For the benefit of the inhabitants, the elders' resource center in Munu village (Mandla) organized a day-long session on naturopathy & natural living- the art of drugless healing. Vridh Sangh members took on the responsibility of planning the session, which was organised with great success. Elders took care to give preference to women, physically handicapped and other marginalized sections.

A need based assessment was made in the meetings during April to June 2007 to determine the resources in the villages, knowledge and skill base of the community and the activity was planned in consultation with representatives of all sections who met at a designated spot.

Health is a critical issue for the villagers who are spending a major portion of their hard-earned money on medicine and consultancy. Even though their knowledge of traditional medicine and nutritional care is high, changing life patterns have forced them to turn to often ill-affordable drugs.

The elders have decided to organize regular sessions on health care and the importance of traditional/tribal knowledge.

A school for Monu & friends, courtesy grandfather



ONE FOR AGE:

Students at the local English medium school in Chhindwara are able to study now that elders have taken on the responsibility of managing the school.

Abhilash, the Vridh Mitra for to Rampeth Village in Chhindwara (Madhya Pradesh), was concerned about the high level of illiteracy among the village children. Poverty prevented their parents from enrolling them in schools.

Taking with him the local Educational Society and the Village Elders Group, the Vridh Mitra initiated a local English Medium Primary School. Currently, the school has 32 students & 5 faculty for various subjects. The facility is free to students, and village youngsters have readily volunteered to teach and help in other ways.

The Vridh Sangh oversees the school's functioning and day-to-day demands. So impressive are their efforts that they have drawn the attention of the Panchayat, which has recently promised land for another school on similar lines.

Student sensitization programme

With each passing year more and more students from all across the nation have come forward in support of the aged. Principals, teachers from various schools are encouraging young ones to understand the needs of today's elderly, sensitizing them about the problems faced by them in their daily lives. It is mainly due to their effort that HelpAge's School Education Programme has been such a success. It has helped not only in improving the quality of life for a large number of our elderly, but is also working towards bridging the gap between these two generations. We thank these schools for their sensitivity and generosity.

Understanding their concerns

Ms. Renuka Chowdhury, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Women & Child Development, interacts with the residents of Gharonda, an old age home in Delhi, during a symposium titled "Trauma of the last Chapter: Plight of the Aged (a meeting with reality)" at the premises of Modern School, Barakhamba Road, Delhi. HelpAge & the Interact Club of Modern School had organized this event with the aim of sensitizing young minds, regarding the aged and creating awareness about their concerns. 12 schools participated.

The Minister urge the student to recognize the importance of the elderly in today's world and congratulated their efforts. To give the students an in-depth understanding of the rights and entitlements of senior citizens, a panel discussion was also held. The speakers were Ms. Arshiya Sethi, Mentor for AASRA Parivar, who spoke about the extremely tough living conditions of senior citizens in Tihar Jail, Ms. Ruby Ahuja, Lawyer, who spoke about the legal entitlements of senior citizens and Mr. Kapil Kaul, Country Head (Resource Mobilization), HelpAge, who spoke about other options available for senior citizens with NGOs and the various facilities offered by them.



Famous astronaut Ms. Sunita Williams (centre), second woman of Indian origin to have been selected by NASA for a space mission, graces the function where HelpAge was honored and given a donation of Rs.77,877 by Mr. Pandya, her father, along with the children of Rajasthan English School, Ahmedabad, who had collected the amount. Representing HelpAge is Mr. John Thattil (standing on William's right), Regional Director (West). The function was organized by Rajasthan Sewa Samiti in Ahmedabad.



Mrs. Linda Elsby, LDSC volunteer and chief guest for the day hands over a trophy to Mrs. Cynthia (centre), Principal of the Ryan International School, Bangalore, for the schools contribution towards the cause. Looking on is Mr. Rambabu, Sr. Manager (Karnataka), HelpAge. Ryan International School, Bangalore, collected Rs. 2.26 lakh in 2006-07 towards the cause.



(from left) Students- Nandhu T. Nair (12 yrs), Ali Niaaf (9 yrs) and Abhinav (7 yrs), of Marion Villa Convent ISC School, Trivandrum, first, second & third prize winners respectively, stand proudly with their prizes and certificates for collecting the highest amount for the cause, during a prize distribution function held at the school. Looking on are (from right) Ms. Sreedevi, class teacher of Std. VIII, Sr. Ruby, the Principal, Mrs. Alamma Thampy, Joint Director (Kerala) and other members of HelpAge. The school raised Rs.38,677 towards the cause.

Corporates root for healthcare for elders

Over the years a consistent growth has been seen in Corporate Social Responsibility. It is mainly due to their support that HelpAge's Mobile health care service has been able to make an impact on the lives of the destitute elderly and provide basic health care to those who have none.



Ms. G. Thenmozhi Gopinathan, Mayor of Madurai Corporation inaugurates the MMU for Madurai. Looking on are: (from left) Mr. A. Manickam, South Zone Chairman, Madurai Corporation, Mr. B.T. Bangera, M.D. HI-Tech Arai Ltd.(Madurai), Mr. Michael Paul Chatelier, Correspondent, Le-Chatelier Mat & Hr. Sec. School, Mr. Wasimalai, Director, Dhan Foundation and Mr. P. R. Anbazhakan, Deputy Director - Resource Mobilization (Chennai) & Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai, Regional Director (South), HelpAge. ARR Charities (Chennai) donated the vehicle and HI Tech Arai Ltd. (Madurai) are supporting its running cost for a year.



Mr. Ram Shewalkar, noted Marathi Author performs a puja (prayer) to inaugurate of the Nagpur MMU donated by Johnson & Johnson. Looking on is Mr. John Thattil (third from right), Regional Director (West), HelpAge, Mr. Vaidya Ram (on Mr. Shewalkar's right), Regional Product Development Director (Asia-Pacific), Johnson & Johnson, and other officials. Johnson & Johnson also donated an MMU vehicle for Kanpur, replacing the old vehicle.



Dr. H.S. Bakshi, Regional Director (North), HelpAge, signs an MOU along with an Asian Paints representative, at the plant of Asian Paints situated in Greater Noida, UP. Asian Paints will support the running cost for HelpAge's MMU operating in the rural areas of Greater Noida & Ghaziabad, in the vicinity of the Asian Paints plant for a year.



Mr. D.K Panigrahi, Sr. Manager, Admn NALCO, Bhubaneswar, hands over a cheque of Rs 8.25 lakh for the purchase of an MMU at Bhubaneswar to Ms. Susmita Ghose (right), Regional Director (East) and Rashmi Mohanty, Deputy Director Programmes (Orissa & Chattisgarh), HelpAge.

