



# Friends Society

(Established 1969)

## ANNUAL REPORT: 23-24

(July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024)



Petit Library, Opp. Parsi Agiyari; Fatehgunj, Vadodara 390002, India

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ACTIVITY YEAR (2023-24)

Friends Society has been contributing humbly and consistently to provide relief and support **the lives of hundreds of people every year** since last 55 years – for those who attend our activities (beneficiaries) as well as volunteers who conduct these activities.

### 2024 the year of PETIT LIBRARY

- Being concerned by the impact of social media thereby heavily and negatively impacting the reading habit of public, Friends Society decided to celebrate the year 2024 as the **YEAR OF PETIT LIBRARY**. Specific communication campaign through banners, leaflets and banners was carried out, events like “meet the author”, various social media handles were used like WA chat groups, instagram etc. to spread the word about N.M. Petit Library. Impact as of writing this report is the library currently has record 109 members already registered. The year 2024 is yet not over and we intend to continue our focus on library activity.

### Infrastructure Improvement at N.M. Petit Library Campus

- N.M. Petit library building, part of which is used as the Friends Society office and activity centre is more than 125 years old property. Time and again some repairing and maintenance work was carried out year on year. However it needed a facelift and long term repair and maintenance work to reinforce its structure and life. This year with the help from the generous donations from well-wishers massive work like change of flooring in the library building and Sunday school activity area, internal and external painting, water proofing, replacement of old furniture was carried out.

### SCOPE and IMPACT of our work (activities)

- **590 beneficiaries** benefited from regular ongoing projects (62% were patients benefiting from blood donation, 35% remaining were youth, women and other people in the community including people with different disability. It does not include institutionalized beneficiaries of Sankul at Pensionpura)
- **About 2500 clothes were distributed to needy beneficiaries** under “UMANG” – clothe donation drive carried out during the year
- **285 units of blood** were collected in various blood donation camps organized in communities and industries in Vadodara. One unit of blood helps 1.3 patients on an average. Hence we estimate that at least 370 patients in the SSG Hospital benefited from this blood collection.
- **70 volunteers**, who were mostly college students, conducted service activities and participated in various FS initiatives.
- **9 beneficiaries** with visual disability were provided services of scribe for writing various exams

# ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday school is conducted every Sunday, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, at the Petit Library campus since 1983. Objectives are to facilitate supplementary education, medical rehabilitation, mobility improvement, and social integration of non-institutionalized children with disabilities who live across Vadodara. They are in the age range of 10 to 25 years. Jalaram Trust, a charitable organization and many donors, provide free lunch for them. Children are brought to the campus and returned home by Vans hired by FS. Attendance at each event is around 25 to 30.

During the year activity was carried out for 39 Sundays starting from 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023. This year department of audiography and language pathology, Sumandeep vidyapith carried out hearing and speech assessment of beneficiaries with an objective to initiate speech and hearing therapy sessions for the needy identified beneficiaries.

Other non routine activities included teaching of Ganpati idol making form Mud Clay. Beneficiaries then made 17 Ganpati idols. Volunteers conducted sessions on Money concept – identification, usage etc. Woolen caps ere distibuted to beneficiaries by Charotar oundation during winter.

Music therapy, art therapy, Physio therapy sessions were conducted regularly along with games, dance, singing etc. On an average, 20 beneficiaries took advantage of the activity who were supported by 12 FS volunteers with 3 qualified staff engaged for art therapy, music therapy and interns giving physiotherapy to beneficiaries.

Annual event of Picnic for the benefiaries was conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> March 24 at Fuldwar resort Vadodara. Beneficiaries were provided with breakfast of poha, sev and tea. After that all the beneficiaries were taken for atrip around fuldwar resort. Later some beneficiaries went for the adventure rides and the other group was made to play passing the ball. By 1:00 they were provided with lunch which included Puri, paneer, aloo sabji, Gulab jamun, fryums, dhokla, salad, dal and rice. Post lunch a small interactive musical session was organised. All of them were delighted to listen and sang along with the artist. They also played musical chair and then played cricket, volleyball and badminton too. They enjoyed rain dance too. By 4:30, evening snacks were provided and then return journey started at 5.30 p.m.

