

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

“Many of life's most tragic failures occur because people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up. ” (Thomas Edison)

CONTENTS

1. CEO's MESSAGE
2. NIPP
3. MOTHERS' HEALTH
4. SCHOOL WITH A DIFFERENCE
5. INCOME GENERATION
6. IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME
7. D.O.T.S.
8. PERSONNEL, VISITORS, EVENTS

1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER's MESSAGE

Dr. Frederick Shaw

The early days of April were clouded for many of us by the shock of Joseph Schaller's unwelcome death. Joseph was a good friend and a member of the founding Board of Directors of DIR. The sorrow I profoundly feel, is mixed with thoughts of the luck I had in my life to have known Joseph so well and the good fortune I had to spend so much time with him.

We will not readily accept that Joseph is not with us.

On the home front, a strike within the Punjab Health Department caused a 'slow down' in our immunization program, but otherwise there seems to have been little impact.

Before becoming somewhat familiar with slum life, one fact of which I was blissfully ignorant concerned the degree to which slum residents - especially *young* slum residents - were exposed to conditions outside their own immediate area. This was first brought home to me some years ago when we had our first outing for children to a nearby park. The children obviously had a marvellous time but gave me a profound surprise when I learned that none, NOT ONE, of them, all over twelve years old had never ever stepped outside their slum, and most had never been further from home than about half a mile.

The implications of this are wide and far-reaching. In the first place it allows involved children no basis for comparison, and allows no concept of a "non-slum" area to exist. Sadly, it creates a concept of what "normal conditions" are and creates a universe which needs no improvement. "It is normal".

These realizations have motivated those of us within DIR to facilitate children having experiences outside their slum, and is one chief reason we strive to get children to attend schools outside Janta Colony and Adarsh Nagar. Their daily trips to clean, well-surfaced streets devoid of open sewers populated by scavenging pigs allows children to see another reality and perhaps even awaken a probability that "maybe one day I could live outside my present surroundings."

In the context of getting children to travel, see and experience, April was a good month for our youngsters, and we are indebted to Mr. David Lelliot (who is a Chandigarh resident, and is Deputy High Commissioner for UK,) for providing two valuable outings. The first occurred when he organized an art competition for our children to illustrate “what Gandhi means to me”. That competition was held last month, on a day when a new bronze statue of Gandhi was unveiled in London. This month Mr. Lelliot arranged for the artists – competitors to visit the art gallery of Alliance Francaise in Chandigarh to see their art framed and on display in the gallery.

Then, just before the month of April closed, the same benefactor organized a trip to Chattbir Zoo, where 42 of our lucky children saw animals they earlier doubted exist. We will probably never fully know the impact of this expanded exposure of our poorer children to the wonderful world around us, but I think we may all rest assured that the impact will be positive.



2. NUTRITIONAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY PROJECT (NIPP)

Ms. Sarita - Health Promoter

This program has a targeted approach in which, each Health Promoter selects the three most malnourished children in his/her area to receive special attention. The criterion for this special selection is that a child is 3 or more months continuously “in the Red” category of the growth chart (“seriously underweight”) or a weight below the “DIR Priority” line of the growth chart. Each HP will identify 3 children from his or her area and then nurture them until they have gained adequate weight to be classified as in the “Green category” (which means “appropriate weight”). Typically, we think of children who start “in the Red” improving and entering the Yellow (the “underweight”) Zone, before being classified as “Green”. Once one child has gained adequate weight to be “Green”, then another will take her/his place in the NIPP. By this means, we expect that there will always be 39 children “targets”. We can expect them to be the worst of the current total of 264 children who, very sadly, are “in the Red.”

Age group (months)	% of NIPP children
0-12	0
13-24	18
25-36	28
37-48	44
49-60	10

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
% of children who made a weight GAIN	36	47	39	31	46	54	31	26
% children whose status remained UNCHANGED	50	40	46	62	41	26	59	61
% children who had a weight LOSS	15	7	10	5	10	13	10	13
% children who WERE ABSENT from area	0	5	5	2.5	3	5	0	0



In this NIPP program we have tackled one of the most difficult problems that we believe there is where the improvement of young children's health is concerned.

