



Raphael Ryder Cheshire International Centre

Newsletter, January to June 2025

From the Editor's Desk

"Hope is the quiet courage to begin again, no matter how many times we fall." — Unknown

As India moves forward—digitally, economically, and globally—millions of its citizens are being left behind. Among them are children and adults with intellectual disabilities, whose lives often remain hidden in the shadows of society. Disability in India is still viewed primarily as a medical concern, something to be fixed, not as a question of rights, dignity, and access.

Many of us work in quiet corners—those spaces where systems rarely reach and where humanity is often measured by silent acts of service. The past six months have only deepened our conviction: true inclusion requires not just care, but courage, clarity, and a refusal to look away.

This newsletter offers a window into that journey. Of the lives we've embraced, the losses we've mourned, and the everyday acts of resistance that keep hope alive.

When Compassion Took the Lead: The Story of 14 Girls from Satya Sai Ashram



At Raphael, we often say, *"We do not choose whom we serve—love leads, and we follow."* This belief was put to the test not long ago when a quiet ripple reached our doorstep: the Satya Sai Ashram in Dehradun, home to 19 girls with intellectual disabilities, needed to shut down for various internal reasons.

There was no formal request for admission in fact, all NGOs in Dehradun were asked to be prepared for an inspection and a possible shutdown. The girls, all of them with special needs, were at risk of losing their only home.

Resources were already stretched thin at Raphael. Taking on more children—especially those requiring lifelong support—was not part of any plan. But at Raphael, we have never let convenience dictate compassion.

But we didn't step in because we felt we had to—we did it because we believed they needed a safe place to live.

Today, these girls live in a secure, loving environment. They receive regular therapy, attentive care, and above all—dignity. Our only expectation is fairness and a spirit of partnership in the service of vulnerable children.

To our sponsors and well-wishers, this story is, above all, a tribute to your unwavering belief in Raphael's mission. Because of your support, we have the strength to say yes, especially when it matters most.



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Sachin – The Invisible Boy

Children with disabilities grow up alongside us—playing, learning, working—but somehow, they remain unseen. Unheard. Forgotten. Despite decades of advocacy, the reality remains stark: for many individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, visibility ends where token gestures begin.

This is the story of **Sachin**, a young man with intellectual disability and once a student of Raphael. For the past ten years, he worked as a gardener at a school, quiet, diligent, and never demanding attention. He watered plants, swept paths, and tended flower beds. A very familiar face.

One day, Sachin had a serious accident on school grounds during work hours. He was almost crushed to death on the spot. He was rushed to the ICU.

What followed was more devastating than the accident itself. How did this happen? Who will pay? Was it reported? What happened to the person responsible for his death? Sachin sadly did not survive.

Ten years of service. Ten years of showing up. Ten years of being present. Was Sachin invisible? Would this have happened if he was a neurotypical, able-bodied employee?

True inclusion means being seen. Being heard. Being valued. Being respected. Sachin's death must not fade into silence. It must ring out as an alarm.

Because there are many more Sachin's among us—sweeping floors, folding chairs, serving tea—quietly present, easily overlooked. If we do not act now—if we don't demand better policies, stronger safeguards, and inclusion that lives in practice, not just policy—more lives will be lost through the cracks.

Closing Thoughts: Who Are We Leaving Behind?

As India races ahead, millions with intellectual and developmental disabilities remain excluded, left out of the story we are so proud to tell.

At Raphael, we see a different India. One where growth is measured not only in numbers, but in how we treat the most vulnerable. Inclusion is not a slogan—it is a responsibility.

Let us not build a future where speed eclipses sensitivity. Let us build one where no child is unseen, no adult is unheard, and no life is un-lived.

The road ahead is long, but if we continue to walk it together — with courage, compassion, and clarity—we may just build a future that leaves no one behind.

Obituary

Mrs. Mooena Roy, who worked at Raphael for many years, starting in 1984 as the Liaison Officer, passed away on 14 December 2024 at the age of 101 years. We pray that her soul rest in peace. She will be deeply missed by all of us at Raphael. She left a bequest of Rs 14 lacs for Raphael. This amount is to be used for the bathrooms and water connections in Shiv Sadan, as she was closely associated with leprosy patients.



We remain indebted to all our well-wishers, supporters and donors, for their continuing generosity and support that enables us to achieve our mission to relieve suffering.

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