

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & FUNDING SUPPORT

Snehagram is primarily managed and supported by the Camillians. We have been fortunate also to be supported by the Italian Bishop's Conference for the first three years to set up our program. We can only manage the program with the generous support of benefactors and collaborators, both individuals and corroborates. We are looking forward to explore sponsorship programs and fund raising events to raise support for the program.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

You can support us:

by donating to Snehagram you are making the childhood and adolescence memorable for children living with HIV and supporting a program through which they receive guidance, protection, promotion of rights of children, opportunities to develop their full potential, make independent decisions, skill development, life skills and values that will guide and sustain them in their personal and social lives.

You may also help them by your mentorship, teaching and guidance by being a short term or long term volunteer

The donation made to Snehagram are exempted from tax 80G (5)(vi) of the IT Act 1961.

Contact us directly through our website, e-mail or phone

BANK PARTICULARS

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A/C No : 0518 0530 0000 3909
Bank Name : South Indian Bank Limited, Kaikondrahalli, Carmelaram P.O. Bangalore - 560035
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Snehagram – Camillians

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SNEHAGRAM: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Snehagram was conceived as a humble attempt to respond to the needs and challenges of adolescent children living with HIV. Sneha Charitable Trust had the experience of working with PLHIV and younger children through Snehadaan, Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home and activities of Sneha Charitable Trust. With the advancement of medical interventions, the children were growing up into youth and it was our responsibility to groom them and prepare them for a successful adulthood. Which needed a different approach and focus on vocational skills, life skills and preparation for independent living.

First batch of 23 children (10 girls and 13 boys) moved to the campus in Nachikuppam village of Krishnagiri Tamil Nadu on June 22, 2013.

VISION & MISSION

Snehagram envisions to ensure quality of life and future of the orphan and vulnerable children living with and affected by HIV and lead them to a healthy and productive adulthood by comprehensively addressing their needs on education, health, psycho-social and emotional well-being, vocational training, life skill education and value formation.

Educate for Life is our Motto

OBJECTIVES

- To create a home away from home for Children Living with and Affected by HIV to rebuild their lives.
- To encourage children to attain optimum education for building their lives for future,
- To ensure quality of life through comprehensive and holistic care integrated with adequate psycho-social and emotional well-being.
- To build self-esteem and confidence through life skill training , guidance and support.
- To guide and support the young adolescent to transition into responsible, healthy and hope filled adults.
- To enable the children to develop their skills for securing job through vocational training based on their aptitude.
- To mentor and rehabilitate the young adolescents to settle in life.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

TURN CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

When I am around children, I enjoy asking what they want to be when they grow up. This exercise fascinates me. It offers a rare opportunity in life: the freedom to spell out whatever the imagination dares to dream, uninhibited by other people's expectations or fears. Usual replies include, "I want to become a social worker," "I want to be a teacher, mechanical engineer," and my favourite, "I want to be a social healthcare worker!". Our true worth does not consist in what human beings think of us. What we really are consists in what God knows us to be. One of the most useful skill in life is the ability to turn challenges into opportunities. When something unwanted happens, it is easy to be defeated and resigned to a negative outcome but is so much better to be smart, innovative and find a way of creating a positive effect from a difficult situation. This is what, I believe, Snehagram is aiming at. I gratefully appreciate and acknowledge the selfless service and commitment of Fr. Mathew Perumpil, Fr. Joy Inchodikaran, sisters of the Divine Providence, staff and volunteers for making the life these adolescent children so meaningful, creative and innovative and helping them in developing their different skills, moulding and remoulding their life opportunities and shaping their future life in a meaningful way. I would also like to acknowledge the generosity and spirit of service of our volunteers, well-wishers and benefactors. I sincerely thank all our dear children as well for allowing us to serve them as our own. God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Fr. Baby Ellickal
Provincial



DIRECTOR'S DESK

Three Years seems like three months as we look back to the eventful, yet energizing and fulfilling mission that is slowly evolving into some shape and form now. Moving with 25 young teens with a small team of care takers into a small village in June 2013 was quite adventurous. Yet looking back we can see how God was with us in every step to build the dreams of these teenagers into possible realities. As we enter into our fourth year with 62 young people, we are grateful celebrating the grace-filled three years of our life at Snehagram. Our collaborators and partners in this mission, Daughters of Divine Providence, not only became our greatest support, but also reminded us of the providential care of God throughout these years.

