



SNEHAVAANI

NEWSLETTER OF SNEHAGRAM-A CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING
& REHABILITATION OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV

Compiled Special Edition 2016



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DIRECTOR SPEECH

I am very happy to present this special compiled edition of Snehavaani fully written by the students themselves. Great to see how the students are using this platform to communicate with the world their experiences and learning. We are also grateful to the KHPT team who mentors the children to write well and develop their communication skills. Congratulations dear students for your excellent sharing and writing. Snehavaani is truly a window to the daily life of Snehagram and I am sure it will connect us with all who are journeying with us. Blessings and Peace.

Fr. Mathew Perumpil, MI
Director, Snehagram





Auroville Marathon:- 14th February, 2016

By Ambika

My journey started with excitement as I was about to embark on an incredible adventure with my friends- completing a 10km run. During practice I felt lazy and found myself lagging behind, often wondering if there was any point in me even trying. However, when the time of the race came near, I heard the voice of my inner consciousness telling me that every chance I get to do something like this is a great opportunity and that I should be proud of the capacity I have. I then changed my mind. I started to run consistently with my running buddy whose running pace was comparable to mine. On February 14th 2016, we had the run and I was happy that I was able to finish the run within an hour. I was happy that my friend encouraged me to keep running and it motivated me to participate in every run without missing any event. Afterwards, we visited a nice beach that we played in. This experience was similar to that of our learning tour in Pondicherry.



Christ University Visit:- 26-28th February, 2016

By Pooja

Students and faculty from Centre for Social Action from Christ University, Bangalore come to Snehagram to learn about our life and experience of living with HIV. Their purpose was to orient us on career and jobs and to evaluate our capacity and abilities. Their visit to our campus cemented a relationship between Snehagram and Christ University. Their visit helped us understand how to format our future and give us some preliminary training.





NIOS Public Examination:- April, 2016

By Manik



This year 19 students from Snehagram successfully finished their 10th standard examination under the NIOS. From the first year they came to Snehagram the students have been waiting for this special opportunity. Many laborious hours from both the teachers and students went into helping the organization cross this milestone.

When we were preparing for this exam, we often lost sight of its looming presence as the testing date drew nearer and nearer. We suddenly recognized the proximity of our exam when one day Shaji sir came to our class and reminded us of the day of the exam. From that day onward, we started systematically revising and preparing for our exams. Finally on March 21st 2016, we started our practical examination and on April 4th we started our theory exam. As soon as we finished our first exam, we felt a sense of satisfaction and relief. We looked forward to the end of all our tests and the next thing we knew, we had completed all our exams. It was all because of God's grace and the conscientious nature of our teachers and their guidance that made us very confident to cross our first milestone. This journey that we endured in preparing for our exam was full of fun and excitement. This year we wish that 14 of our students experience the same rush of excitement and ultimate sense of satisfaction that we felt.

With the help of the National Institute of open Schooling Syllabus (NIOS), I was very happy to finish my 10th class examination. When I was taking the exam I felt very nervous and anxious. After I had finished my exam, I felt very happy and free from all the tensions worries I had felt in the exam hall. My friends and I were hoping for a good result on our exam.



The next course of action for those of us who have completed our exam will be to engage in many training and skill building lessons in various areas, such as vegetable farming, Nursery Farming, Chicken Farming, Dairy Farming, Mango farming, writing and reading skill building, computer training and photography training.

With this training, we are going to learn different skills that will not only build our own lives, but also sustain Snehagram in the coming years. We hope for the best and will continue to celebrate our lives every day.



My Run in the World 10 K:- 15th May, 2016

By Babu

I have been practicing for many runs this year. As the month April came near, the T.C.S world ten kilometers run came to my mind, and I asked father if I could participate. He graciously agreed and told me that a few other friends could compete with me. Hearing this, my friends and I started very seriously practicing. I suffered many cramps in my body while I was training, but I knew it was part of the experience. At the end of April, I received shocking news that it was too late to registration for the run. But luckily I had entered with the help of my coach, Elvis Joseph. My friends, being disappointed, never gave up their training with me. In the last week of the race I went to Bangalore for a trial on the track. It was exhausting for me, as I had to keep up the steady pace with the bike which was being ridden by my coach. During this period, my small mistakes were corrected, as to not lead to failure on the day of the official run. I was also taught a few very useful tricks to enhance my running speed. The race was on the 15th of May. On the evening of the 14th, I was called for a press meeting with Rahul Boss and Mike Poulle, who is an Olympian and a record holder for long jump. I thought that this will be a simple meeting with Mike Poulle, but it was so much more, as I was in the presence of three other champions. All of us were asked a few questions. My questions were "When did you begin running and who inspired you?" to which I answered, "the world sport came to my mind in 2008 with the Champion in Me Program, which is a special sports program for children living with HIV/AIDS. Here I came to know what my potential was in running and also in long distance. In few years I began to run 5km and after four years I started to run 10kms. It was my favorite distance. I was inspired by three sides: my friends, my coach and my talent". The second question was "what do you want to become?"



