



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023 -SEPTEMBER 2023

HTBF awarded title of “Top 20 Best NGOs of the Year 2023”

We are pleased to inform you that Help the Blind Foundation has been selected for the most prestigious title of “TOP 20 BEST NGO’S OF THE YEAR 2023” by Brand Honchos Media.

Brand Honchos Media, through extensive research on 500+ Indian NGOs from pan-India found us eligible for the Most Prestigious Title of “TOP 20 BEST NGO’S OF THE YEAR 2023”. We were felicitated at one of the biggest conventions of the year, “Indian CSR Awards 2023”, held on 7th October, 2023 at Hotel Hyatt Centric, New Delhi.

We record our deepest appreciation to Mr. Nataraj, our Trustee, Ms. Abbinayaa, our Project Officer, our host of volunteers, supporters, colleges, beneficiaries, donors and well-wishers from across the globe.

A big thanks to Brand Honchos Media. We promise to uphold the pristine values which we hold dear!



Mr. D.K. Sharma (at right), HTBF Trustee, and Ms. Abbinayaa, Project Officer, HTBF (at left) receiving the award on behalf of HTBF

HTBF receives Platinum Certification from Guidestar India

We are greatly delighted to share with you all the exciting news of our getting the award of Platinum certification from Guidestar India. We are deeply honoured to receive this certification. This is an upgrade from gold certification which we got in 2020-21. We owe this to all of you donors and well-wishers, volunteers and members of the staff. Thank you 🙏 GuideStar India is India's largest and most reliable online information repository of over 12000 NGOs. We have been awarded the prestigious GuideStar India Champion Level- Platinum certification and have joined India's largest pool of credible NGOs after undergoing a rigorous due diligence process. GuideStar India's Platinum Certification is the Champion Level certification indicating that a high level of accountability and good governance procedures are adopted by HTBF. It indicates that HTBF shares in the public domain its tax returns filed within due date, audited annual accounts and auditor's report submitted to tax authorities for two years and there are no material qualifications in its audited accounts. To view our profile at GuideStar India, please visit <https://lnkd.in/e6pgbWYx>



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



Help the Blind Foundation regrets to inform the HTBF family that Shri. V.C. Ganesan, aged 86 years, attained heavenly abode at 6.30pm on 2nd September 2023 in Chennai. Sri. Ganesan was the first Managing Trustee of HTBF INDIA. His contributions in setting up of HTBF on strong foundation was immense. We offer our sincere condolences to the family 🙏

Women's Blind cricket team creates history

The women's blind cricket team wins gold medal, creates history.

(<https://www.livemint.com/sports/cricket-news/indian-women-s-blind-cricket-team-wins-gold-in-ibsa-world-games-beat-australia-in-finals-11693058339594.html>)



Indian women's blind cricket team created history as it defeated Australia in the finals by 9 wickets and won gold medal at the IBSA World Games. The women's cricket team showed exceptional resilience in the rain-spoiled match and ultimately became the first ever cricket winners at the IBSA World Games.

We are proud to be associated with five members of this winning team, who are HTBF beneficiaries: Gangavva, Deepika, Varsha, Simu and Ganga. We extend our warmest congratulations to them and the entire team!

Indian women's blind cricket team created history with the maiden gold at the IBSA World Games (Reuters)

Music for the soul

It is true that when one of your faculties is taken away, some other faculty is enhanced. Such is the case with Ms. Priyanka Sharma. Here is a beautiful piece of devotional Bhajan rendered by our #visuallyimpaired beneficiary, Ms. Priyanka Sharma, studying B.A. Honors (Music) at Miranda House, Delhi. Congratulations, Priyanka 🌸👏 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecb-q0EN5kY>

HTBF beneficiary Sunitha wins para-climbing championship



Ms. Sunitha Dondappanavar (at center)

On the eve of Independence Day, one of our beneficiaries, Ms. Sunitha Dondappanavar, from Bangalore, went on to quietly win the Gold Medal in Para Climbing at Bern, Switzerland. We are extremely proud of her and convey our congratulations 🏆👏 to her. The real sense of achievement is on account of the volunteer Ms Lata Shekar who counseled Sunitha patiently and dissuaded her from giving up. We are thus proud of our volunteers who go that extra mile to build confidence in the students and instill in them the "I can do it" spirit. Thanks to all our volunteers 🙏

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Kabaddi for the visually-impaired

TABSA (Tamilnadu Blind Sports Association) recently organized a state Kabaddi tournament that brought together players from 8 different districts. This two-day event took place on September 30th and October 1st, with the final match occurring on the latter date at 3 pm, featuring Tanjore and Madurai as the finalists. Ultimately, Madurai emerged as the winners, securing the first prize, while Tanjore claimed the runner-up position. IAB supported by providing lunch and accommodation.