Snehagram today is a lovely campus with plenty of green cover and full of life and enthusiasm of the young boys and girls who have made it their home. Just as they were building this campus into a beautiful place, they were also building their fragile lives with hope and joy. Now as they are moving from one milestone to another, they are eagerly looking forward to stand on their feet confidently to face the world with courage and strength.

Snehagram is looking forward to forge into new avenues and partnerships to create a better world for the many young people facing a difficult future in every aspect of their lives. Together we are sure we will achieve our goals and dreams to bring more smiles into their faces and strength into those lives to live confidently.

Our hearts resounds with gratitude to all who have joined us in this wonderful journey of life. Thank You and God Bless us all.

Fr. Mathew Perumpil, MI,
Director, Snehagram



LIFE AFTER SNEHAGRAM

In the words of the children, life after Snehagram is markedly different from life before they came here. For some, ART adherence and health have improved remarkably almost like a steep U-turn, yet for few others it has made life less stressful away from the stigma and discrimination at home and the positive, caring environment at Snehagram. Few talk about acquiring new skills of tailoring, computers, operating a sophisticated camera, speaking good English, playing a new sport or getting to eat fruits daily while others talk about how their own knowledge about HIV and its mode of transmission has helped them go back to their family which used to isolate them and educate them. These children are happy that they have acquired the power of negotiation and altering their environment to one that is empathetic to their HIV status. Few select children like Babu and Manik will compete with other children in the world for international recognition and performance in sports while children like Meena who have been a Prime Minister at the Child Parliament may go ahead to take bigger roles as an adult when they grow up. The possibilities are endless but the starting point for these children was giving them an environment of acceptance, love and nurturing, of recognition and encouragement, of good medical care, treatment and support to manage their HIV/AIDS and general health and a belief in life after HIV/AIDS.

** Note: Snehagram is a learning site of Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) for its HIV/AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children Social Protection Project which is funded by USAID and implemented in 16 districts across the three states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to increase access to priority health, educational, social protection and welfare services by children affected by HIV/AIDS (CABA). The learning site at Snehagram serves to demonstrate to other programs and other states how an institution based intervention is focused not just on care and treatment of CABA but also links them to opportunities related to education, over all development and vocation.

“COUNSELING MADE ME A BOLD GIRL AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO HANDLE MY OWN FEELINGS OF DESPAIR AT BEING TREATED BADLY BY MY UNCLE’S WIFE AT HOME. IT’S ALMOST LIKE I GOT MY CHILDHOOD BACK.”

MEENA, 18

PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Karnataka Health Promotion Trust

- Programme guidance
- Learning Site initiatives
- Financial Support
 - a. HIV/ AIDS Orphan and Vulnerable children social protection project

St John’s Medical College

- Medical care & referral service
- Pushers in operational researches

Boston University

- Research support
- Virtual and actual internship by students in public health
- Volunteer programme

Learn For Life Foundation, USA

- Finding sponsors for children
- Support in data organisation and management
- Funding support for education

Runners High, Bangalore.

- Athletic training for children
- Conducting fund raising and amateur running
- Events for supporting the running programme

Bangalore School Sports Foundation

- Conducting the ‘Champion in Me’ Sports event
- Training Children in Athletics and Sports programs

International Services Agency (INSA – India)

- Conducting life-skill trainings for children
- Facilitating children's Parliament
- Training and facilitation for drafting the ‘Child Rights Policy Manual’

Sachin had difficulty in taking ART regularly at home after both his parents died from HIV ten years ago and his health suffered a major set-back where doctors declared him 'dying' at the hospital in Mysore. He was taken to Snehadan where he was treated and received care and support till he finally moved to Snehagram when he turned fourteen. Sachin enjoys good health now and says, 'I can't believe what a U-turn my life has been after the care and support from Snehagram.'

Child Parliament: The Child Parliament is another unique programme at Snehagram facilitated by INSA-India and aims to provide sustainable and meaningful opportunities for children to participate in local, national and democratic processes for the larger purpose of attaining child development, survival and protection. Under the Child Parliament program, children are being elected as ministers to different ministries following the democratic system. There is a minister for education, environment, health, law and sports-each looking after areas assigned to them. The Environment Minister looks after the cleanliness, the plantations around the campus and watering them while the Law minister looks that there is no use of profanity and no violence among children. There is a Prime Minister, cabinet of ministers, shadow ministers and helpers who collectively identify issues from the point of view of a CABA/CLHIV, bring it to the notice of the administration and management of Snehagram, recommend solutions, facilitate discussions, bring out resolutions and enact it. The children through the Child Parliament are acquiring leadership skills and getting involved in the governance of the institution and getting empowered.