I replied, "I want to become a professional athlete and represent my country, India. I aim to work with UNAIDS in the United States and to be an ambassador there. I also hope to work with children living with HIV/AIDS and promote them through sports and bring down the stigma and discrimination that come with the disease".

All this will not be achieved overnight, but gradually I will work towards this goal every day in my life until I reach it.

I was nervous of the next day race as it was my first international 10k run. Having prayed, I woke up feeling positive the next day. I was scared that I may be sick as my body was feeling a little bit weak. Having little energy drinks and fruits made me feel better. At the race, I was unluckily positioned in the last category (f), so I stood at the end of the line. However, I did not mind this, as my mind was only fixed on the finish line. So the race began, and I pushed the crowd, making my way forward. For the first 2.5 kilometers, running was tough, as I had a big crowd running with me. For the next 2 kms I started running faster because of the thinning crowd around me. I began to speed up.

I kept running fast and steadily until I finished. I completed my world 10k in 40.11 minutes, in the ninth place in my category of 15-20 years. It gave me real joy in my heart and mind, and it also encouraged me to run well in future runs. I always realized that I can do what any other man can do, as I am a healthy, happy and skilled boy.



Leadership and Entrepreneurship Training: - 19th-20th May, 2016

By Vanitha



Leadership and entrepreneurship training was conducted on the 19th and 20th of May by Mr. Jai Kumar.

It was my first real experience in life understanding the value of life and money. One thing which made me alarmed for the first time was my attempt to reach a target. The target was not so easy. It goes as follows: there are 40 mats which represent each child who is abandoned in the street; our mission is to save them. The target for the first and second round was to save 35 children. Unfortunately, we could not reach the target. To get the third chance, we had to pay money, so we asked and gave the money to receive this third chance. This time, our target was 200 children, but we could not do it. Jai Kumar sir gave us a fourth chance, but we told him that we had given up. But he implored us to think properly, so I started thinking and a thought came to my mind- life is much like Face book. People will like your writing and give you comments, but no one is going to solve your problems completely because everybody seems so busy in taking care of their own problems. So, I thought that if I get a job and my boss asks me to finish a difficult task but I give up, then my boss may not give me another chance. What my friends and I learned is that we must accept the fact that disappointment is inevitable, but we should never give up if any challenges come in our life.

Kolar Camp

By Vanitha

On April 27th, I began my first experience being a facilitator and leading a big group of individuals living with HIV. Three of my friends and I went to Kolar, where the event was taking place. Upon arriving, I was saddened to see that most of the children there lived without much positive outlook on their own lives. This provoked me to ask myself a question, 'am I actually happy with the way I am living my life despite my HIV status?' The answer was yes, so I asked the other children the same question, but the answer was 'no' because of the discrimination that they had endured previously in their lives. This camp was all about to hope for the future, and as such I made it my goal to refresh their outlook on life.

Anandayana Run in Bangalore: - 1st June 2016

By Lakshmikanth

We all ran the Anandayana Run on 1st June 2016. The event was held at Sneha Care Home. Thirty students went to run, and the race began at 7:20 AM. There were more than 300 participants in the run including our own Snehagram runners. Before I ran, many thoughts crossed my mind: "How will I finish my run? How much time will I take? When will I finish?" I was worried about losing and coming in 5th or 6th among Snehagram participants. While I was running, I grew fatigued, but suddenly another thought came to me, "Keep running and you will come second among our school." I had a running partner from Runner's High named Arun, and when I was tired he encouraged me to keep going. When I came to the finish line, I found out that I was the winner! When I finished, I was happy, cheerful and tired because I thought I had not run fast enough. I finished within 48 minutes. After the race, we had breakfast and time to talk with the children at Sneha Care. After that, we freshened up and came back to Snehagram. Once we reached Snehagram, I thought about all of the health benefits that come with all of the running and playing that we do.

This run was sponsored by Runner's High from Bangalore. Once a year, we all go and participate because we want to be healthy and to raise money and support others in need.



