

NEWSLETTER

JULY – DECEMBER 2021, VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

• **Help the Blind**
• **Foundation**

PIONEER IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED



HTBF



Education is one of the greatest assets for any human being to lead a good, quality life. Help The Blind Foundation has always been at the forefront to promote university education among visually impaired students. We are grateful to everyone who has supported and encouraged us throughout the years in helping us to fulfil this pursuit.

Here, we try to share our experiences, success stories and events impacting the lives of our VI students to both the current donors, in the hope of getting their continued support.

Chairman

‘My blindness is not my weakness, it is my strength ‘



Ms. Chhonzin Angmo, a 25 year old from Himachal Pradesh is now an inspiration to everyone across the globe. Ms. Angmo lost her eyesight at the age of 8. But this brave girl never let her disability stop her from exploring life to its fullest.

As an avid adventure seeker and a para athlete, she completed her Basic Mountaineering Training and two cycle expeditions from Manali Khardung La. She completed her graduation from Delhi University and is now working in Union Bank Of India. She was supported by Help The Blind Foundation throughout her graduation.

Ms. Angmo is one among the 8 participants of ‘Operation Blue Freedom’ who successfully scaled the world’s highest battlefield at Siachen Glacier and created a new world record. The Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi complimented them that they have made the entire country proud by setting the world record by reaching the ‘Kumar Post’ situated at an altitude of more than 15,632 feet.

We at HTBF feel proud to be a part of her expedition to success. She is an inspiration to many who dream to become extraordinary under any circumstances.

In her own words ‘My blindness is not my weakness, it is my strength’.

“Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.” – Helen Keller



HTBF

Help The Blind Foundation - Sponsorship Applications Invited for the Current Academic year

With the pandemic lockdown declared, in the emergency situation, the College admissions were delayed across the country due to which the sponsorship process for the VI students also started off late. Help The Blind Foundation India opened the Sponsorship Application link from October 2021. Applications started pouring in and we had received more than 3000 application from across the country. The processing of application went on successfully under the intense verification of the team HTBF.

From the Land of Temples to Greece- 'A Journey towards Success'



K Marimuthu, a beneficiary from Chennai doing his 3rd year UG at Loyola College took part in the 16th Chess Olympiad for the Blind and Visually Impaired, organized under the auspices of the International Braille Chess Association (IBCA), which took place in Rhodes, Greece, from October 16-26, 2021, as part of the 2021 Rhodes Chess festival.



He got selected on the basis of his performance at AICFB National Selection Chess Tournament for the blind 2021, held at Blind Peoples Association, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

India Won 8th Place and Marimuthu won 7th place in the second Board Chess Competition. HTBF provided him a laptop and other requisites such as clothing, sports & formal shoes and travel bags.

Do not limit...Dream big...



We feel great pride when we take Ms. Himanshi Rathi's name. A beneficiary of HTBF from Gujarat University received the medal for scoring highest in her MA, English Literature at the 69th Convocation of Gujarat University. She gives all credits to her friend Vrinda Joshi who was guiding Himanshi to the dias to receive her gold medal. Himanshi and Vindra have been studying together since they were in Class II, and she reads out things for Himanshi, who has got another four members who have vision problems in her family.



She relies on advanced electronic devices when Vrinda is not around. Both the friends are from Palanpur and shifted to Ahmedabad after they completed their schooling. Clearing Civil Services Examination is their

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dream. The families of both friends moved to fulfill the girls' dreams. Himanshi and her friend are working hard towards reaching their goal. We wish them all the best and look forward to seeing them create history.

Walking together to light.....

An initiation session was conducted for the EMET students from Presidency College and Queen Mary's College in the Presidency Campus, Chennai.

The session started with "introduction to desktop" so that those who do not have any clue about desktop computers will get acquainted. Our trainer Ms.Sathya used tactile books to show them how to navigate and explore using the computer keys and short keys. A game "passing balls using canes" was introduced to the participants in which they had to move with canes between two people to get the ball and pass it to the other person. The person who picked up maximum balls was announced the winner. Another activity "find the grain" was carried out where they were given boxes of different types of grains and spices and asked them to identify; a few of them could identify those grains with smell and a few by touch.