Ashwini, the Health Minister, shares how high levels of ART adherence among the children has been made possible by stringent monitoring on a daily basis by her along with the help from shadow ministers and helpers. She says, 'My role is to identify which of us is not taking ART, water, fruits and vegetables regularly and report it to the management of Snehagram to control children who do not take ART regularly.'

Champion in Me and Sports: The Champion in Me is an annual arts & sports event for the children living with HIV which was launched with an aim to unearth the hidden talents of children and provide a platform to exhibit their competencies in arts and sports. Every year it is held at Snehadan Campus at Bangalore where several hundred children participate in different cultural and sports competitions, win prizes and learn the importance of cooperation and lending ears to the ideas of others. The Champion in Me and the training at Snehagram were the spiraling influence on Babu Seenappa and Manik Prabhu's success in different marathons and their participation at the International Children's Games/Olympics at Netherlands between June 24-29,2015. For the first time in the history of the global sports event two children who have HIV are participating and defying the myth that being HIV positive is the end of the road.

'THE GOOD THING ABOUT HAVING CHILD PARLIAMENT IN SCHOOLS IS WE CAN TAKE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERN OURSELVES WITHOUT DEPENDING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM ADULTS FOR EVERYTHING WITH JUST SOME SUPPORT.'

KALESH, 16



SCENARIO OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV IN INDIA

While estimates for children orphaned by AIDS are unavailable there is evidence that nearly 0.1 million children living with HIV/AIDS in India. UNICEF estimates that there could be about 4 million affected children in India, located mostly in the high HIV-burden states of south and northeast India (affected children include those living with HIV or those who are orphaned by AIDS, and children whose parents are living with HIV). By the end of 2015, around 75 thousand children below the age 15 needed ART.

As per June 2015 data, in Karnataka, we have 7582 children below age 15 alive on ART . As per USAID OVC project's initial findings we may have about 64,980-1,08,300 children infected and affected by HIV. About 30% of this CABA have single parents. Majority are paternal orphans brought up by widows who are also HIV positive. This puts the children into high vulnerability position.

This is true for most of the children living within Snehagram, Snehasadan and Sneha Care Home. The children have the history of neglect, abandonment, loss of parents and childhood trauma which is having immense impact on the young minds.

'The biggest problem that any child in this world can face is being unloved, uncared for, unfed, ill-treated, dejected or deserted. When our parents are alive, no matter how sick they may be, we are much better off because they deal with the ill treatment that comes our way from others. When they die, no one is there to intervene when people ill-treats us. Children who are infected with HIV face the ill treatment from other family members, alone.' - Babu Seenappa, 14

OUR TEAM

FR. MATHEW PERUMPIL MI
DIRECTOR

FR. JOY INCHODI, MI
ADMINISTRATOR

TEAM MEMBERS

SR. RANI (SUPERIOR) JITHIN SEBASTIAN
SR. PRASANTA ANTONY MARIA JOSEPH
NIRAMALA SUBIN
PRABHAKARAN



SNEHAGRAM STUDENTS: STATISTICS

NO. OF CHILDREN	2013	2014	2015
GIRLS	13	22	24
BOYS	12	21	27
TOTAL	25	43	51

PROGRAM FEATURES

Programs at Snehagram are designed to meet the unique requirements of adolescent children. They fall under the five broad categories shown in the figure below. However, flexibility is the key feature and each child has been encouraged to chart out a future path and pursue the same utilising the services within Snehagram.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The academic programme in Snehagram is student centered. Most of these children lack formal education as they have not attended the school for a considerable time hence National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) of Central Government has been adopted to complete the secondary education. This offers the student the choice to select any five subjects of his/her interest and clear them at one shot or in parts. Participatory and activity based pedagogically is being followed. Each class has three to four study groups which learn together and their discussions and progress are monitored by the respective subject teachers. The application questions and the activities make the students reflect and personalise the learnings.

The students of Snehagram are divided into three groups; The NIOS group, the Pre-NIOS group and the Skill group. A continuous and comprehensive evaluation is conducted in both the semesters to assess their progress.

NIOS

Students in this group individually chose five subjects and prepare thoroughly and write the exams. In the year 2014-15 we registered our first batch 14 students who wrote the exams for three of their subjects viz; English, Home Science, and Data Entry Operations. All of them have passed their exams and are preparing to write the remaining subjects this March- April.

