

DREAMCATCHERS

January- August 2021 | Volume X

S.I.C.W

Where the child comes first

Society for Indian Children's Welfare also referred to as SICW, has been serving the needs of destitute women and children for over four decades. Our services include rehabilitation of children through Adoption, Educational Sponsorship for underprivileged children, Community Projects Centre at Jan Seva, sponsoring Children's Heart surgeries and free Medical Clinic. Leela Medical Clinic at Beckbagan has temporarily been closed due to the Covid pandemic.



Adoption Program

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Education Sponsorship Program

Umeed (Hope)

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In loving memory of...

Founded in 1979, our mission was to rehabilitate abandoned and destitute children, and through its adoption Program SICW has been doing just that - helping create happy families for over four decades. We are a Registered and Licensed Specialised Adoption Agency (under the Central & State Governments) and we have, over the years, been able to help over 2500 children join their 'forever' families, both in India and abroad.

The orphaned and abandoned/ destitute children given into our custody are the heartbeat and the very essence of our organisation. Foundling Home (for infants) and Ashirwad (for older children upto 6 years) provide our children the care and protection they deserve, in a loving and secure environment. The children receive round-the-clock quality medical supervision and quality care from doctors and trained caregivers. SICW has earned a reputation for its specialized neonatal services in saving many a child who came to us with very little hope of survival. Our medical team of about 60 staff includes doctors, trained

nurses and caregivers along with physio and speech therapists.

In the words of Kailash Satyarthi ~ **"Every single minute matters, every single child matters, every single childhood matters..."** And this is what we were able to do - help as many children as we could, right through the Covid-19 pandemic that brought the world to a halt.

We took in 14 children from January - August 2021 and 11 excited families took home their bundles of joy while seven children were restored to their biological families. A special mention must be made of a pair of siblings who were finally united with their forever parents after a long wait, our very first single dad who took home a happy and excited four year old boy, and two special families took home and embraced two special needs children. These children are blossoming in the care of their loving families!

Our gratitude goes to our medical team, caregivers and social workers, who put aside their personal duties to be there for our children throughout the pandemic, and continue to do so.

Education Sponsorship Program

Introduction:

SICW started an educational sponsorship program in 1985 with the aim to educate underprivileged children with the help of sponsors from various walks of life. The children being sponsored, belong to the marginalised sector of the society. Often, due to lack of finances, education takes a back seat in the lives of these children. Thus, we offer educational assistance so that they can get a chance to shape their future on their own terms.

- We made sure that none of our children's education is hampered due to the pandemic and its adversities. We provided them with our continuous support all throughout the lockdown and guided them as much as we could, with the new challenges that these children had to face.

- Even during the pandemic, people came forward to help. We are thankful to all these new helping hands as well as to those who have been our constant support.
- A group of young girls, belonging to various rural areas of West Bengal, have created a bright and successful future for themselves in nursing with the help that has been provided by the Education Sponsorship Program of SICW. We wish them a hearty congratulations and are extremely proud of their achievement.
- As class X and XII results of 2021 were declared, we saw, yet another time, the resilience our children in the face of the pandemic. Even after such hardships and drastic changes in the

education system in the last two years their performance in the examination is praiseworthy.



Umeed (Hope)



The Umeed Program, for Children with Special Needs, is an integrated program established in 2005, with mentoring and professional input from the Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy. It is designed to give the in-house children living on the premises of SICW priority and a right to a quality of life with self-reliance. Umeed classes run to develop the children's cognitive, communication, self-help, motor and academic skills through a progressive curriculum based on milestones. Children also receive physiotherapy, speech therapy, prosthetics and other aids depending on the nature of the disability to enable them to develop a

greater degree of self-reliance. During the reporting period, Umeed has supported 28 orphaned and abandoned children living within the premises of SICW.

