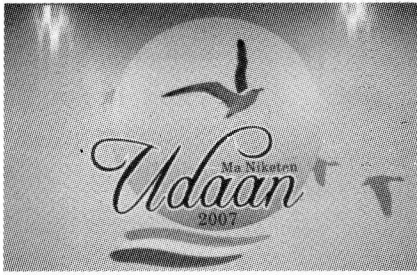


UDAAN – 2007

— SR. BARBARA & DR. ANIL LUNIYA (MA NIKETAN, MUMBAI)



‘Udaan’, meaning ‘flight’, is a very appropriate name for the Edufest organized by a group of philanthropic individuals in collaboration with Ma Niketan, an NGO run by the Society of the Helpers of Mary. Udaan - 2007, the two-day Edufest, was held amidst great fervor on the 24th and 25th of November, 2007, at Ma Niketan. The outfit runs 7 more such institutions in nearby areas including Assangaon, Andheri, Kanjur Marg, Madh Island, Nirmal, Waliv and Ma-Niketan, 140 girls from Std. X-XIIth. Participated in Edufest. Thane. Seminars were conducted in the morning while the entertainment programs constituted the attraction for the evening.

Ma Niketan is an abode for 350 female children, who are from poor families that cater to their intellectual, emotional, social

and economical needs, thereby helping them grow as mature and responsible citizens. In 2006, a youth leadership program was organized at Naya Jivan, Assangaon – a branch of Society of Helpers of Mary, under the banner of Rotary Youth Leadership Awards under the leadership of Dr Anil K Luniya, an eminent Physician, from Thane. Following the grand success of the program, the NGO was motivated to set their sights higher and thus was conceptualized – ‘Udaan 2007’.

As stated in its tag line, “Flying Together,” the program focused on the concept of team building and leadership. Udaan 2007 was heralded with an introductory speech by the Convener of Udaan – Dr Luniya, who emphasized the role of Team building and narrated the story of geese flying in formation as a team, and the lessons learnt to achieve as a team. This was followed by blessings from Sr. Barbara, the Vice President, Ma Niketan, Thane. The chief guest Mr. Rahul Timbadia ex-



Sapna Chouhan and Mr Sachin Gaonkar. An enlightening session that elaborated on the requisite attributes in a team and the importance of open and trans-

tolted the virtues of resilience, perseverance, and discipline in life.

In a highly interactive seminar headed by Avinash Gulrajani from The Global Academy of Meta Mind Management, the children learnt about the importance of team spirit and later, about the basics of team building from Dr. P. S. Ram Nathan, a BARC scientist & Dean of the Gharda Institute of Technology, Chiplun. Yet another power-packed seminar about the significance of discipline in a team was highlighted upon, by Rashmi Karandikar—the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Thane Rural. Day 2 of Udaan 2007 also witnessed a multitude of events and seminars starting with a Painting Competition at 6 am in the morning conducted by Mrs.

parent communication among the team members by Mr Dhiraj Chopra and Mr Prabodh Halde.

Child abuse, one of the most pressing social issues prevalent in society today, was addressed by ARPAN, an NGO that taught the children to identify and counter abuse. The participants who attended the program reported that the event was a wonderful learning experience, which would benefit the students tremendously in future. On both the days, these informative seminars were interspersed with Yoga sessions by Dr Suman and team, and various interactive group activities like Treasure Hunt (Mr Milind Deshpande & Team, Pune), Chak De India (Mr K Mohan, GM, RBI), Memory games & Quiz

contests (Dr P S Ramanathan, Mr Sachin Chavan, Mrs. Rama Chandrashekhar), Debates (Mr Sachin Chavan, Mrs. Rama Chandrashekhar, Mrs Sapna Chouhan) and several other team exercises (Mrs Karuna Chavan & team).

Interestingly, each and every one of these dynamic orators urged the children on 'to dream bigger and higher in life'. Sister Barbara and team believe every child has great potential and together they can work for a better world and a better future. Dr. Anil Luniya, said, "The negative apathetic approach that these children often develop towards life should be nipped in the bud. We should help them shed their inhibitions so that they can spread their wings and reach the sky. We need to train them to think independently and have a vision and a goal in life" Both the days' evenings were filled with variety entertainment program with Orchestra, Dances from professionals, as well as children of different Homes. It was fun and pleasure to see all the children enjoying and dancing on the floor with DJ. A special UDAAN theme song was written by Mr Kuldeep Verma, composed and sung by Mr Pravin Ahire.