LIST OF CHILDREN AS PER THE CLASS

SL NO	CLASS	NO OF CHILDREN
1	NIOS,	19
2	PRE NIOS + TAMIL MEDIUM STUDENTS	19
3	VOCATIONAL TRAINING	
A	TAILORING	7
B	FARMING. (DAIRY, AGRICULTURE)	6
	TOTAL NO OF CHILDREN	51

The Pre NIOS

Students who will be appearing for their public examination the following year are trained in different aspects of English like grammar, comprehension, vocabulary building and communicative English in the first semester. In the second semester they are introduced to different subjects of NIOS to be able to choose their subjects for NIOS. They are also introduced to self-directed learning through group discussions and interactions in their study groups. Those who are 15 years of age are promoted to do their Secondary Course.



Vocational Training

Those children that are not interested in pursuing formal education through NIOS are given the flexibility to choose vocational training. Currently we have; Tailoring and Embroidery, farming and dairy. Four of our students who passed the basics of tailoring have gone for further training to Malur, Karnataka.

A focused effort on setting up a community college with six basic course is also being discussed and is in the planning stage.

Apart from formal studies, short term programs for the personality development, career guidance are also offered through volunteers and staff of partner organisations. Exposure visits to other institutions offering vocational training are also organized. The visit to farms in Salem and Puvitham, Dharmapuri helped them understand organic farming and how to manage water effectively in a drought prone area.

All the children are engaged in some farming activities as well as daily cleaning and maintenance activities around the campus. Specialty of our farming is that we follow 'Organic Farming' and each child is given a plot of land to cultivate and manage independently. This gives a good learning for them in management and when the produce is sold, they get part of the money into their bank accounts.



'I want to be a tailor instructor and teach poor children who are not educated how to make dresses and earn so that they can stand on their feet. I want to make a good tailoring school. Snehagram taught me tailoring and now my dreams are weaved onto this interest.' - Ashwini, 16

SNEHAGRAM- BELIEVING IN LIFE AFTER HIV/AIDS

Snehagram is a 17 acre residential facility for orphan and vulnerable children with HIV situated in Nachikuppam in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu with the mission to ensure quality of life, leading them to a healthy and productive adulthood through education, good health, psycho-social support, vocational training and life skill education.

Through its specialized school, vocational skills trainings, a comprehensive health management program with special emphasis on HIV/AIDS, sports activities and yoga, events like 'Champion in Me', Summer Camps, Child Parliament and involvement of children in the administration of Snehagram, the institution has been able to develop leadership skills in the children and empower them in terms of good health, level of awareness of HIV and skills to negotiate with family and community to overcome stigma and discrimination, achieving life aspirations and goals and believing in life after HIV/AIDS.



Learn for Life Centre, the residential school at Snehagram offers children specialized education allowing each child to choose a subject suitable to individual aptitude and aspirations while completing their secondary and higher secondary level of education under the National Open School (NOS).

Vocational training: Children receive vocational training in Snehagram to develop in them skills required to get a job and earn a stable livelihood. These trainings are on computer programming, language and communication, customer care services, BPO/ITES industry, crafts, tailoring and embroidery and agriculture and farming with exposure to skills in cattle and poultry farming. Children are involved in farming in the land inside the campus and take lead in maintaining this kitchen garden in turns.

Sachin, 19, from Mysore learnt photography and the basics of videography in such trainings and can now handle the DSLR Nikon professional camera with as much ease as a professional photographer would. He photo documents all the events and programs at Snehagram and wants to grow to become a journalist.

These vocational trainings have helped these children to think beyond academics and mentored their overall development and given them additional skills to help them prepare for jobs and get financially independent.

Comprehensive Health Management: The clinic at Snehagram, with an on-site nurse and a group of doctors available for consultations, focuses on prevention of opportunistic infections through regular monitoring and evaluating immunity status and viral load of children who are integrated to the Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) provided by the National AIDS Control. Referrals are made to Snehacare and St. John's Hospital in Bangalore. Besides management of HIV/AIDS, Snehagram looks into the nutrition, good health and overall well- being where children spend early morning time in yoga and running and acres of land have been planted with fruit trees like mango, papaya, sapota etc. to provide for good nutrition.

"I WANT TO HAVE MY OWN TAILORING SCHOOL TO TEACH POOR CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT EDUCATED TO HELP THEM TO STAND ON THEIR OWN FEET"-

LIFE GOAL OF ASHWINI, CLASS 9 STUDENT, RECIPIENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON TAILORING FOR CHILDREN.