Due to the outbreak of COVID - 19 pandemic, regular evening classes at Umeed (SICW) were suspended from 23rd March, 2020. We started our online classes from 15th July 2020. In the beginning it was a challenge for the teachers as to how the children will accept online teaching. Teachers developed their lesson plans for every student aligning with their intellectual level and group activities. Each teacher has been

given 5 to 6 children and they conduct their classes on alternate days. We are happy to see how children have accepted their online classes. They follow their usual routine starting with their prayers then physical exercise and activities. It is a new learning for both teachers and caregivers to carry on the online classes smoothly. All activities have been carried out online with the children having no physical contact with the teachers. The caregivers too have been trained and participated in the effective implementation of the same. Buoyed on we also started their speech therapy and counselling sessions.

The same curriculum continued from January to August 2021. It has been a long period of isolation for these children and online intervention has definitely removed barriers to an extent and proved a blessing. We hope to further enhance their learning experiences.

Jan Seva

Jan Seva includes:

- ECCEC program
- Vocational training and Computer Literacy Program
- Udaan (Soaring High)

SICW is a non-profit making organisation. Jan Seva is a Project of SICW. Services includes Early Childhood Care and Education Centre (ECCE) for underprivileged children between 2-6 years that provides free education, nutrition and health check-up

The 'Udaan' project offers similar services for children with disabilities and their families. Jan Seva also runs Programs like Computer Literacy and Vocational training for the mothers of the ECCE children and students from the community. The Community Health Program (CHP) aims to protect and improve the health of the families in the community. The Mother and Child Clinic provides free medical treatment to mothers, children and women from the geriatric group.

The last two programs CHP and The Mother and Child Clinic are non-functional due to Covid-19. These two programs will be revived once Jan Seva becomes fully operational.

ECCEC Program

For ECCEC (Early Childhood Care and Education Centre) the academic year began in January 2021. Due to the pandemic, the system of imparting knowledge to the children of Jan Seva was done by online classes. These virtual classes were very successful. The good thing about these classes was that the parents of these children were involved in it to a large extent. Their participation was a very positive sign especially when the father took an interest in his child's well-being.

The teachers were regularly trained by the co-ordinator to conduct these classes. They were told to keep in mind the child's attention span. To make learning interesting the children were taught for only 30 minutes at a time once a day from Monday to Friday. The teacher had only seven to eight children in each batch. Very soon they began to look forward to these Virtual classes. Various play methods were followed like drawing, painting, picture reading, simple handicrafts, gardening etc.

During religious festivals the teacher would explain in a story form the significance of the festival and also use pictures to make it interesting. Normally the children were asked to wear their school uniforms for their online classes. But on special days they were allowed to dress up in festive clothes. Saraswati Puja was held in February in a very quiet way in Jan Seva. The Goddess was worshiped and very few staff members were present.

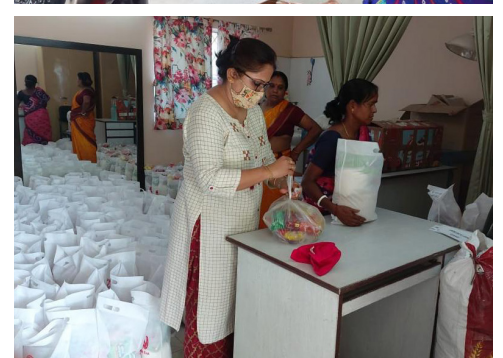
Pictures were shown to the children in their online class the next day. Online awareness was created with the parents regarding importance of good health, cleanliness and hygiene.

Grocery bags were distributed twice a month to the families of the Jan Seva children. This consisted of rice, oil, sugar, 2 types of lentils, salt, biscuits, noodles (special request from the children), health drinks and sweets. The parents were informed in advance to collect the grocery bags from Jan Seva. On many occasions the parents came forward to thank us profusely for helping them to keep their fire burning in their kitchens. On the days of the distribution the teachers were present all along.

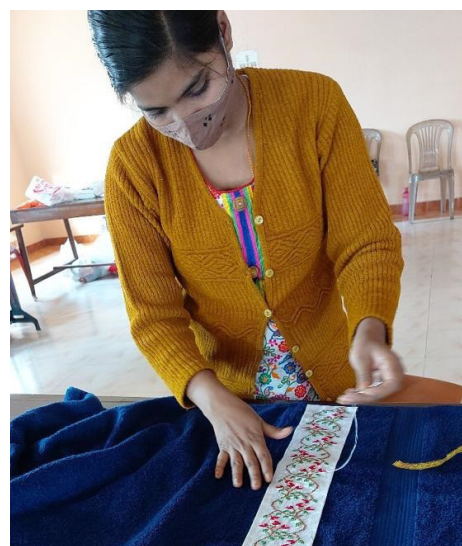
They were available to talk to the parents singularly and discuss matters regarding the online classes. They were given 10 minutes each and all protocols were maintained regarding wearing of mask and distancing.