Participated in Open Vadodara Talent Competition organised by the Banyan City Jaycees Education Trust at Spandan School.. Various festivals like Diwali, Holi, Uttarayan were celebrated at Sunday School sessions for the beneficiaries.

### **Some achievements:**

Open Vadodara Talent competition: Fahad Shaikh first prize in singing by participants with visual disability and Jayendra Makwana third prize in dancing by participants with mental disability.

Like every year, this year too, Sunday school beneficiaries participated in PRERNA, a national level social event at the Faculty of Technology & Engineering, MSU, Vadodara. They were trained for the event at Sunday school. Prize details –Jayendra Makwana third prize in Dance competition for participants with mental disability

The category of the competitors for the event on 12th of August, 2023 was, MR and Speech Impediment. Beneficiary, Saddam participated and showed his acumen in Carom Competition.



The category of the competitors for the event on 13th of August, 2023 was for participants with mental disability. Beneficiary Yuvraj participated in the Dabba Fod Competition, and knocked out 22 pins out of 8, truly a moment to capture. Beneficiary, Kamlesh participated in the Solo Dancing Competition, Beneficiary Krishna and Ajay participated in Pot Designing Competition.



## **SHAURYA (“A Feat of Courage”)**

### **Open Vadodara Sports Meet for Children with Disability**

Since the past 29 years, Friends Society has been providing a unique platform for the specially-abled children from in and around Vadodara in the field of sports. Shaurya is a flagship event of Friends Society that helps infuse the qualities of healthy competition and build confidence. The main aim of this event is to help children find their talents and discover their true potential.

On the day, our group of volunteers arrived at the pavilion early at 6:00 am and got to work organizing the area for the welcome of our participants, visitors, parents, and school personnel. The anchors of the event initiated the proceedings by welcoming our esteemed chief guest, Mr. Vishnukumar Rajput (IAS). He is currently discharging his duties as Commissioner for persons with disabilities, Gandhinagar. During his keynote address, he extended an invitation to participants to seek support from him at any time as the commissioner of persons with disabilities. Also, our Guest of Honor, Mr. Mohan Patel. During his speech, he complimented the participants for embracing sports despite their physical constraints. He discussed his personal experience as a young competitor who competed in and won at the national level for NASEOH (National Society for Equal Opportunities to Handicapped). Mohan Patel was an active member of Friends Society in his younger age.

Soon after, the Shaurya opening ceremony was held. It featured greetings from our chief guest and guest of honor, a briefing from the Shaurya in-charges, lighting of the diya and mashal, and finally, the release of balloons. After that, we moved on to the sports event, which featured 14

different games. Meanwhile the registration crew and food committee completed their portion of taking attendance and distributing the food in the backend. The game coordinator was able to determine the sequence with the support of attendance data, and shortly the games began.

With the assistance of our kind supporters, we were able to provide meals that had everything the kids would love, such as cookies from Super Bakery, wafers from Blue Sky Travelers, flavored milk from Baroda Dairy, and puffs from Goodies. All the attendees, including parents and school staff, received lunch prepared by Jagdish Farsan, which included theplas and Frooti. We awarded participation certificates to all the participants, while the winners were awarded with winning certificates, medals, and bags by the Chief Guest. He also lauded the efforts of the participant kids and encouraged them to continue their efforts to excel in sports. Ruzan Contractor, our joint secretary, offered vote of thanks to all who graced the occasion with their presence, in particular chief guest and guest of honor, sponsors and donors for the event, University authorities for permission to use their ground, transportation providers, schools, and participants.

We also took the opportunity for felicitation of Divyang participants (Rakesh Modi, Suresh Rana, Iliyas Vohra, Satish Rana, and Amit Gawarikar) for successful kayaking expedition from Porbandar to Somnath. Chief Guest intently listed to the details of kayaking expedition from them.

The event concluded with a joyful note, underlining the idea that getting an opportunity to play is the best aspect of the game.