AN INSTITUTIONAL CASE STUDY LIFE 'BEFORE' AND 'AFTER' SNEHAGRAM



DIFFERENT FACES. SAME STORY. STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND HIV

LIFE BEFORE SNEHAGRAM:

These are stories of few children at Snehagram but who collectively represent the different scenarios and background of Orphans and Vulnerable Children with HIV in India and their major challenges. These stories help to throw light on the impact of Snehagram and its programmes on the quality of life of these children and the need for such residential care, treatment and support institutions and facility to address the issues of Children Affected By HIV/AIDS (CABA) and Children Living with HIV (CLHIV).

For 16 year old Ashwini from Bidar district in Karnataka, stigma and discrimination entered her life soon after her parent's death from HIV/AIDS. Ashwini and her younger brother Akash went to live with their mother's family after they became orphans but their suffering did not end with losing their parents. In more ways than one, it just seemed to begin. Ashwini's grandmother began to isolate her from the rest of the family which caused her immense pain and humiliation. Separate plate and glass to use and different set of bed clothes made Ashwini to feel dejected and uncared for. Fear of transmission of HIV from Ashwini to others in the family was the cause of such behavior.

Meena, 15 from Maddur town in Mandya district in Karnataka has a similar tale of receiving ill treatment from family members after parent's death. Burdened with household chores, not being given food to eat, spoken to with no dignity and consideration are aspects of the traumatic life that orphans and children with HIV live. She remembers with pain,

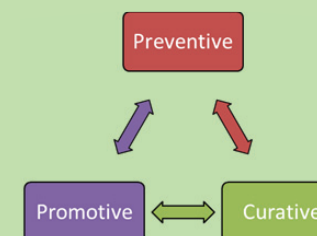
'My maternal uncle's wife used to cook for only them and I used to watch them eat. Even in my mother's last days before HIV finally killed her, my uncle and his wife did not look after my mother. I saw her die from negligence as much as from HIV.'

For Siddaramu, 16 from Maddur it became tough to cope after parent's death when he found there was no one to support him and his sister. They got separated – he lived with his mother's family and his sister with their father's family. For Sachin, 14 from Bidar remembering to take Ante Retroviral Therapy (ART) on time at home was a great challenge. Kalesh, 15, from Bidar remembers how doctors in the hospital suspected him and his younger brother to be infected with HIV when his mother died from the same disease there. Till then their HIV status was unknown. On testing Kalesh was found infected with the virus and treatment was started for him.

The children may be different and from different geographies but it is the same story of stigma and discrimination, absence of a support group and lack of care, a hostile environment within and beyond home, safety issues, of unknown HIV status, of delay in treatment, of lack of access to ART and issues of adherence, of malnutrition, of lack of opportunities in education, vocation and giving up.

HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Managing the health becomes a key goal for our program. To reach our goal, we have divided our health management functions into three groups:



PREVENTIVE CARE

We follow the golden rule of Medical care "Prevention is better than cure". We have made prevention practices integrate into the daily lives of our children. Which includes:

- **Yoga/ Suryanamaskara:** Children start their day with Yoga and Suryanamaskara, which helps them to have a healthy body and mind and align with nature.
- **Running/ marathon:** Snehagram has a running track across the campus. Children run 5K, 10 K daily morning. On certain days they also run cross country. This helps them to keep fit. This has brought health and fame to Snehagram.
- **Nutrition and healthy habits:** Providing a balanced nutritious menu for the children is the backbone of our preventive health management. Snehagram children cultivate organic fruits and vegetables which provide them the required exercise, farming skills and healthy ingredients. Diet includes mix of vegetarian, non-vegetarian and seasonable fruits. Water therapy is used to ensure children take sufficient quantity of water. In winter season hot water is provided to drink and for bath. Children are taught hygiene practices and Health Ministers from among the children ensure all follow the healthy habits.
- **Home remedies:** We encourage the children to adopt home remedies and naturopathy for common ailments. Hot water with Honey is the medicine for the cough in Snehagram. We work for judicious use of allopathic medicines and believe that the immunity has to be generated by the body and not by the antibiotics. Hence, the pharmacy includes less than 5 types of antibiotics.

PROMOTIVE CARE

We believe that "health is a state of complete mental, physical and psychological wellbeing" and focus on creating A healthy mind in a healthy body.

- **The psychosocial services:** As the children come from difficult circumstances, we often observe psychological issues which need as much attention as all other development aspects. Sr. Bridget in collaboration with NIMHANS Bangalore, provides the Psychosocial services to the children. Life skill education is integral part and several workshops are conducted on improving self-awareness, leadership developments and career guidance. Individual and group counselling is provided on need basis.
- **Well-being group:** Well-being groups are formed of children who meet every week and discuss their issues and provide mutual support in dealing with life challenges and in goal setting. A Well-being tool developed by Boston University students is followed by Snehagram in order to assess the psychological health status of the children and implemented every six months.

