



NEWSLETTER

October 2021 - March 2022



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Dear Readers,

It's a wonderful feeling connecting physically with our families after one and half years. Leaving the period of turmoil behind us, we look forward to a better period ahead. This issue brings out the fruitful events at IAPA, held in hybrid form, in the last six months.

Webinars were conducted on knowledge enriching topics, which not only helped build the capacities of our adoptive parents, but also served to keep their anxieties at bay. Sharing our experiences with co-workers in our field of work, helped in spreading awareness and information on relevant subjects. Mental health of children, an ongoing concern, was effectively addressed by the panelists of our Child Guidance Centre. Children were kept motivated to adjust to the world of offline studies, after a long gap. Career guidance was provided at crucial junctures to different groups of students. IAPA heartily appreciated the achievements of a brave young girl who is an integral part of IAPA's extended family. Support from our well-wishers, whether financial or otherwise, went a long way to keep our activities and morale going strong.

Happy Reading!!

We look forward to your feedback on iapacw1970@gmail.com

With Best Wishes,
Team IAPA

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It's all about feeling good!!



Mental well being of children enhances their emotional, social and intellectual abilities, coping skills and productivity! Post pandemic, particularly for those children living under challenging circumstances, this aspect assumes special importance. A Sensitization Workshop was held by panelists of our Child Guidance Centre (CGC) for the principals and teachers of BMC schools, to enhance their knowledge and interest in this critical issue. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Rohini Lalge, Administrative Officer of BMC wards C & D, for her support in this initiative.

Our panelists shared crucial tips on how to identify and address various emotional, behavioural and learning challenges that children face. The role of professional testing, counseling, therapy and medication in bringing about the required modification, was explained. Various queries posed by the teachers were addressed. Need for timely action to bring about sustained positive changes was emphasised.



Keeping Them Motivated!



IAPA's *Project Asmita* seeks to develop the latent capacities of BMC school children, by supplementing the efforts of their school teachers, with additional academic and extracurricular inputs. Not being possible to execute the project during the lockdown, IAPA appointed teachers from January 2022 onwards to start teaching online and/or offline, as per Government regulations. With a gap of around two years, it was a challenge to get the students ranging from Std. I to VII to initially attend the classes and later stay motivated to study. Holding programs to celebrate significant days, helped to keep up the enthusiasm of the students. Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti was one such day, celebrated with excitement by the students!!

Ensuring A Secure Future

We frequently read reports in newspapers and other media, about infants being abandoned in public places. In most cases they are born to mothers who are not in a position to look after them. They take such desperate steps out of fear of social condemnation, as also due to ignorance about other available alternatives. It is therefore crucial to spread awareness of the importance of ensuring the child's safety and long term rehabilitation, through legal and safe surrender process. IAPA has been striving to spread this awareness by holding workshops with relevant personnel concerned with the future well being of the child. One such webinar on '*Legal and Safe Surrender of Children*' was held on 19th January 2022, with personnel from the Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA).

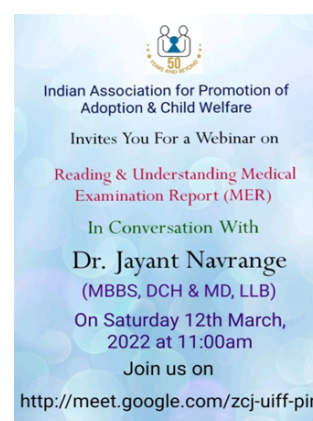


The participants were apprised of the importance & procedure for such surrender, and how adoption agencies like IAPA facilitate this process. The crucial role of Out Patient Departments (OPDs) in maternity & other hospitals, and Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) or voluntary social workers in the community, was also shared. Several questions raised by the participants on practical situations, were answered to their satisfaction. The participants appreciated the need of taking the right initiatives to ensure that vulnerable children don't fall into unscrupulous hands and instead get into legal mainstream, for a secure future.

Let Us Take an Informed Decision Together

It is necessary that the **MEDICAL EXAMINATION REPORT (MER)** of the child proposed for adoption is properly understood by the prospective adoptive parents (PAPs), before deciding to go ahead with his/her adoption. This step should be taken at the earliest, before reserving the child online within the stipulated time frame. A webinar organized by IAPA on 11th March 2022, with resource person Dr. Jayant Navrange, shed critical light on the subject of '*Reading and Understanding the MER of the child*'.

Knowledge about medical indicators to be checked for the child's health status, play an important role in taking the right decision. PAPs were advised to seek further clarifications to be clear in these matters. Moreover, if the PAPs are able to understand the potential for future normalcy, in case of children currently with 'special needs', they would be able to make an informed decision whether to adopt such children or not. Dr. Navrange's well-researched presentation on these matters, and more, went a long way in addressing the anxiety of the PAPs.



Heartfelt experiences shared by adoptive parent - Mrs. Kalyani Sardesai and significant tips by PAP - Dr. Tanuja Karande, in taking such life-changing decisions, alongwith suggestions from PAP-Mrs. Anushree Bandiwadekar to explore such options, provided practical value to this subject.