During the event, Mr. Abdul and Ms. Roshan, the son and daughter of Mr. Jinnah, the founder of IAB, expressed their gratitude to Mr. Patel and his family for their significant contribution towards constructing a building for the association. HTBF sponsored the prizes and medals for the tournament. Ms. Ambika Seetharaman, Project Manager for EMET at HTBF, represented us at the event. The program reached its conclusion with a prize distribution ceremony.

One of the unique aspects of this tournament was the participation of visually impaired Kabaddi players, who recognized each other through vocal cues by chanting "kabaddi" and by tapping their feet on the rubber mats used for the game. This added to the unique experience of the event, making it an eventful and memorable day for all involved.



Left: A photo showing HTBF founder Dr. Patel in conversation with Mr. Jinnah. Right: Ms. Ambika Seetharaman of HTBF handing over the trophy

South News Roundup

HTBF initiates the Early Intervention Programme

We are thrilled to share the latest developments from our Early Intervention Program, which is making a significant impact on the lives of visually impaired students in government schools. Since its inception, this program has aimed to provide computer and digital literacy training, spoken English instruction, and orientation and mobility training to students in grades 9 to 12 from underprivileged communities. Our goal is to empower these students with the skills they need to succeed. The program kicked off on the 1st of August at the Government Higher Secondary School for the Visually Impaired in Thanjavur. A remarkable 86 students are benefitting from the program this year, a testament to the need for these services in the community.

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Following the successful launch in Thanjavur, we extended the program to the Government Higher Secondary School for the Visually Impaired in Poonamallee, Chennai, on August 7, 2023. The inauguration was attended by the school principal, trustees of the Help the Blind Foundation (HTBF), and other staff members. We are proud to be serving 63 students in Chennai through this year's program, bringing transformative opportunities to their lives.

HTBF supports participants in Blind Cricket tournaments

HTBF has always believed in, and supported our beneficiaries in sports. This is one of the best ways to boost morale and spread positivity. Nine HTBF beneficiaries were part of the Indian blind team in the world men's and women's cricket tournament held in Birmingham, England. We supported the following players with financial support of Rs.25,000 each - Maharaja S., Deepika T.C., and Ganga Sambaji Kadam.

HTBF also supported the TN Cricket Association for the Blind, who conducted a cricket tournament for the Blind at Vellore. (Tamil Nadu). HTBF sponsored the sportswear for the 3 Teams, at a cost of Rs.20,000.

Feedback is important to us!

At a recent meeting at Moti Lal college, we received fruitful feedback from students of PGDAV, Motilal, Satyavati and Dr B.R. Ambedkar Colleges and Trainer Ms. Aishwarya regarding Smart Vision Glasses (SVG) in the presence of Mr. Rajesh and Mr. Edwin. There was also encouraging feedback on how the students have improved their skills in computers. A few suggestions were put forward by Mr. Deepak who is a past beneficiary of HTBF and an English lecturer.



Jamesh, a past beneficiary of HTBF from Government Arts College, Coimbatore, has cleared the Group 4 Exam and been selected as a Junior Assistant by the Department of Agriculture.

We are also happy to share that our beneficiary Akbar Sai, who has completed BA this June, has been appointed at Amazon recently. He was selected as a Machine Learning associate. His job is to report to the Machine Learning development team on the feedback from ALEXA users. We are thankful to Enable India, who offered Advanced Employability Training from January, which helped him.

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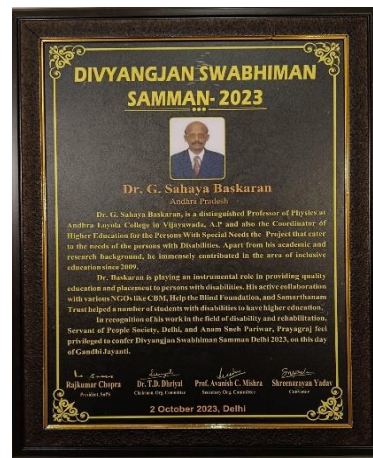


Dr. Sahaya Bhaskaran bags the "Divyangjan Swabhiman Samman 2023" award

Our eminent volunteer from Vijayawada, Dr. Sahaya Bhaskaran, was recently honoured with the "Divyangjan Swabhiman Samman 2023" award. The award was presented by Hon'ble Union Minister of Education and Skill Development, Sri Dharmendra Pradhan at a ceremony held at Lajpat Bhawan, New Delhi, on Gandhi Jayanthi Day.