Snehagram Counselling made me understand the transmission of HIV and those others need not fear from getting it from me. That knowledge freed me. I went home during school holidays and counselled my maternal uncle and his wife on HIV transmission. Now they feel safe in my company and treat me well!!' - Meena, 15, Prime Minister, Child Parliament

CURATIVE CARE

- **ART (anti-retroviral therapy):** ART is the wonder drug that keeps the HIV positive children alive. 42 of our children are on ART. Adherence to ART is a key parameter for its success and we have managed it by following certain best practices. Child Parliament that is formed within Snehagram motivates and monitors ART adherence of children. Apart from making the children aware of health benefits of ART and making them responsible to take it regularly and on time, the Health Minister of the Child Parliament closely observes the children while they are taking ART. The pills are counted and written with the name and date on each child's ART box.
- **In-house nursing facility:** The in-house nurse plays a major role in the health management of children. She monitors, records and keeps track of each child's CD4, ART follow up dates. Additional support is also taken from Snehadaan Medical facility.
- **Tie up with St. John's Medical College Hospital, Bangalore:** There is regular follow up available from St. Johns Medical College ART Centre who visit and check the ART adherence and health of all children. We also visit the Infectious Diseases (ID) clinic on Fridays when there is need. We also have support through electronic media for consultations related to any other health issues.
- **EMR (electronic medical record):** We maintain EMRs (electronic medical record) for all our children. Two student volunteers from Boston University, Sherly and Miranda have been instrumental for implementing the EMR within Snehagram. This has enabled us to get the health parameters of a child in single click of a button and diagnose the child quickly and accurately.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The co-curricular activities strengthen the base of curriculum. These activities enable children to share their emotions and strengthen the bond of friendship. In extra-curricular activities, creative works are given importance which facilitates skills and ideas of children. Adolescent stage is a period of turmoil and restless, where energy of children has to be tapped for productive work. These are the activities which motivate students for learning and make their lesson enjoyable.

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS:

Throughout the year, we conduct events and celebrations to engage our children and showcase their talent. Sometimes the events are of national significance such as Independence Day, Republic Day, sometimes they are of religious nature; Christmas, Diwali, Dusshera, sometimes they are of social significant days such as Children's Day, AIDS Day etc. Children work in groups, prepare for days and put up great talent shows. They also get to meet people and get appreciated by them.



PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

As sports and cultural activities are given importance within Snehagram, selected children take part in different sports and cultural activities at national and international levels. This gives them visibility and builds the confidence. Some key events participated in 2015 are; Auroville Run, Pondicherry in February 2015, Athletic Camp organised by BSSF, 5 K run Bangalore. Babu and Manik from Snehagram got the opportunity to attend The Children Olympics in July 2015 in Netherlands. The Karnataka Government honoured by Manik and Babu for the same.



To snehagram staff and children,

I am so thankful for having had the opportunity to come and stay with you. I have learnt a great deal about the program, the issue of HIV in India, and the challenges that Sneha Charitable Trust continues to overcome. Getting to know the students and seeing firsthand how resilient they are was truly eye opening, and their positive energy really is contagious! Snehagram staffs are doing a wonderful job of fostering each student's individual talents, aptitudes, and interests while helping them to overcome their challenges is empowered. I am grateful for being a part of this Organization.

Hope to continue my involvement in the best of my abilities. The experience I've taken will stay with me for years to come was truly "Learning for Life". I wish all the best to the students in achieving their goals and to keep working towards them!

Best Regards,
Rheanne, Canada



I was staying at Snehagram for about five weeks. The first few days I was participating as an observer in the daily activities of the students. After some days I started a goal setting/ personal power course for the girls. The aim was to improve the sense of unity among the girls and help every girl get a clearer picture about how they are going to build the future they would aspire for. So they wrote down goals/ wishes they would like to achieve in the future. I strongly believe that after the short course the girls felt more connected and turned out to be more supportive to each other. Furthermore, it feels like they understood more what steps they have to take to have the future they want and to be more self-responsible. The course might not have the same positive effect on every girl, but I do have the feeling that every girl learned more about themselves and about how to better interact and support each other. It was very nice for me to see that the girls really appreciated my time and effort for the course. It was the first time for me that I was doing a course like this. I didn't really know if it would have the impact on the girls that I was hoping for. They appreciated the course very well and their enthusiasm enhanced my confidence as well.