Our guest cum coordinator and well-wisher Prof. Nagaraj conducted a quiz. With some riddles, he made the students think of festivals connected to the

'It's quite challenging to engage the young minds every time. But we're thankful to them because, they only make us feel young and energetic. Thanks to our beautiful students.'

Gayathri, Trainer

cues given. Amidst some wrong guesses, a few intelligent students made right guesses.

"Light a candle" was another interesting activity held and we found some of them have never ever touched a matchbox. It was a wonderful and scary experience for them but everyone attempted and we hope it lit up their confidence also. They were given fun-filled activity with a big bag of veggies to sort and group, but many of them couldn't differentiate as they were confused between gooseberry and lemon; potato and small yam, etc. We set 3 minutes for each group which was actually not enough for them but yes, they tried well. A few English terms of veggies were also learned. We wrapped up at 5 pm and they left the premises filled with happiness and joy.

Hard work defines your success

It makes us feel extremely proud to share the accomplishment of our Alumni student from Coimbatore Mr.Sivachandran. He has cleared the Non – Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) exam and has been conferred the title of NVDA certified expert and is one of four such persons from India. What excites us more is that he can now handle testing the beta version of the NVDA releases and reporting the bugs.

What we once thought as impossible is now turning to reality. Our students are beating all the odds to prove their calibre to the world. Never let the odds turn down your Ambitions is what you get to learn from the success of Sivachandran.



EMET, Education Mobility Employability Training certification ceremony Presidency College & Queen Mary's College, Chennai



EMET Certificate distribution ceremony at the Presidency College, Chennai on 11th December 2021 and at the Queen Mary's College, Chennai on 17th of December 2021.

Presidency College: Dr. Raman, Principal, Presidency College and Mrs. Deepa, Trustee, HTBF, Dr. Sivaraman, HOD, (English Dept), Presidency College, Mr. Nagaraj, Asst Professor, Presidency College, Mr. Narasimhan, Trustee, HTBF, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi, Volunteer, HTBF and other guests attended the programme and 12 students received the certificates.

Queen Mary's College: Dr. Uma Maheshwari, Principal, QM College and Mrs. Jayashree, Chief Librarian, HODs of different departments, Mrs. Mallika Ravi, Trustee, HTBF, Mr. Narasimhan, Trustee, HTBF, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Volunteer, HTBF and other guests attended the program at Queen Mary's College. 13 students from QMC received the certificates. All of them shared their feedback about EMET.

Donors Meet – Help The Blind Foundation Hong Kong

An annual meet of donors was held at Hong Kong. The objective of the meet was to give updates on the activities of Help The Blind foundation as well as to connect with old and new donors. 165 donors attended the meet and several people attended the event online.

Video on HTBF beneficiaries, and EMET was premiered before guests. Video Link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FoLEI578NfWQALGT6rprxH-JW5Zbq41/view?usp=drivesdk>

Many of the donors appreciated the effort and expressed their happiness for being a part Help The Blind Foundation. Help The Blind Foundation will always remain obliged to their benevolence.



Our beneficiary Ms. Yogita Pal, student of LSR College, Delhi got selected as Probationary Officer & now posted at Bank of India Mukherjee Nagar Branch.

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From Shackled Wings to Freedom of Flight - Meghana SureshBabu

Meghna Suresh Babu is another name for Confidence. As the name indicates she is cosmic, cryptic and definitely capable of bringing down thunder, lightning and rains. Meghna who was born premature, was incubated for long and on identifying the eye problem her parents took immediate actions to do surgeries but it didn't help. Meghna was always cheerful and happy as she was treated like a princess at home and spoon fed. She thought life would always be a bed of roses until her mom decided to leave her at the hostel. At 8th Grade she was dropped at Little Flower Convent Hostel. From there her struggle to cope with the life started. Unlike her Visually Impaired Peers Meghna was finding it difficult to get along and do her daily chores. Right from health, personal hygiene to studies she had to request help and everything took a toll on her. She pleaded her mother to take her back to home but her mother refused.