The Servants of the People Society, New Delhi, founded by Lala Lajpat Rai in 1921, conferred this esteemed award in recognition of his contributions to the field of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Dr. Bhaskaran is a Professor of Physics at Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada. We are extremely happy and proud of Dr. Bhaskaran's recognition and convey our heartiest congratulations to him.

Dr. Sahaya Bhaskaran wrote, "Many thanks to our Jesuit community, student volunteers, colleagues collaborating staff, other NGOs like CBM, Enable India, Help the Blind Foundation and Samarthanam trust for their active collaboration with our college. Thank you so much sirs and madams for your wishes and greetings. In fact, Help the Blind Foundation played a significant role in this recognition. Our collaboration of over 12 years helped a number of students in Guntur and Vijayawada. Thank you so much to all in HTBF."



A warm welcome to our new volunteers!

A number of new volunteers have joined our family, and we extend a warm and hearty welcome to every one of them:

Mr. Mohammed Labid Khan - Anantapur
Ms. Vasudha Ramamurthi - Bangalore
Ms. Anashritha - Chennai
Ms. Suchitra - Chennai
Ms. Vani & Mr. Jairam - Hong Kong
Mr. P K Jain - Indore

Mr. Mukesh Kumar Aharwal - Indore
Mr. D M Ranwha - Indore
Mr. D K Purohit - Jodhpur
Mr. Senthil & Ms. Sharanya Jayadev - London
Ms. Radhika Sathya - London
Mr. & Mrs. Hari Venkat Rao - Pune

Mr. Patil K R - Pune
Mr. Kalkar C D - Pune
Ms. Bhuvana Sri Ganesh - Singapore
Mr. Vignesh Rajasekaran - Singapore
Ms. Bhavani Munamarty - US
Mr. Rajan Gupta - Vadodara

Here's wishing them a great innings in the service of our visually-impaired beneficiaries!

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Scholarship applications in full swing

Out of the 5 big states, TN and Gujarat have completed more than half of the applications. The other states too are expected to start soon. Several hurdles are being experienced as usual – mark sheets are not available in some cases, disability certificate is not recent, etc. The experienced volunteers are helping the new volunteers handle the sponsorship applications. HTBF has a clear policy guideline for this year as below:

Eligible criteria:

Personal –

- Visual impairment of 40% and above.
- Annual family income less than or equal to Rs. 3.00 lakhs.
- The income certificate should not be more than 3 years old.

Academic –

- 55% and above for UG 1st year.
- 70% and above for PG and 65% for B Ed 1st year since employment opportunity is more.
- Sponsorship is only for the first two degrees. 2nd masters are not eligible.
- Diploma courses which add value and employment opportunity is high will alone be considered.
- For continuation students who have more than 3 arrears will not be approved.
- New applications in UG 2nd year, 3rd year and PG 2nd year are not eligible.

College-

- Colleges with NAAC rating of 2.5 above.
- Colleges with at least 10 years of existence.
- Colleges with a minimum of 5 students applying for sponsorship.
- Colleges recommended and approved by the Trustees though not complying with the above eligibility on exceptional circumstances.

Sponsorship amount:

- Fixed amount of Rs. 10000/ as tuition fee and living expenses for days scholars and students staying in private hostels.
- Maximum of Rs. 25000/ for students staying in the college hostel. This amount will be split as tuition fee plus hostel fee (receipt mandatory for both) plus fixed living expense of Rs.5000/all put together not exceeding Rs.25000/

Exceptions to the above can be considered subject to strong recommendations from the concerned volunteer and subject to the discretion of the Trustees

Our beneficiary Ms. Kajal P. Panchal, after completing M.A and our EMET course, has joined IndusInd Bank in Ahmedabad last month. Our good wishes to her.

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News in pictures

At Miranda college on 26th September, a gathering of 150 + students and professors were present at the Smart Vision Glasses (SVG) distribution at Mini Auditorium where NEP 2020 programme was going on. The deserving students were given SVG because of their extremely good performance and regular attendance at the EMET program. There was great excitement in the air!