After all, I am very happy to have taken time to visit Snehagram and trying to help the students here. It is very inspiring to see how the places like Sneha Care Home and Snehagram have been built. It is easy to see all the work and effort which have been put into establishing these places I will go back to Germany with a very inspired mind, and of course the time here was very unique for me and I learned a lot, although I was only staying for a short time. I definitely would like to come back to see the progress and of course to see how the students are doing and maybe to do another projects with the students.

Barbara, Germany

“VOLUNTEERS’ CORNER”



My experience at Snehagram

First, I wanted to start by giving a huge Thank you to everyone at Snehagram. All the students and staff made Shirley and I feel very welcome here and that was a huge help. Without your support we wouldn't have been able to accomplish everything we did.

The highlight of this experience was getting to know all the students. Teaching classes was an unexpected project but Shirley and I came to know the students in our class very well. Although teaching was tricky at first because neither of us is trained in teaching, it turned out to be a fun and valuable experience. She and I tried to come up with fun, new activities each day, which I think our students really enjoyed. We also got to know some of the girls pretty well just by living in the hostel with them. Playing cards, talking and joking around was another highlight of my experience here. We hope that they will all remember Shirley and I the time we had here, because we certainly will.

Shirley and I completed several major projects for which we are extremely proud of and grateful for the opportunity to work on. We hope that in the future they will continue to expand and be used. She and I would also love to come back only to visit in the future and help in any way possible. We hope to stay in touch with not only the staff but the students as well. We couldn't have asked for a better time here again, thanks you so much for having us!

Thanks,
Miranda Fadden
Boston University, USA

To Snehagram children,

It was 6 months. Quite long time. First I feel sorry for that I didn't help you much. But I learned many things from you making relationships with other people, taking responsibility. And it was also a great chance to think about my life and future. Unfortunately I'm not a good writer. So I can't write any longer but I believe you knew what I'm thinking. All the best all of you I am looking forward to seeing you again

Buong-soo, South Korea



CHAMPION IN ME:

Champion in Me is an annual Sports and cultural meeting of HIV positive children initiated by Sneha Charitable Trust since 2009. Since then it has offered a forum for Children Living with HIV to come together and showcase their talents. Snehagram children continue to get highest in medal tally while the membership and competition is getting tougher by the passing year.



BLESSING OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSE, FEB 1

Snehagram witnessed a special event on February 1st as we welcomed the Camillian Leaders from around the world led by Fr. Leo Pessini, The Superior general of the Order. We had a special Thanksgiving Mass presided by Fr. Stephen Foster, the provincial of Anglo-Irish Province who contributed to the building of our Church in the campus. After the Mass, Fr. General with Fr. Vittorio, the Provincial of North Italy blessed the new house for the Fathers. There were around 70 Camillian Fathers and some of our collaborators from around the world. As they reached the Snehagram campus, we welcomed them with roses. After the Mass and Blessing, we had some cultural programs followed by a delicious dinner. Then all of the fathers wished us all the best for our life and thanked us for the wonderful programs and hospitality.

Gowthami, 14

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Adolescents living with HIV face a lot of challenges during their transition into healthy adult life. Snehagram envisages overcoming these challenges by developing leadership skills among them. Child Parliament system that is implemented within Snehagram is a clear example for this. Apart from this children are also groomed to attend conferences and workshops and influence the stakeholders to take actions that will uphold the rights of Children Living with HIV.

CHILD PARLIAMENT:

Child Parliament is a system of self-governance by children. INSA India, a partner of Snehagram supported in setting up the Child Parliament system within Snehagram which is actively functioning since 2013 and has become an inspiration to many more organizations working for Children Affected by AIDS (CABA) in the country. Under this system children elect their own Parliament; Prime Minister, Health Minister, Law Minister, Sports Minister, Education Minister, Environment Minister and Opposition Ministers. Cabinet meetings and Parliament meetings are held regularly and children take active part in managing and guiding the affairs of Snehagram. Mr. Lakshmikanth is the current Prime Minister and Ms. Pooja is the Deputy Prime Minister for the year 2015.



'The biggest advantage of having a Child Parliament is children can solve their own problems rather than take it to teachers, staff and head of Snehagram.'

- Meena (17), Prime Minister, Child Parliament, 2014

'We solve our problems, take our own decisions and it is good to take our own decisions and improve our lives in Snehagram and that is the best thing that Child Parliament has brought.'

-Siddaramu, 16, Health Minister, Child Parliament

Child Parliament of Snehagram is now a model for many other institutions. In December 2015 Child Parliament members from six institutions from across Karnataka and Maharashtra came for an exposure visit to Snehagram to learn the functioning of Child Parliament.