Her mother had to take care of Meghna's brother (who is autistic) and hence stood strong on her decision. Meghna had no choice but to battle the odds out and be independent. Though loneliness shadowed and made her weak ultimately she realized that she has to change herself for good and with a lot of hardships she passed the 10th exam with average marks. Over the years we can see a much more confident Meghna who is more focused on her academics. She did well in 11th grade and then the Pandemic brought her back home. Hostel life taught her to be self-sufficient and to be grateful to her parents and teachers. Meghna says her friend Nandhika Shree is a great source of inspiration to her.

Meghna Says; The trainers in HTBF have motivated us and have constantly pushed us to scale new heights. This has further enhanced my confidence. I always remember Cinderella... "Had Cinderella gone back to pick up her shoes, she wouldn't have become a princess." I don't want to recall my past and bad memories, but I want to soar high with open wings to bring a lot of joy not only to myself but for all those who have helped me in my journey. I owe a great debt of gratitude to my parents, my teachers, to HTBF because of whom I am able to touch, feel, and operate a computer from the comfort of my home, which would have been impossible without the internet facilities given to me by HTBF.

She confidently testifies that she is no longer a captive of her past, but flying high and chasing her dreams.

Outreach ----- Our Volunteer Mr.K.S Iyer was invited by L&C Mehta Arts College, Ahmedabad, to address first year students' welcome function on 22-10-21 and provide details of our Scholarship scheme to newly admitted Blind Students.

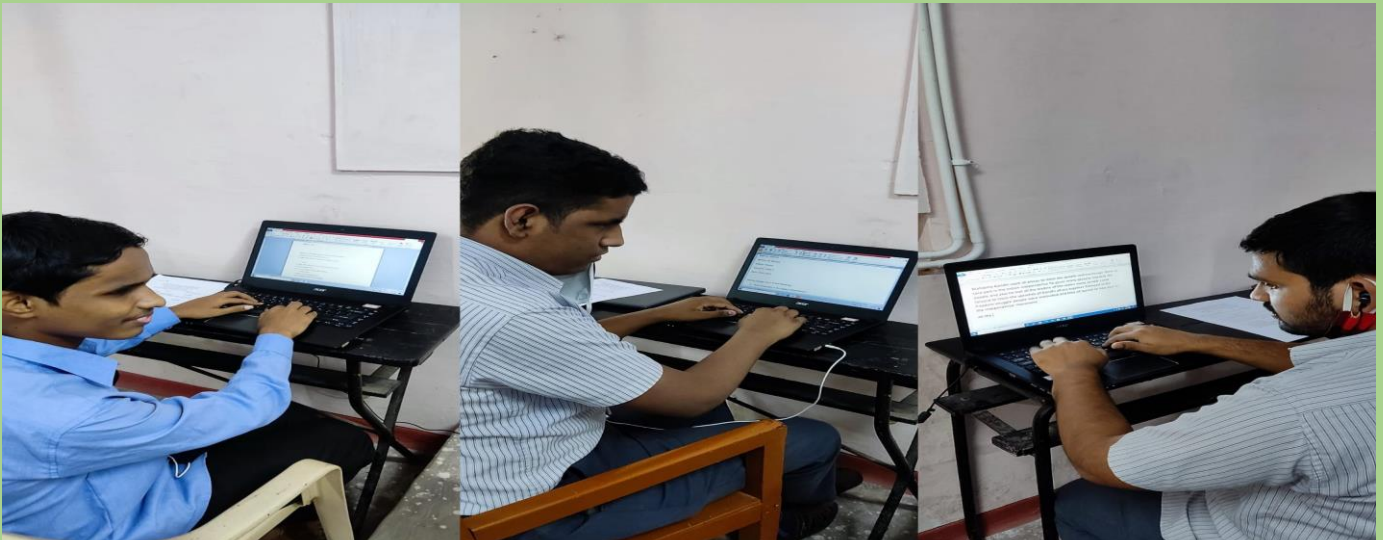


Kushboo Mishra, one of the HTBF Beneficiaries, joined Canara Bank as a directly recruited officer with Canara Bank, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi on 4th August 2021.