On 25th Nov. at the closing ceremony, the chief guest Sr. Lela Superior General of the Society of the Helpers of Mary in her speech, Congratulated Dr. Anil Luniya and Udaan team, for their contribution to make this event successful. She also encourages the other homes for such events in future. She gave away the awards to: best teams were announced as well as the Miss Udaan & runner-ups.

The children coming from 8 other homes of Helpers of Mary rejoiced as well as felt sad on leaving after the event. It was a brilliant event and experience for all the 140 participants and the organizers felt their efforts rewarded in full. Perhaps, the most remarkable thing about Udaan 2007 was that the mega event was not organized or sponsored by any major organization, instead its was a culmination of the efforts of certain dedicated individuals like Dr. Luniya, Mr. Pradeep Nair, Mr. Ashok Bhambri, Sister Barbara and many others who believed that they could make a difference and they did.

Positive feedbacks have come in form all different institutions, and the changes are being seen in the daily activities of these participants.

selling Tea and Snacks. Sisters had put stall and Parish Priest helped in conducting games, in which most of them participated and seemed very happy. Every catholic family rendered their service to make this day a memorable one.

It's amazing to see the poor who do not have funds for survival were ready to give what they had. While walking on

the footprints of the Master we are the most privileged ones who can learn much from the poor. They are keen on observing their service and faith; that's how they could gladly sacrifice even what they had. This is what missionaries are also called to offer something out of nothing. "Happy are the poor for theirs is the Kingdom of God."

SUPER FLIGHT (UDAAN)

— Sr. MATHILDA, (PALI, MUMBAI)

The great event of Udaan 2007, 24th & 25th November was organized under the banner of dynamic Dr. Anil Luniya & team along with Sr. Barbara & team.

It was primarily for all the young girls of Std. X, XI & XII, of seven different centers of Andheri, Assangaon, Kanjur Marg, Madh Island, Nirmal, Uttan-Pali, Uttan Chowk & Walive for the 'Edufest' on Team Building. It begun on 24th with the Udaan song invoking everyone gathered to fly high like the sea gulls flying together.

Dr. Luniya in his inaugural speech introduced the two days programme on team building. The faculties of the Udaan

team highlighted the basic values of trust, discipline, courage, communication & Harmony. All these topics were very well depicted and explained, so that each participant gains effectively and have a positive outlook towards forming team for progressive action towards the Goal.

A session on Child abuse was an other social issue, which they emphasized. It is necessary that the young girls know and become aware of their rights and protect themselves from falling into all dangerous acts of rape, sexual abuse, molestation, etc.,

Open house Debates & games like 'Khel Khel mein' were

very enriching for the girls to break from their cocoons and open up for discussions. This helped them shed away their shyness, building confidence to build themselves and fabricate the society at large.

Cultural Programmers gave a boost to all the participants to put in their talents at their best for team building. It was really encouraging to see how the Udaan team picked up the best performers from among them.

Udaan 2007 song vibrated through the hall on the closing

ceremony in the evening of the 25th November. Our Superior General Sr. Leela appreciated the Udaan team for its successful programme in canonizing our young girls in teams for a future, to fly together; to reach the goal of becoming successful citizens of our country.

She thanked Dr. Luniya and his team. She also remembered Mother Anna Huberta and Mrs. Diwaliben who were instruments in building the Home for Children 'Ma-Niketan'.

BEHOLD I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

— MR. RONNY MATHIAS, (DHASAR, MUMBAI)

Alino who was suffering from acute Psoriasis was in an awful shape with his sunken, protruding eyes and weak limbs contorting him into a dire state. "There was no room in the inn for the Messiah who came to be born to this world." No Hospitals or Institution were ready to admit him. Freda, his wife looked after him for 14 long years.

We were on our trembling knees in Mira-Road church praying ardently to God to show us a way, to touch and heal his son Alino. We prayed that we may find some one as we step out

of the Church, who would provide an answer for our quest'.

In our desperation we were running from pillar to pole seeking for help to admit Alino to some hospital. Dr. Drego whom I visited advised me to go to Nair Hospital. However, we couldn't get admission for Alino. One day I met a friend of mine - Mr. David on some business matter. He was more optimistic in offering me a ray of hope to meet Sr. Anegha who was the local superior of Pushpa Vihar community that takes care of the Leprosy colony in Dahisar. Mr. David spoke to me