My Thailand run: - 4th June, 2016

By Babu

After my T.C.S run, I went on vacation for 5 days, and when I came back I heard some surprising news from my coach, Elvis Joseph, that I was going to Phuket in Thailand for the Laguna Marathon on June 4th. With such short notice, I did what I could to prepare. This mostly consisted of going on daily 10km runs.

June 2nd was our flight to Thailand. With excitement in my mind I landed in Thailand on the 3rd of June. Now I worried, as I had only one day for my 10.5km race. On that evening, we went and collected my bib number. After that, I had my dinner I went off to sleep with a strong mind. The next day, I woke up at 5am, on the day of my run. In the afternoon, we had press meetings where I spoke on behalf of people living with CLHIV/AIDS. I spoke up saying that we do the same things that normal people do. This was a proud moment for me.



Soon, I began my race and in the being I was out in the front of the pack. Later I found four runners who paced me. I continued to pace with them. In 4.5km I became little slow and gave away some distance to those other runners. My mind was telling me that my body can't do it, but I forced myself to persevere as I picked up the pace. But soon I got a very bad cramp on my chest, and breathing became difficult. Suddenly I started gasping for breath as I desperately tried to finish the race. But couldn't as the pain was increasing so I stopped and walked for almost 800m. This was my first time I walked in a 10k race in my life. Even though mentally I could run and finish the race, physically I couldn't do it, as my body became weak. My coach who was following me told me not to worry. "You can do well in next run", he told me.

I thought I failed him. Even though he was disappointed, he never shouted or got angry with me; he always appreciated me. Walking helped reduce the pain on my chest, so I began to jog along with another runner and finished the 10.5km with very disappointing timing of 51.50.mintues. I felt very embarrassed and ashamed to look at the time. My coach's words kept me strong in that moment. I learned that your mind and body should go together and work in unison. If this happens, then you can achieve anything in life. Now I know I need to work a little more on eating healthy food and training intensively for my next run. There is always a second chance.



My Third International Run:- 11th July, 2016

By Babu



Feeling disappointed after my Thailand run, I started focusing more on my personal health. I sought to improve my nutrition, which led me to discuss a menu change with Fr. Matthew. I recommended giving milk in the morning with sprouted grains. Even though I did not like to eat certain foods, I began to eat them for the benefit of my health. In addition to revising my diet, I was also preparing myself for the Gold Coast Run in Australia, which was held on the 2nd and 3rd of July. I didn't tell any of my friends, because I wasn't sure of the status of my visa and airline tickets. I was eating, sleeping, training, praying and working for the next month. My coach, Elvis Joseph, came to Snehagram and gave me new shoes, telling me to be ready for the run. Thinking my visa and tickets had come made me happy. Given my experience in Thailand, we thought we had better go two days in advance so that I would get adjusted to the climate, as it was very cold in Australia. Later, I informed all of my friends of my impending

trip, and they were very excited for me. Our flight was at 1pm on the 28th of June. After packing all of my belongings, I went to my coach's house. There, I heard some shocking news that our visas had not yet arrived, but our tickets were confirmed. He also told me that the Australian Embassy would only grant me the visa on the 28th of June. Then, I stopped being as worried as I initially was. The next day, we travelled to Delhi as we had the connecting flight. Now, time was running short as it was 9am, and the visas had still not arrived. I was now worried because my coaches visa had arrived, but not mine. It turned out that I had to submit a few more documents before I could receive my visa. Because of this unfortunate circumstance, we had missed the flight and thus wasted the money that had gone towards the plane tickets. At this point, I was sure that my hopes of competing in Australia were shot. With this, my coach and I returned to Bangalore to enquire about the outlying documents. Within the day, we had submitted the appropriate documents. Eventually, on the 30th of June, I received my visa, but now we did not have plane tickets! Fortunately, my coach borrowed money from his generous friends to help pay for two more plane tickets. We booked the earliest possible flight, so that I may still be able to compete in the race. When I finally arrived in Australia, it was midnight on the 2nd of July; the race was only 6 hours away! I had nearly no time to rest and prepare for the event. All I could do was pray and sleep for a short time. I woke up the next day at 5am and arrived at the race site at 5:40am. The weather was very chilly outside. When the race finally began, I started out fast, but I could not sustain this pace because of the low temperatures that kept my legs cold. So, I maintained a slower pace for the first 4km, which helped me warm up my legs. Thereafter, I began to run faster and faster. However, after 7km, my throat started to dry and my chest began to burn, now I was mentally prepared not to stop regardless of what happened. I completed the race in 42.25 minutes, which I was pleased with given the difficult running conditions outside. The run had drained my whole body, and as such, I took a good rest.