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Facing Challenges in their own terms....👍



The ultimate satisfaction anyone can get is when you see the results of your attempt to benefit people. One such fulfilling instance is that three visually challenged students Shaik Akbar Sai, Koraganji Jayakanth and V.Arun Tej from Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada are now able to write exam papers using a Laptop.

The visually challenged students type the answer on the College laptop loaded with NVDA software and without any external help. The typed script will

be printed and given to the class teachers/examiners for valuation. This marks another milestone in the efforts of HTBF to capacitate the Visually Impaired students to have an optimistic future.

We truly appreciate the efforts of our Volunteer Dr.G.Sahaya Baskaran, Coordinator, HEPSN, Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada for his extraordinary dedication and determination.



SOHEB AHMED, BTech. Final year (IIITDM KURNOOL), one of the HTBF beneficiaries, has been Selected for employment at VIRTUSA, a US based IT Company.

An Achiever in Real Life ----- One of the HTBF's first scholarship beneficiaries Mr.John Michael, is an Officer in Bank Of India. He was a visually-impaired orphan who grew up with the support of many kind hearts. He is now married and recently has been blessed with a baby boy. HTBF wish him more happiness and success in his life ahead.



One of our EMET Students Pandiselvi of MA in SVN College Madurai has secured a position in IDBI Bank Madurai as a Customer Relationship Executive on contract for a year. She is posted in Bye Pass Road Branch, Madurai.

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International Day Of People With Disability – 3rd December, 2021

'Leadership and Participation of Persons with disabilities towards an inclusive, accessible and sustainable Post – COVID – 19 World' is the theme of International Day of People with Disability.

As a person with disability I am proud to celebrate this day. It is important to me because it gives me the chance to tell everyone that "We Can Too", that the persons with disability if given the right support and opportunity can succeed in whatever they do. For me it is about continuing to pursue my education in a normal educational Institution. I am grateful for being accepted for what I am and for giving me the right kind of support and guidance. As a student of Social Work I have also contributed equally to what it requires to succeed and go further in life.



Ms. Ribanlin Lyngdoh

I would like to share my views on what it takes to build a more accessible, inclusive and sustainable society for all. Being inclusive means creating an equal platform for people with disability, treating them equally in the society. Empowering, supporting, and accepting persons with disability is not just about creating awareness but also including them in educational Institutions, at work and in the community. For many years, discrimination, lack of access to services, lack of social support were some of the challenges that the persons with disability had to face. But now things have started to change, social perception towards disability has shifted for good, and the acceptance and inclusiveness has increased. I express my unambiguous gratitude towards **Help The Blind Foundation** for being a support in my studies.

Ribanlin Lyngdoh, HTBF beneficiary at St Edmonds College Shillong. She is doing her 1 year Master of Social Work.

Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) Examination 2021 Coaching Sessions were held for HTBF Beneficiaries



Mr. Shanmugasundaram who attended our training program has passed the IBPS PO mains examination and also has come out successful in the subsequent interview. He has been recruited as Probationary Officer in Canara Bank this year.

As in previous years, an Online Training programme on IBPS Preliminary examination 2021 and other competitive examinations was conducted by HTBF for the visually impaired students/beneficiaries in Tamilnadu in November. This year in all India basis 7855 clerical posts were called for and the last date for applying for the IBPS preliminary exam was on 27th October 2021. Mr. Ramanujam. N coordinated the program. Due to COVID, the classes were conducted online. Mrs. Lalitha took 3 hours session and Ms. Hamsaveni handled the 3 hours session on Maths/ Numerical Ability. The duration of the training program was 20 days. 17 students attended the online training program. Lessons and model questions

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& answers in General knowledge and current affairs were sent to them for their reference. Students/beneficiaries from across Tamilnadu were given the opportunity to attend the training program. Students from Coimbatore, Erode, Madurai, Chennai and nearby places attended the program. Recorded versions of the classes were sent to the students on daily basis for their reference. Students were asked to download these recordings for their studies. Guidance for applying for the exams were also provided by sending the related YouTube references. Due to Corona, adverse weather and poor Internet and phone connectivity in the Villages students had to struggle a lot to keep up with the sessions. But HTBF is happy that one of our beneficiaries could crack the exams and has been recruited as a Probationary Officer in Canara Bank this year.