On 27th September, the distribution of Smart Vision Glasses (SVG) took place at the Mini Auditorium in **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College** where students performed their hidden talents. They also demonstrated excellent anchoring with interesting comments showing their confidence gained through EMET and the support of their trainers.



Smart Vision Glasses distributed at Indraprastha college



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Distribution of keyboards at **PGDAV College** on 13th Sept 23, wherein students from **Rajdhani, Satyavati and Mata Sundari colleges** had also come to collect the same. At right: Here is one more student **Geeta Mahto** of **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College**, who came to collect the keyboard at PGDAV. She is a national level athlete and has lot of laurels to her credit. At right is **Dr Varun Gautam**, PGDAV Coordinator, handing over the keyboard.



Distribution of Smart Vision Glasses (SVG) at Vijayawada



At Janaki Devi college, distribution of special certificate to **Ms. Deepa** from Haryana, who is a member of the gold medal-winning national cricket team.



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Smart Vision Glasses distributed at Mata Jijabai College, Indore

Below: News published in Danik Bhaskar newspaper covering the Smart Vision Glasses distributed by HTBF. The college authorities appreciated the work and efforts of HTBF as well as the center of attraction, the Smart Vision Glasses. 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟



स्मार्ट विजन ग्लास दृष्टिबाधितों हेतु वरदान

इन्दौर: माता जीजाबाई सरस्वतीय छात्रावास बनाम महाविद्यालय, मोदी रोड, इन्दौर में स्थापित छात्रावासों के माध्यम से विद्यार्थियों को स्मार्ट विजन ग्लास वितरित किए जा रहे हैं। छात्रावासों के स्टाफ सदस्यों ने विद्यार्थियों को स्मार्ट विजन ग्लास वितरित किए जा रहे हैं। छात्रावासों के स्टाफ सदस्यों ने विद्यार्थियों को स्मार्ट विजन ग्लास वितरित किए जा रहे हैं।

Sneak Peek: The next version of Smart Vision Glasses (SVG)

The next version of SVG - Gen 3 comes with bone conduction frame glasses which eliminates the need for a earphone. This Gen 3 will be delivered to students in November for the 2023-25 batch EMET students.

<https://eye-see-mag.com/en/high-tech/bone-conduction-glasses/>

A vocal endorsement for EMET

We received this heartening note from one of our beneficiaries, which has cemented our belief that the EMET program is a step in the right direction. Read on...

“Hello I'm Madhumitha from Guduvanchery, Chennai. Initially when I joined EMET, my name was "Silent Angel", because I never used to mingle with anyone and speak. I hated EMET classes and was in deep stress because of my vision condition. I used to cry even for petty things. If trainers asked me about my pending assignments, being late etc., I immediately showed them my tears but never answered properly. Even at my school I was so timid, shy and fearsome.

But now I'm able to win the volleyball match in my college (CM trophy) and also participate in district matches. Now I can easily make friends and speak to my friends, family and trainers courageously. I can advocate for myself.

Recently I participated in a marathon. And I'm going to participate in another marathon which is going to happen at Mysore in August. I'm also joining the CDT training at Bangalore in August. I'm so excited about it. I'm able to speak freely with anyone without any hesitation and this happened only because of my trainers. They consistently, and tirelessly worked with me and motivated me a lot.

I would like to thank my mom who put her heart and soul for my progress. She used to get up at 4am, made food and helped (my brother (low vision) and I) us get ready for school and college. She used to travel with me every day (but from the 3rd year onwards after I learnt mobility, I travel alone). I grew up looking at her strength and courage. I've never seen her sleeping properly. Her only aim is to see me living independently. Unfortunately, I missed the opportunity with Sutherland. But I'm sure after the CDT program I'll get into a job and make everyone proud.”

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How to donate to HTBF

We appeal to our donors and other well-wishers to continue to support us 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. 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.

For donations – Contact: Ms. Kudhamani at +91-9551243750, Email: info@helptheblind.in

If you want to remit the donation online, (**for Indian Passport holders ONLY**) please send it to:

BANK ACCOUNT – ACCOUNT NUMBER: 50100269779772,

ACCOUNT NAME: HELP THE BLIND FOUNDATION,

NEFT IFSC CODE/RTGS: HDFC0000206

ACCOUNT TYPE Savings

BANK: HDFC Bank, G. N CHETTY ROAD, CHENNAI

Foreign passport holders wishing to donate are requested to collect details by writing to:

donor_connect@helptheblind.in

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