#### **PARTICIPATION:**

<b>SHAURYA 2023-24 21 January 24</b>				
<b>Sr No</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED	173	73	246
2	HEARING IMPAIRED	66	32	98
3	PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED BY LEG	19	0	19
4	LEARNING DISABILITY	25	4	29
5	PARTIALLY VISUALLY IMPAIRED	3	1	4
6	VISUALLY IMPAIRED	19	10	29
7	PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED BY HAND	7	2	9
	<b>TOTAL COUNT</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
		<b>312</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>434</b>
	<b>No of Schools present : 25</b>			
	<b>Total games played based on categories and age group: 78</b>			

This year the event was held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024 at Handball ground, University pavilion MSU. FS thanks the University authorities for providing the ground at the last minute as we had to relocate the tournament from Rosary school ground due to some government exam event. We also thank our life member and past trustee Ms. Vanisha Nambiar without whose support it would perhaps not have been possible to seek this permission. Also we are grateful to all our donors, sponsors and well-wishers for their continued support for this event. Thanks to local media also for covering Shaurya event.

We are pleased to provide a comprehensive compilation of the feedback we've received from the schools that took part in the program.



**SAMAJ SURAKSHA SANKUL:** “Yesterday's event was a delightful experience; all the students had a great time, fostering positive thoughts about their capabilities and aspirations. Gratitude extends to your team, leaders, volunteers, sponsors, and everyone involved for making it a success.”

**R.K SPORTS & KILLOL SPECIAL SCHOOL:** “Really Excellent work, everything is well arranged, On behalf of our all-Intellectual Disability School, we are thanks to the Shaurya team with our bottom of Heart.”

**ARPAN CHARITABLE TRUST:** “A very good "Annual "Shaurya" program was held. The volunteers" of your organization used to take the children to every game by asking from the front, asking if there is any problem and have seen them guide children well. Overall, the program was very good, thank you very much to the entire team of Shaurya for that.”

**URMI SCHOOL:** “This year the team of Friends Society organized for the special children which was well planned, food was nutritious, the service of the volunteer was very much appreciated. Arrangement of mobile toilets for children was good. The organization of the game competition was easy. Thanks to the whole team.”



## ACTIVITIES FOR PATIENTS

### BLOOD DONATION

This program is aimed at collecting blood that can be used for the low-income patients at the Sayajirao General Hospital (SSG) and also aims to increase awareness about the value of donating blood, providing guidance to those who cannot donate blood due to some reason (such as low hemoglobin), and to help dispel myths about blood donation that people may have. This program was started in 1969, the year the FS was established.

During the year, blood donation camps were organized at four locations resulting into collection of 285 blood units. A few days before each camp, volunteers would canvas the people at the location of the camp, hold talks with them to educate them, and encourage them to attend. During a camp, lasting from 3 to 6 hours, volunteers coordinate with blood bank staff and the host organization, prepare the venue for blood donation, registers blood donors and provide guidance to those who could not donate blood.

The blood donation camps were held at Narayan Powertech Limited, Techno Led at Jarod and Chhani locations, Civica Resources Limited and Inox India Limited.



“Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.” *Albert Einstein*



## ACTIVITIES FOR FATEHGANJ COMMUNITY

### **BALWADI (“Ankur Balwadi”)**

Balwadi was started in 1982 to provide opportunities to low-income families to get their pre-school children on the right path from an early age. The children are 3 to 5 years old. The program was designed with the help of early childhood education specialists from the M.S. University. It has developed a reputation of being one of the best Balwadi in the community.

Balwadi activity was conducted from July 23 to June 24 for total 30 registered admissions. The activity was conducted for 215 days.

The activity included teaching the kids alphabet, counting 1-10, identification of colors, fruits, vegetables, trees, shapes, body parts, animals, etc. They were also explained about Indian festivals, basic personal hygiene, etc. Various festivals were celebrated at the Balwadi. A fancy dress competition was arranged on Independence Day. A puppet show was organized in the month of March 24. Certification program was held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 24.