On the 5th of July, I met the Mayor of Black town. There, I spoke on behalf of all the children living with HIV. I conveyed a message of hope for the children.

Overall, the trip was a success, and I am very honored to have had this opportunity. My coach was a constant inspiration to me, as his encouraging words got me through all of the tough times throughout this trip. I learned to never lose faith and hope in life, even if it seems that all is hopeless.



Welcoming the new students

By Pooja

On July 9th 2016 new batch of students from Sneha Care Home 16 of them joined Snehagram.

We welcomed them with garlands. We were happy to welcome them to our Snehagram family. On the next day we had sessions with new students along with their parents, we explained about our home, our rules and regulations. We gave them full information about Snehagram and how it functions. It is good to notice that Snehagram family is developing and growing as a large family.



Life skill training at Snehasadan, Mangalore

By Vanitha

Every opportunity knocks only once so this opportunity was very special for me because I was going to share my knowledge with Mangalore children. As I was excited, I travelled with 3 more friends Meena, Sukesh, Kalesh. We had a safe journey. This was on 10-10-16 so I started teaching life skill and learned bit more and it was interesting to understand that to take class for our own friends or people of same age was very difficult. So it was little difficult but still myself and my friends could manage. After all we were happy to know that they learned something out of teaching. So with that happiness we had nice fun. Everything went so fast so we didn't know how the days went by.

Organic farming

By Vanitha

In Snehagram, we usually have organic farming as a co-curriculum activity, but this year we are doing organic farming as part of our vocational training.

I am also one of the student involved in this type of training and I enjoy doing and learning about farming. We have planted all kinds of vegetables needed by the Snehagram family. We have 5 girls and 6 boys who are training for this. We have also started green shed where we are also cultivating vegetables that grows inside the green shed. We do organic farming because we want to be healthy and promote other to do like us. In outside they keep pasiceside and they grow.





World Aids Day programme in Delhi

By Gowthmi



On 30th November 2016, I left from Snehagram accompanied by Lavina Madam from KHPT. This was my first time of travelling in flight. I was so happy that I got a chance to fly in the sky. As I and madam reached Delhi. I was happy to see the place and go around the Delhi. I was thinking that Delhi was clean cities but when I saw the place it was really bad and it was polluted by the air. Then we went to hotel to stay, and we had our lunch. In the evening we went for buying some things. Then in the next morning was the program of celebrating AIDs Day. I had the opportunity to speak in front of 2500 people. I was bold to say that I have HIV in the mist of all the people. Then I encouraged others to come out of their stigma. I gave motivation to many people to come out of their fear. Saying **"I have HIV so what?"**



The issues of adolescents living with HIV

By Shruthi

Shruthi and Babu along with Fr. Mathew went to Mangalore to speak about future problems faced by the adolescent who are living with HIV, organized by KMC Mangalore for their doctors on World Aids Day.

I went to the conference for the first time. I was so scared and afraid of the crowd, how to speak in front, but I tried my best to share my problems in the future and about my job. Then in which environment I am going to stay and live.....? This opportunity game me a new confidence to face people.

Bangalore Ultra Run

By Ambika

Running is something special in the life's of Snehagram Children. I keep running I feel that I did it for my joy. That this year I did not get sick, I believe that sports is helping me all in my future goals. This run 12.5 k made me to be proud among many people Ambika our runner came first among open women category and Bhavani.S in the second place in open women category within the 1hour 14 minutes Ambika says I am Very happy about it. I get motivated in doing the up in coming running.

By Babu

Bangalore ultra is a yearly run organized by runner high. We started participating in this run from the past 3 years. This run is challenging as we are running extra kilometers which is 12.5km. Last year one of my friends won the third place in the open men's section. We had tight schedule for this year's ultra. My friends and me were busy participating in this challenge run. All of us were ready to take challenge this year. From the time we began the practice I made up my mind to be one among the three prizes. The race was starting at 6.30 AM. We had to travel 150 kms from SNGM. We woke up early in the morning 3.30 in the morning. On our way I had a very bad travel as I vomited twice. My body was very weak and felt furious. I wanted to take rest, so I thought if quitting the run. As I got down, I again vomited on the road. But my mind was strong so decided to run the race. So I took some energy drinks. On the start line I saw many familiar faces in the huge crowd. When I knew there are 10100 were participating I got a little scared. But I had to make it. I stood at the first line and on 3.41 I started racing first and I fixed my mind not to lose energy as I had to run a very long distance. I saw a lot of them behind trying to overtake me. I felt a little pain on my chest and two of them overtook me. I thought about my aim to be one among the three places and so I increased my pace and never allowed anyone else to overtake me. 6kms I overtook the second guy and raced the first guy and the 9th km I took over. I was very happy to be the first and dint wants anyone to be in front of me. I ran and ran, faster and faster to be the first. I finished men's open section in 54.05 minutes. This made me give thanks to The Almighty for giving me so much energy even after the ill health. I was glad to see two of my friends win the first and second place in women's open section. There I understood that it is no problem to give it a try even if I don't succeed.