On 22nd February SICW Founders day was celebrated online with the children. A picture of Late Dr. Zarin Dadina was shown to the children and a prayer was said in the class.

On 15th August Independence Day, the teachers and students celebrated these occasions online. There was storytelling and picture reading of our freedom fighters. The children participated by singing songs and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



Vocational Training and Computer Literacy Program:



Vocational Training program remained very busy most of the time. There was a period when Jan Seva was entirely closed for a month due to lockdown. Good amount of work was given to the ladies to work from home. This helped them to contribute towards earning for the family. From January to March stitching of Masks became a priority to anything else. Colourful three layered cloth masks were stitched and these became popular and in great demand. Floral designs were made by our ladies and these were transferred

on cloth masks for embroidery. These too were talk of the season where masks were concerned. This was followed by embroidering colourful towel sets with handcrafted designs made by our students. Uniform stitching for the children started in July along with sari petticoats and night gowns.

On 25th July 2021 the 17th Installation Ceremony of Inner Wheel Club of Kolkata Megacity was held. It took place on the virtual platform through the Zoom app. Jan Seva was invited to attend this ceremony because we had partnered

with them in their Women empowerment project called STRI SHAKTI. This supports women in their category named SHEROES.

Two of our Jan Seva students of the vocational training unit were selected and they received Sewing Machines as a sustainable livelihood initiative to gain their economic independence. These ladies were namely Ms. Piu Das and Ms. Ruma Halder. They were very happy and decided on a long term plan to earn a livelihood from home.

COMPUTER LITERACY PROGRAM:

This Program started slowly but has picked up quite well. Due to lockdown these classes were also closed for a short while. An awareness program was arranged among the community students

and our Computer team to highlight the need for computer training. Children from senior school classes who wished to contribute in the family income came to us to learn the Advance Course in Computers. This consisted of Excel and

PowerPoint functions in an elaborate manner. Some of these students passed in their NIIT exams held in February 2021. The next batch will appear in September or October 2021.

Udaan (Soaring High)



Dream Catcher Vol. X gives us a glimpse of the activities of Udaan Children with the guidance of their respective Special Educator and parents, within the safety of their homes. All round rehabilitation with physiotherapy, as guided by the teachers and parents; behavior management; academic development; social and communication involvement has enabled them to be self-reliant in spite of their limitations. Despite the continuous Covid-19 challenges throughout the globe, innovative methods in imparting education and counseling sessions to the children and their families through 'Online Education' have been provided by the Special Educators. They have relentlessly worked through these difficult times, providing personalized and

valuable online education to the 'Udaan' children, which was much appreciated by the parents. The guardians enjoyed and participated in the different activities of their children, such as, activities of daily living (ADL), rhyming, art and craft, academics etc. Festivals were celebrated with much enthusiasm!

Some of the 'Udaan' Program achievements in the last six months (Jan.to Jun.2021):

- On 10.03.21. five new special children from the community were selected for the 'Udaan' Program, taking the total number of children served to 73. Four children have been mainstreamed into local schools like Jagabandhu School, Sarada Mission, Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy School and Silver Point School.

Udaan has successfully proven to be a bridge for the challenged children, in introducing hope and education with appropriate rehabilitation in their lives.

- The bags of ration provided by SICW to the children of 'Udaan' have been very useful to their families, living in the surrounding community. In fact, it has been a major incentive to the children to attend online education.