LEARNING SITE DEVELOPMENT

As one of the pioneering institution in the area of CABA care, Snehagram has been gradually developed into a Learning site for other institutions providing care for CABA. The widely acclaimed model of care at Snehagram is open for learning and assimilation. Snehagram facilitates exposure visits to the institutions in Child care and provides mentoring visits to the organizations that are into the care of CABA. These include training support, handholding, sharing of best practices etc. In the year 2014, 00 institutions were facilitated with exposure visits and 000 were given mentoring support.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME

SUMMER CAMP FOR COMMUNITY CHILDREN. KALANKARAI 2015.

Snehagram, as part of its outreach initiatives, conducted five-day campus for the community –based CABA (children affected by AIDS). These are envisioned to impart life skill training and value education in fun filled environment. The camps were aptly titled ‘kalankarai’ (Tamil equivalent to Lighthouse). The camps were conducted in april and may 2015 and around 140 community based CLHIV participated in the camp. ARCOD and NGO based in Krishnagiri, tamil nadu played a pivotal role in mobilizing the participants for the camps. Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) supported the camp by providing resource person who could handle session in Tamil. The camp itself is ideated to act as a light house for the children and by the end of the camp the children are expected to assimilate the attributes of a light house and act as one to guide others in facing the challenges of their life.

The major objectives of the camp were:

- To instill personnal and social values
- To provide life skill education. (an important component of HIV/ AIDS prevention, care and treatment interventions with children and adolescents)
- To impart awareness about HIV/AIDS and thereby to effectively cope up with their situation.
- To enable them to set short term goals for life.



ADVOCACY INITIATIVES



NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP ON THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN INFECTED AND AFFECTED WITH HIV

National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), in collaboration with Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) under the USAID funded OVC Social Protection Project, organised a two-day workshop on the ‘Needs of Children infected and affected with HIV’ at Snehadaan in Bangalore, Karnataka on 29 & 30 January 2015. The children of Snehagram was involved in the programme for a better understanding of the problems faced by the children affected

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON CHILDREN

The sharing of experiences and needs of children infected and affected by HIV was one of the major highlights of the workshop. The children from Snehagram attended the panel discussion on the impact of HIV/AIDs on children, moderated by Fr. Mathew, Director – Snehagram. Six children from Snehagram represented the HIV infected children while the affected were represented by two.

Children raised the issues they face in the Family, Social life and in the areas of education and health with the real examples from their own lives. They narrated their stories since they became orphaned till the present day. They also shared their dreams for future and their anxieties on passing through the shaky bridge of adolescence to the adulthood where they would be challenged by the question: ‘are you ready to stand on your own feet’.

In the interactions that followed, while replying the audience on the ‘apt time/age for the disclosure of HIV status to a child’, one of the panellists said that it was not the age that matters most but the way the ‘HIV status’ is presented to them was the matter of concern. He stressed the need for presenting it to the infected in a positive manner without instilling a sense of intimidation. His statement that: “HIV, for me, is just three letters in the English alphabet” was received by the audience with a huge applause.

The ‘voices from the affected’ was a reminder that they shouldn’t be ignored on the pretext of their negative status and instead, they should be taken care with a sound mechanism of psycho-social support along with their education and other socio-economic requirements.

The programme was attended by Dr. Naresh Goel, DDG, NACO; Dr. Melissa Freeman, Team Lead, Infectious Disease prevention and Control, Health Office, USAID; Dr. Reynold Washington, Managing Trustee – KHPT; Dr. S G Ravindra, Project Director, KSAPS; Dr. Bitra George, Director, FH India; Ms. Elizabeth, Team Leader – Mainstreaming, NACO; Dr. Manish, PD – OVC Project, KHPT and Fr. Mathew Perumpil MI, Director Snehagram.

The participants appreciated the endeavours of the Sneha Charitable Trust for caring the children infected and affected by HIV and its concern for their bright future.

NACO CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES IN KOVALAM, KERALA

On 9th December, 2015, there was surprise call and I was asked to join Fr. Mathew and Mala, one of my peers for attending the National Conference on Social Protection Schemes for the OVC organized by NACO. It took place in Samudra Hotel in Kovalam, Trivandrum, Kerala. It was my first time that I got a chance to attend a national conference of such importance. It was my first visit to Kerala also.

I shared my life experiences in the conference and also came to know various social protection schemes provided for an HIV person.

I was happy to represent the young people like me to be the voice of the CLHIV.

Sukesh