### **PUBLIC READING ROOM AND LIBRARY**

For more than 50 years, FS has been operating the reading room and library for the local area residents. They come to read newspapers and magazines six days a week, 3 hours every morning.

The library has about 4900 books in three languages and on a large variety of subjects. English – 1295, Hindi – 557, Gujarati – 3055. It is open for two hours a day, three days a week; in addition, many of the 109 library members visit to exchange books.

One part-time staff member and 2 to 3 volunteers help with library transactions as well as with cataloging, organizing, and maintaining books.

As mentioned in the highlights, this year is celebrated by FS as the year of Petit Library. Various communication medium is explored to publicise the Petit library like WA groups, Instagram, Public meetings, leaflet distribution etc. This year library recorded maximum member's registration – 109!!

Under Meet the Author program first session was held with Mr Mrugank Shah (poet, writer and film maker). He spoke about Books as Mind charger. It was attended by about 30 persons.

Public Reading Room and Library was open for 133 days.



## **SEWING AND EMBROIDERY CLASSES**

These classes are designed to provide skills to women from lower socio-economic communities – the skills and certificates which can help them increase their earning potential to supplement family incomes. In addition, various activities are aimed at their educational and social development. The beneficiaries are 16 to 45 years old. Classes are held two hours a day for five days. Thirty trainees enrolled for sewing class this year.

The beneficiaries participated in the general events of Friends Society such as Independence Day, Garba night etc.

## **YOUTH CLUB**

Youth Club is held six days a week for two-hours at the Petit Library campus (Petit library). It provides friendly atmosphere for pre-delinquent children from surrounding low-income communities. The atmosphere is conducive to learning and fostering discipline and self-control to reduce delinquent behavior. The beneficiaries are children in the age range of 7 to 15 years.



Youth Club activity was conducted for 106 days. On an average, 12 kids participate daily, sometimes as many as 20 to 22 attend.

Two weeks long summer camp was organised. On an average 21 beneficiaries participated. The activities conducted in Summer Camp were Puppet Show, Sports Activities, Zumba, Workshops on Art and Craft, Session on Good Touch & Bad touch, & Personality Development. It also included fun activities like Treasure Hunt, Dance, and Drama. Snacks and refreshments were distributed after each activity throughout the summer camp. The aim of the summer camp was to improve the children's life by giving them a new experience, building their confidence, and developing their skills.

Typical activities in general for youth club participants include:

Entertainment/fun activities: antakshari, storytelling, singing songs, dance, garba, clay work, passing the parcel, tactile painting, & Zumba. Conducted One week art and crafts activities, storytelling sessions

Awareness/educational sessions: team building games, education and career opportunities, public speaking, sessions on Smart kids, how to command your subconscious mind, making pen stands from plastic bottles, Diya making, Ganesh idol making, live telecast of Chandrayaan

Sports: kabbadi matches, musical chair, three-legged races, cricket, 'dabba fod,' football, basketball and bowling. When proper setting or equipment are missing (such as for bowling or basketball), volunteers improvise to ensure that beneficiaries still have fun

Occasional events: Uttarayan, Republic day, Independence day, Rakshabandhan, Janmashtami, Navratri, Diwali, Christmas, preparation and participation in FS' annual event SHAURYA, picnic, etc.





## ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### PROGRAMME FOR UNIVERSITY YOUTH (PUY)

This program is intended to increase the knowledge and awareness of young volunteers on a variety of topics of interest to them. Volunteers come up with ideas for topics to be discussed, coordinate speakers and manage communications. This program was started in 1970.

During the year, seven different sessions were conducted under this program. Topics covered were Team building, Project management, Blood donation, two quiz sessions, screening documentary on Amazon and the resilience of Matses people, awareness session on Anemia. On an average 27 participants took advantage of each session.

***“Service-Learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning.”***  
***-Jacoby, Barbara. 1996. Service Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.***

### ***Self-Development through Service***

## ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS

Individualized assistance, help that is not a part of group activities, was provided to adults and children with various disabilities. Key assistance activities:

### **Scribes for beneficiaries with visual disability**

Few FS volunteers with guidance and support from one of the trustees Ami Patel work dedicatedly to arrange scribes for the students and candidates with visual disability appearing in academic, competitive and employment tests and examination.