Online webinars and meetings attended by both 'Udaan' Staff and Parents with new admissions:

- In the month of March 2021, the Program administrator, Coordinator and teachers had an online orientation session with the parents of the newly admitted 'Udaan' children, where the Program and its activities were explained to them.
- Online Workshop on 'Niramoy Medical Insurance Scheme' was held by the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP) on 11.05.21 and was attended by Udaan Project Administrator and Coordinator on behalf of SICW.
- Zoom meeting on Prosthetic aid Scheme and ADIP Scheme (Scheme of assistance to disabled person for purchase/fitting of aids and appliances) was held on 03.06.21 by IICP and was attended by the Udaan Administrator, Coordinator and the Special Educators. These capacity building Programs have enhanced our knowledge to develop this Project, further.

Activities of a few children:



Abir – He can spell out words, write his name, rote count numbers up to 30, write Bengali alphabets (vernacular) and numbers in Bengali. He recites poems, both in English and Bengali. He is keenly interested in doing online classes and cooperates well with the teacher. Abir, communicates well over the phone. He can identify many vegetables, fruits, familiar objects, animals and birds. He

loves drawing and coloring. He also takes part in household activities and follows instructions at home. He is learning storytelling with pictures as clues.



Jitu: Knows the names of colors and parts of the body; number counting. Despite Global Pandemic situation and Lockdown due to Covid 19, Jitu has managed to get admission in a local school known

as 'Silver Point', which will provide him with mainstream education. His mother was very happy with his progress in 'Udaan'.

It is indeed heartwarming to watch the families fight against all odds, especially in the Covid times and extremely rewarding to watch a great team come together to reach out to them.

Vaccine Drive



As soon as the vaccines for Covid-19 started to be distributed by the Govt, the Board members of SICW decided to vaccinate all our staff members free of cost. This gesture was highly appreciated and we gave the first dose of COVISHIELD on 10th June 2021.

An arrangement was made with Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences to carry out the Vaccination Drive in Jan Seva. It was a big success. 93 adults received the vaccine. Excellent arrangements were made and all necessary norms for wearing masks

and distance keeping were observed. The second dose will be administered on 10th September 2021.

The Board once again decided to vaccinate free of cost to the parents of our Jan Seva children. This was thought necessary because of the need to receive vaccine for auto immunity.

It was a long and arduous drive to convince the parents to take the vaccination. Here our co-ordinators and teachers played a very positive role. It was decided to give this task to the same hospital as before.

On 24th and 25th June 2021 we gave the first dose of Covishield to 310 parents of our Jan Seva children. The whole program went very smoothly and successfully. The hospital team too did a fantastic job. We were visited two to three times in these two days by the local Police for investigation. They were very pleased with our method of handling the entire program.

These same parents will receive their second dose of vaccine in the end of September 2021.

Heart Surgery Program (SICW)

Society for Indian Children's Welfare has been supporting Heart surgeries for children for more than 30 years. It began as a very small project by helping a few really needy families who could not afford any kind of invasive heart

treatment for their children. For them it was an endless wait. It was a feeling of helplessness which was not under their control. It felt like their whole life had been taken away, said one parent to us.



Way back 30 years ago, we did not realise how fast and very successfully this project would grow. We have operated upon a few thousand children who came to us from economically poor backgrounds. Today, with God's Grace, quite a few of them are adolescents and adults leading normal lives. A few of these children were introduced into education and Vocational Training projects also run by our same NGO.

In the year 2021 from January to August we helped 34 Children with Heart surgeries. These children are referred to us by Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences for sponsoring the Heart surgery treatment. The success rate of surgeries in this hospital is very high. The hospital gives a very large concession on these surgeries because they too believe in helping the underprivileged section of our society.

While counselling the families of these children, we at SICW constantly remind them that we are supportive in their venture of arranging the funds from various sources. Hearing this from us is a very big relief for them. A sense of HOPE is seen in their eyes as they walk out of our office.

In loving memory of...



Swaran Chaudhry

With very heavy hearts, on January 5, 2021, we bade goodbye to Swaran Chaudhry, our late Executive Director/Secretary. Her passion, unwavering commitment and compassion were an inspiration to all her fellow colleagues and staff. We miss her sunny presence deeply



Prabha Katyal

SICW lost yet another valuable member of our team in July 2021. Prabha Katyal was more than just a volunteer. Her warmth exuded through her wonderful reports on the children and her baking skills kept us craving for more! We miss her every day.



**We are thankful to our donors
for their continued support for
the several programs at SICW**

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