Ms.Pooja an HTBF Beneficiary from Madhurai competed with 61 candidates across the country and became one of the top 6 contestants who won the 'food se fitness recipe' award at the finals of the Golden Eye Chef 2021.

Srinivasan – A Polished Gem by EMET



Srinivasan, A HTBF Beneficiary and an EMET Student from Presidency College, recently added his parent's restaurant in Google Map. He says his parent's restaurant namely 'Palaniswamy Restaurant' located in Solingur is one of the best place to get tasty food in Outer Chennai. His father Mr.Palanisamy and Mother Mrs.Vijaya manages their restaurant. Srivasan identifies them as the best entrepreneurs in their area. He says he also helps them in the restaurant by doing the cleaning works, wiping and arranging tables and chairs, making pooris etc. out of his interest.

He says he will keep doing this type of work as he wants to help his parents in their business. Srinivasan says that he will keep improving his technological skills also with the help of EMET classes. This adding of location in Google Map is his first step in technology and he is confident that in future he will add more options such as online booking/order placing and payment option for their restaurant. He shared how he got the idea of adding their shop in Google map. In their place Narasimhan Temple is a favourite spot for tourists and they get the location by means of google map. And they search for best restaurants in and around the temple. He could understand that many restaurants have been added in Google map, so he decided to add Palanisamy restaurant also in Google map. EMET classes helped him to improve his technological skills and recently he could successfully add the location in Google Map.

He acknowledges the support of HTBF and assures that he will try to learn and improve himself anytime anywhere with the support of Help The Blind Foundation.

You can check his narration video by clicking the link given:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17JbZWlihlur9yLKBbfjupCtFkigTmyF/view?usp=sharing>

Not just hand-holding, EMET changed my life

Ms. Pavithra P, a HTBF beneficiary and an EMET Student from Pondichery finds her life nothing less than a miracle. She is doing B.A English Literature II year at Queen Mary's college in Chennai. She became blind due to sudden health issues that happened in August 2018. Her parents checked with various hospitals to rectify the problem but realised that it is impossible to get the vision back. But miracles do happen, and if God closes a door it means he wants to show us another world's beautiful door. On the advice of another parent who had similar issues advised Pavithra's parents, and motivated her to continue her studies and with a million questions in her head she joined QMC.



From the college she came to know about the EMET programme from HTBF. "I joined this beautiful EMET course and started to learn so many things right from computers to English to Mobility and Employability". She testifies that after her exposure to EMET sessions she could see a better confident version of herself and hopes to grow more in life through learning. She is now well-versed in drafting mails, using various applications, keyboard orientation and spoken English. She is confident about her language skills and have learnt many encouraging and inspiring stories about Visually Impaired People. In her own words. Now being a part of this world, I know how to face my life. As a woman, I learn every world has its own challenges and barriers but the beauty lies in how we look at it. I am getting myself ready to join a challenging job in order to see new horizons. She says she owes her gratitude to the trainers and her mother, the pillar of her life and success.



Our beneficiary Ms. Kavya Bhat bagged two gold medals at the Mysore University.

Appeal

Education, Mobility And Employability Training (EMET) Program And Placement Of Our Beneficiaries Are The Prime Focus Areas Of Help The Blind Foundation.

We appeal to our donors and other well-wishers to continue to support us in our efforts in providing college education, skills and employability training to our visually impaired students.

On the Employment front, if you can provide employment or refer an employer for giving jobs to our students, it will be a great help

And you can also contribute by speaking to your friends and relatives and create an awareness among the general population about the capabilities of our students.

Please contact managingtrustee@helptheblind.in for more details. You can also contact us at info@helptheblind.in or call us at +91 90033 30197

Comments, Questions? : Please write to managingtrustee@helptheblind.in with "newsletter feedback" in the subject line.

HTBF India Trustees details link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EHkx9DVQjJG8oPzn0ffValS9nT6TfxUN/edit?usp=sharing&oid=104861293972787322500&rtpof=true&sd=true>

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