After the initial interventions (De-worming and iron syrup distribution) were complete, we invited the 16 economically poorest families to join our school nutrition program, in which children are provided with nutritional snack daily. With the weather changing we have tried to vary the diet adding black grams, nutri-nuggets (soya) and vermicelli in milk. We have seen an improvement in the children coming into the centre regularly, but daily participation of the mothers and children from economically weak families was disappointing. This reinforced the belief that the reason children were underweight in the first place, was because of the lack of parental understanding of the importance of children's diet. This led us to make a very special effort to improve matters. Sushma (HP) along with Maya (Sr.HP) and myself went to each of the priority children's homes and counselled the parents and implored them to come to the centre for food every day. Our increased attention has brought about an immediate increase in the number of children coming for a snack. From now, our HP, Sushma will ensure that the children coming from the field for the meal are appropriately encouraged and properly attended to. Our increased efforts, we hope, will continue to encourage parents to focus on the nutrition of underweight offspring, until the time that there is visible evidence of the improvements the improved diet. Until then, one of our strategies is to draw attention to the "improvements that good food is achieving."

3. MOTHERS' HEALTH

Ms. Sangeeta -Health Promoter

This month there were 10 births; 4 were girls and 6 boys. All deliveries took place in a hospital. All mothers had two or more antenatal checkups before delivery and had appropriate postpartum examinations within two days of delivery. Unfortunately, we have two sad incidents to report. In Banita's area, a lady had a miscarriage in her first trimester as she lifted some heavy weight and had profuse bleeding afterwards. In Sarita's area there was a very perplexing case of a child born naturally in a hospital. The baby boy and mother were discharged from the hospital and the child on the fifth day developed a fever and some chest congestion. A very concerned mother took the baby to the Sector 16 government hospital. The doctors there found many problems with the baby including a hole in the heart, they referred her to the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research. But there the doctors also failed to give any treatment for curing him because "a lot of complications had arisen" in the baby. The parents brought the baby back home and after only a few hours he died. All the reports and checkups before this day seemed to indicate that the baby was normal; he was even a very active infant. These cases make us feel very sad and we want to do more. We are looking into starting pregnancy classes again at the DIR Centre so we can transfer the appropriate knowledge to these young mothers in a formal setting so they take the information received seriously.

Last Month	Delivery	Left	New	This month
85	10	5	23	92

4. THE SCHOOL WITH A DIFFERENCE

Manjit Kaur - Teacher

The start of the new academic year in the school saw many new young faces. The old students were happy to return and the new ones wanted to be returned to their mothers. It has taken some adjustment for the little ones to come to school. We started with their first school days lasting only two hours and then slowly increased their time in school until they were there "full time." There are still some children having a difficult time to adjust but most have learned to play along with others and view school as "fun". "New" children are still being accepted for the new school year, and this makes this time of year difficult for our teachers to settle down into a routine. We

must focus on introducing new children and making them comfortable with each other. Playing games and doing some activities indoors are major pursuits for the newest pupils.

The older children were made to revise their lessons from the previous class so the new teacher can figure out each student’s level. The theme for the month was Vaisakhi (the founding day of the Sikh faith and also a festival of harvest). The children were told about Vaisakhi and made to do activities around that. We look forward to enrolling more students to increase the strength of our school and help the children who haven’t attended school ever have a good start to their education.

5. INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY

Ms. Maya – Senior Health Promoter

Stitching and Products

Hello Friends!

It is my great privilege to tell you about DIR’s income generation project. This month, our ladies stitched lots of bags in preparation of our having a good range of bags to sell at an exhibition staged at Elante Mall on April 4th and 5th. The managing partner at Za Palloza liked our products, and also liked the causes of DIR, and gave us a free stall. This exhibition went well and we managed to sell some of our products as well as spread the word about DIR. On behalf of DIR and the ladies employed through this program I would like to thank the different furnishing shops like Jain Furnishings and Furnishing Studios etc. who are donating the waste cloth to help the ladies stitch different kind of bags. This month the ladies earned a lot of money and were very happy. I would like to thank all the people who buy our bags and support them. In the stitching classes last month we had 10 ladies and this month 4 more have joined.



Beautician Training Center

The new batch of trainees started on 6th April after the room was upgraded with supplies and a fresh coat of paint. Our new teacher Ms. Loveleen has made a monthly syllabus for the students and is monitoring their daily progress. The timing of the class is 11am-1:30pm Monday to Friday. This month the 4 newly enrolled girls learned the basics of “threading” and started to learn to create different hair styles.

6. IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME

Ms. Veena –Senior Health Promoter

SHOTS	1 st Dose	2 nd Dose	3 rd Dose	Total
Hepatitis B	0	2	4	6
DPT	0	2	4	6
DPT-B	17	9	-	26
TT	16	4	-	20
TT 10 yrs.	3	-	-	3



Measles	7	17	-	24
BCG	0	-	-	0
Pentavalent	8	11	7	26
Total	-	-	-	111

This month we had 3 immunization camps. These camps were held by the Punjab Health Services (PHS) permanent workers because the ANM workers of this area are on strike. The strike will hopefully finish this month and the ANM of our area will come to participate in our regular day of immunization. We had a total of 111 children and 20 pregnant mothers immunized this month.

7.D.O.T.S.

Mrs. Meenakshi- Senior Health Promoter

We treated 17 patients of Tuberculosis last month. This is an infectious disease which can spread easily and quickly. We are trying to control this spread but unfortunately the number of patients has increased again this month to 25. Last month out of the 17, three had completed their course and they have been cured but we had a big rise by 11 more patients. Of the 25 patients this month we have 21 in Category I and 4 in Category II. We are taking extra meeting on TB and its prevention. We have also contacted local medical facilities to try and arrange a health “camp” for TB patients.

8. PERSONNEL ACTION, VISITORS, EVENTS

Mr. Sanjeev – Field Coordinator

Visitors: Our Trustee, Jaspreet, brought a friend from **Italy** to visit the DIR centre. He also interacted with the staff and answered many questions about his homeland. Jaspreet also brought her psychiatrist friend Dr. Anju to have a discussion with the staff. She talked about the resistance and helplessness that the families we cater to may feel, and spoke of how how we can make special efforts to eliminate this negativity.

Events:



Za Palooza – On the first weekend of April (4th& 5th) DIR had a stall at an exhibition in Elante Mall. This quirky event drew exhibitors from all over the country, and we had many, many visitors. Sr. HP Maya and HP Sangeeta ran the stall. They were accompanied by the new graduates of the beautician training class. The latter applied Hena tattoos and braided hair to get some practice and earn some money. This was a good experience for all.

English Class for HP–On the request of the staff English classes where started alternating with nutrition class. This class is taught by Dr. Shaw and Ms Harsharan. The HPs find this a very useful skill development class and enjoy the time they get to spend on their development.

Nutrition Demonstration–As part of improving the health of the residents DIR used to have demonstrations of nutritionally highly and inexpensive recipes. Now that our nutritionist, Ms. Natasha is back we had demonstrations again. We focussed on the underweight children and looked for the best nutrition for them. We made healthy sprouts chat with use of black grams, tomatoes, potatoes, lemon and spices to make it interesting for children. The mothers were also made to taste the food and see how simple and effective such a snack was. We also serve similar snacks to the SWAD children which we also shared with the audience.

Painting at St. Stephen’s – On the 20th of April St. Stephens had their environment fair. They invite DIR to have students from the colony participate in the painting competition. DIR was glad to send the children for this new experience. The children were taught how to make art from waste materials and were allowed to roam the school grounds to see the various stalls. This experience exposed the children to environment conservation, ways to

promote it and the considerable need for it. This was very informative for the children. They were also given refreshments and came back happy from the experience.

Chattbir Zoo – The kind people at the British Deputy High Commission who just last month had held a painting competition for our children, decided to make an excursion to our local zoo with our children. We used the opportunity to reward the regular and bright children in our Child Activit Program (CAP). These children come to our centre every afternoon were we teach hem important messages in health and other topics through games. These children ages 7-14 years are a big part of making their families and community aware of health and hygiene. So on the 30th of April 41 students and 4 HPs loaded up into 8 personal cars of the commission's staff and they spent the afternoon in the Zoo with Dr. Shaw. They had a good time interacting with the staff and learning about the various animals. It was enjoyable for the commission's staff who acted as guides on this outing. We were delighted that Deputy High Commission attended to participate. The Commission staff very generously also provided our children snacks and brought them all back safe, happy, children with a whole new world of animals buzzing in their heads.