- 9 beneficiaries with visual disability were extended support of 16 writers for their various academic and competitive exams like Diploma in Computer applications, SBI recruitment test, B.A. Political Science, Staff selection commission recruitment test, Enforcement Officer/ Accounts officer
- The scribes were provided at Gandhinagar, Anand, Vadodara and other cities.

### **Educational assistance to persons with visual disability**

- Educational fee assistance was extended to five beneficiaries with visual disability directly and to three beneficiaries through recommendation to Mercury foundation.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Independence Day Celebration

Like every year, this year too Independence Day was celebrated at N.M. Petit Library premises. Ms. Nihar Agarwal, founder of Anwasha foundation, hoisted the national flag as chief guest of the function. Anwasha Foundation is working for environment preservation through tree plantation, plastic waste recycling and environment awareness sessions among university and school students. About 75 persons attended the event. It was followed by entertainment and cultural program by various beneficiaries group of Friends Society projects like Balwadi, Youth Club, Sewing and Vocational training classes, Sunday school etc.

### Volunteers Camp

Two days volunteers' camp on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 23 was organized at Prarthana farm. 40 volunteers participated in the same. After ice breaking session introduction session about Friends Society was conducted. The executive members presented monthly activity plans for the year. Detailed outline was provided about FS annual event of Shaurya. A session on unsaid rules to be followed at Friends Society was conducted. Project management session was held for the benefit of the members.

### The Republic Day Celebration

Republic day was celebrated at Friends Society. National flag was unfurled by our chairperson shri Bharat Mehta. FS members, beneficiaries and their parents, attended the function. Beneficiaries presented dance performances and singing solo and Chorus at the event. The chief guest appreciated the activities carried out by FS volunteers.

### Cloth donation drive - "UMANG"

It was carried out during the year. Cloth donation drive was aimed to provide proper and comfortable clothing to people who live in poor and unhygienic conditions. We had set up the donation boxes at FS. We collected over 2500 used/new clothes. It took six days (19<sup>th</sup> April 24 to 24<sup>th</sup> April 24) for survey of needy beneficiaries, segregation and packing of clothes. We made packets of clothes according to names from the survey. And finally we distributed them in various slums and streets to the people who are less fortunate.

## Gratitude

Friends Society would like to place on record its deep sense of gratitude towards,

- All the corporates who have extended CSR sponsorship for our projects
- all the donors who have donated to us in cash or in kind
- all the well-wishers who supported us in facilitating our activities
- All the staff members with whose dedication we could run some of our projects
- To the media for providing coverage to our Shaurya event

## ABOUT FRIENDS SOCIETY

Friends society is Vadodara based voluntary youth organization for community service. Donations to Friends Society are exempted from Income Tax under section 80(G) 5 of Income Tax act, 1961.

FS is registered with Ministry of Corporate Affairs, India for undertaking CSR activities. The Registration number is CSR00007705.

Membership Fee: For students Rs 50/- per annum, for non-students: Rs 200/- per annum

Membership year: July to June

Life membership Fee: Rs 2,000/-

Cheque for fees and or donations may be issued in the name of Friends Society. Please mail to Friends Society, Petit Library, Fatehgunj Main Road, Opp. Parsi Agiyari; Vadodara 390002

For **online** transactions, use the following information:

Name of the account: Friends Society,

Name of the bank: Bank of India, University Road Branch, Vadodara

Bank Account Number: 250510100007809,

IFSC code: BKID0002505

**For such online transactions, please send us information about you and / or donor, that is listed below - by sending us an email: [friendsociety813@gmail.com](mailto:friendsociety813@gmail.com)**

- details of the transaction id
- amount
- your (or donor) name
- postal address
- mobile number

**A scan of PAN to issue the receipt and to get form 10BE issued in the name of donor for income tax deduction purposes**

- END -