



## Raphael Ryder Cheshire International Centre For the Relief of Suffering **Newsletter**

July to December 2023

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**We wish our readers a happy, peaceful and healthy 2024.**



Students returned from the summer break to find the day school renovated and looking bright and cheerful. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support received Max India Foundation towards this project.

We extend a warm welcome to the following staff who have joined Raphael in the last six months:

Pooja Rana & Shama Thapa, special educators in the School Readiness Programme;  
Pooja Negi, faculty member in the Teacher Training Centre;  
Santosh Lal, Houseparent in Barbara Cottage, assisted independent living unit for girls;  
Satveer Singh & Kunal, sahayaks boys' hostel;

We bid farewell to Soniya & Ritika Bhatia, special educators who left to take care of family matters. Nikita Rastogi, Accounts Officer, also left for personal reasons.

October-December were busy months in the Guest house with more volunteers than we could accommodate. We were delighted to see Bishop Charles Drennan who has been a regular visitor every year for over 30 years now. Robin Baker visited for the third time; when he is here he is hard at work creating publicity material for Raphael. Please log on to our website to see his films and photographs. James McCartney, our Overseas Volunteer Coordinator for the UK, is also a much-loved familiar face at Raphael and has his work cut out for him when he visits. Similarly, Johanne Sunnex has made several visits and is warmly welcomed.



Ally Watson volunteered at Raphael in 1995 when he was just of school. He undertook a challenging fund-raising programme for Raphael and excerpts from his mail are shared here:



'I wanted to email you and say how proud I am to be undertaking this UTMB (Univ of Texas Medical Branch) fundraising challenge on behalf of Raphael, it's going to a mighty tough race in the French Alps and I am pretty much all prepared and raring to go. Back in 1995 I volunteered for Raphael and now all these years later I really feel like I am giving something back. My experience was life changing and taught me so many things about life. Though I was a little rough round the edges and quite young, Raphael and all the residents taught me many things about understanding what suffering is all about and how the disadvantaged are often the bravest. Now I will be suffering in my own way by running 104 miles on behalf of Raphael. Those wonderful residents and of course caring staff will never be far from my thoughts.' Thank you Ally! He raised 700 pounds for us!

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Monisha Datta, Director The Doon Girls' School, has been volunteering twice a week at Raphael. She helps us with the School readiness curriculum, is training our teachers on "Early Childhood Care and Education" and is taking lectures in the teacher training centre.



We have had a number of young interns recently: Five M.Sc Nursing students from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Rishikesh; seven B.A. Psychology (Honours) students from Graphic Era; six B.A. Psychology (Honours) students from Sri Guru Ram Rai College; and one student from the University of British Columbia.

We remain indebted to all our donors, Indian and overseas (institutional, corporate, foundations and individual), for their continuing generosity and support that enables us to achieve our mission to relieve suffering.



We are more than grateful to SPIC-MACAY (The Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth) for arranging yet another delightful programme, 'Gotipua', at Raphael. It is difficult for our students to attend the lecture-demonstrations held in other schools. The performers were boys, all below the age of 14 years, learning pre-Odissi dance and they dress as females. The programme was magnificent and held the audience was enthralled.



### HOSPITAL

Apart from treatment for tuberculosis, the Out Patient Department is now open to patients with other illnesses. A registration fee of Rs.50/- is valid for 10 days and the patient is provided with medicines for 7-10 days. We continue to admit only seriously ill TB patients to the in-patient facility.

### SHIV SADAN

A successful Give-India fund raising campaign has enabled us to do significant repair and renovation to the Shiv Sadan quarters for the leprosy cured patients. Many quarters now have a water connection in the room and double doors at the entrance to keep them warm in the winter and cool in the summer.



### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Apart from all the regular activities, it was a busy six months. This is the time for the celebration of many festivals. Janmashtami, Dussehra, Diwali and Christmas were celebrated with much enthusiasm. On Janmashtami prayers were offered to Lord Krishna with a dance-drama depicting his birth. Dussehra was celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> October with the burning of effigies, a small skit from the Ramayana and a Dandiya by staff and students. Most of the residents went home to spend the festival with their families. For those who stayed behind and who have no families, they went on a shopping spree to buy some new clothes. The day was celebrated with good food, sweets and a few fireworks. Christmas was celebrated on 19<sup>th</sup> December before the winter vacation. Some of the students participated in the nativity scene while others performed some dances followed by the singing of Christmas carols. Much to the excitement of all, Santa Claus arrived and distributed sweets and cupcakes.



World Cerebral Palsy Day was observed on 6<sup>th</sup> October The theme for this year was “Stronger Together” 21 children and adults with cerebral palsy played games that had been especially adapted for them.



The candle workshop was very busy in the days leading to Diwali. The students made and sold 25,000 diyas and 2000 candles Raphael also participated in a few exhibitions near Diwali time and our handmade paper bags and candles were quite a hit.



The International Day for Persons with Disability was observed on 3<sup>rd</sup> December: Raphael played a friendly cricket match with students of the Laxmi Devi Academy, a neighbouring mainstream school.



Several disability awareness programmes were held in and around Dehradun. Programmes were conducted at Bhawani Balika Inter College Dehradun, Government Degree College Roorkee and Graphic Era University and reached about 300 students.



Raphael hosted a 3-day Continuing Rehabilitation in Education (CRE) programme on “Ensuring safety for Children with Disability” from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023. It was attended by 48 special educators from Delhi, Haryana, Tehri Garhwal, Saharanpur, Uttarkashi & Dehradun.

23 young trainees enrolled in the 2-year Diploma in Education Special Education (Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities) 2023-2025. It is heartening to see an increasing interest in this course.

There has been an increasing demand for admission to the School Readiness programme. A new class has been added for 4-6 year old children. Presently 43 children are attending the programme on a regular basis.

64 children with special needs are being reached through the Outreach A programme via three early intervention centres that we have set up on the Shimla bypass road, two government primary schools in the same area and one primary school in Doiwala.

Ranjana at the district support centre in Rudraprayag is able to reach 15 children, while Neelam in Uttarakashi works with 10. Given the lack of public transport, the rough terrain and the distances, this is no easy task.

It was a great honour to be awarded, after extensive due diligence, the **Gold Seal of Trust** by Give for the year 2022-23 for unwavering commitment to excellence, dedication to serve and adherence to best practices.



**WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SHARE THAT RAPHAEL WILL CELEBRATE ITS 65<sup>TH</sup> FOUNDERS’ DAY ON 5 APRIL 24 AND WE HOPE THAT MANY OF YOU WILL JOIN US ON THE OCCASION.**