Colombo Run, Srilanka

By ManikV

I had the opportunity to fly to Srilanka. It was my first visit to Srilanka. I liked the cleanness of the country. I liked beach of Colombo. I enjoyed playing in the beach and having fun. I enjoyed the Colombo marathon at Srilanka. I didn't participate in the run but I enjoyed the people running and encourage them and seeing them run made me feel happy at the run.

After the marathon we visited some of the HIV Affected Children in Srilanka who were also like me. By seeing at them I thought how blessed I am, blessed with food, sports, Education and all my needs. I was sad to hear that people around them are discriminating them in many ways. They don't even have one meal per the day because of money. People are not coming to support or help them in their basic needs.

I gave them the message of life and how to live. With HIV we can do anything in our life and achieve anything in our lives. By support of the medicines and thinking positive about one self.

I also learned that I am blessed with so many things. I enjoyed being in Colombo in Srilanka.

Well-being Groups at Snehagram

By Varalaxmi

One of our volunteers from Germany came to Snehagram on November 13th. Barbara teacher came to review to well being groups and to support the well being group.

We had done in 2014th year of class. She was saying the importance of well being group and how it helps in our future. She gave some home work to do. To practices to manage anger and we kept some goals to achieve. We were divided into groups. With them she asked how it is going.



Sneha Run 2016

Sneha run was organized by the Sneha Care Home. To give awareness about stigma discrimination about HIV. It was usually conducted on Champion in Me but not this time. Because not many were there. Also we did have the time to organize so they organized in 4th of December. We Snehagram student also attended the program. Some were volunteer and some were runners. Running student did well the run. Running was not only brings competitiveness but all were running for joy and to prevent all kinds of sickness.



Champion in Me, 2016

By Vanitha

Champion in me was held on 26th and 27th November 2016 at Sneha Care Home in Bangalore where 8 number of institutions from different parts of Karnataka came to participate. It was aimed for children living with HIV where they could show their talents, participate in arts and craft events and sports events. Basically this event was for making them confident and make them realize their ability. Almost 600 children attended Champion in Me this year. This year was very special because we usually go outside for sports day but this time they did it on our own ground. We all participated and had fun with other children. We Snehagram children got lot of medals and won the Football Cup also throw ball Cup. We met new friends and started to bring hope in them because they had thought that there is no future for them. This event was learning for them to think about their future plan, what they want to become. And we came back to Snehagram with their smiling faces.



Child Editorial Team

Snehagram has a Child Editorial Team of 7 members whose role is to encourage writing, drawing, painting and poetry as means of expression and communication among the children in the campus. The Child Editorial Team meets once every month and uses this to discuss the topics of writing, read stories written by children, offer help and corrections and collect stories from all the children. The team also takes a lead in coming up with Snehagram newsletter called Snehavaani every three months.

The members of the Child Editorial Team are Sukesh, Vanitha, Meena, Pooja, Manik, Babu, Siddaramu. While Sukesh is the Chief Editor for boys, Vanitha is the Chief Editor for girls.



Start Where You Stand

By Sonika

Started where you stand and never mind the past
The past won't help you in beginning new,
If you have left it all behind at last,
Why that's enough, you're done with it, you're through

This is another chapter in the book,
This is another race that you have planned,
Don't give the vanished days a backwards look,
Start where you stand.

The world won't care about your old defeats
If you can start anew and win success,
The future is your time, and time is fleet,
And there is much of work and strain and stress,
Forget the buried woes and dead despairs,
Here is a brand new trial right at hand.
The future is for him who him who does and dares,
Start where you stand.

Old failures will not hold , old triumphs aid.
Today is the thing, tomorrow will soon be, get in the fight, and face it unafraid
And leave the past to ancient history
What has been has been, yesteday is dead,
And by it, you are neither blessed or banned,
Take courage, man, be brave and drive ahead,
Start where you stand.



Snehagram – Camillians

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