Family Care - The Primary Choice!

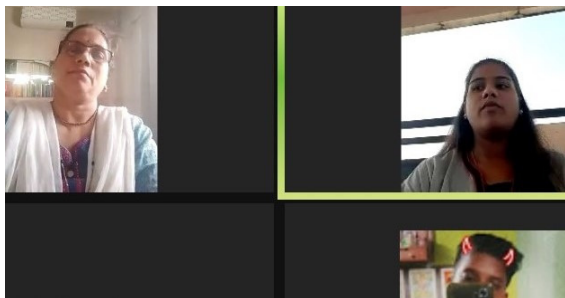


Alternative Family Care (AFC) is one of the family based, non-institutional and community oriented services facilitated by IAPA, for children in vulnerable situations. A webinar was held on 20th January 2022, with *Dr. (Mrs.) Nilima Mehta* setting the tone to focus on this option. IAPA Project Officers operating the service shared how such services help to support families in crisis, including single parent families, parent(s) who lack economic means to fulfill their parental role and those suffering from certain illnesses or disabilities. The main objective of AFC services is to prevent family disintegration and protect vulnerable children from neglect, abuse, exploitation and avoid their institutionalisation.

IAPA has been implementing the State Government's AFC Scheme - the Bal Sangopan Yojana (BSY). Financial support is provided by the Government to families in crisis, through NGOs. The child is placed within the kinship circle of the family or in an alternative family in the community. An ex-client of IAPA sharing her personal experience, was testimony to the effectiveness of this Scheme, alongwith the backing provided by IAPA's support services.

It was emphasized that inadequate care environment can impair children's emotional and social development and that every child's interests are best met in a family environment. IAPA proposes to organize more such webinars, to spread this awareness and information, across the State of Maharashtra.

Guiding Them In Time!



Schools and colleges functioning in a hybrid mode, the period gone by was most challenging for students. This was especially true for those standing at the crucial junctures of SSC and HSC, with various career opportunities open for them. A webinar on *Career Guidance* was held on 17th October 2021, for sixty-five IAPA students from Stds. IX to XII. Aply resourced by Career Counselor *Mrs. Vandana Nagargoje*, it provided an overview of different career opportunities that could be pursued, after completing various levels of education. Setting realistic goals, keeping in mind the cost factor and role of family members and/or peers, in influencing one's career decisions, was emphasized.



Likewise, an offline session on *Career Guidance* was held on 15th February 2022, resourced by *Mr. Sandesh Lalge*. Catering to a group of fifteen students of Stds. XI and beyond, it outlined the opportunities of pursuing different fields in education, leading to interesting career options. Sharing examples of illustrious personalities in sports, cinema and performing arts, it was explained how one's hobbies and passion can be turned into successful careers. Students were guided in the steps needed to be taken after each phase of their education, for pursuing specific careers.

Initiatives for our Rural Project!

A haemoglobin check-up camp was organized at Terewayangani village (IAPA's rural project) in December 2021. Low haemoglobin can be a timely indicator for anemia, the most common blood disorder caused due to Iron deficiency. Staff from government sub-district rural hospital conducted these tests gratis, for sixty eight schoolgirls and ten women who participated in this camp. A talk by *Dr. Vidya Diwan* guided them on aspects of a nutritious diet, most essential for preventing anaemia. She also provided two months' supplements for five girls to help raise their Hgb levels, which were currently below 10!!



Imparting training in *English Speaking* amongst students under our rural project, was a long pending requirement. It was experienced over the years that students in Terewayangani school are weak in this language, due to lack of exposure at home or in their neighbourhood. An initiative was taken to help them learn the language more easily through activities. Thirty seven students of Stds. VI to IX have started participating with enthusiasm in these activities held on Sundays, since February 2022. The six sessions included demonstrations and practical exercises in English speaking, alongwith written exercises for practice. *Facilitator Mrs. Mohini Patil* also sends audio clips for the students to hear and rehearse. We look forward to seeing a positive change in the English speaking skills of our students.

Rudos To Shivani!

What a feat to receive the PRADHAN MANTRI RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR for bravery at a tender age of 5 ½ years!! A proud moment for Shivangi Kale, daughter of Prasad and Gulbakshi Kale, on 24th January 2022. Shivangi's commendable act of bravery helped save her two year old sister and mother from getting electrocuted with a heating rod. Exhibiting extraordinary presence of mind and courage at the crucial time, Shivangi pulled her sister away to safety and switched off the electric mains, successfully averting a disaster!!



IAPA felicitated Shivangi in an interactive webinar with the Kale family on 5th March 2022. Shivangi's dad proudly spoke of the recognition they were getting due to this feat in a tete-a-tete with Mrs. Anjali Gokarn, IAPA's committee member. Shivangi's mother spoke about the importance of instilling and reinforcing practical tips in children.

Let us talk!!



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IAPA's Adoption Counseling Cell resourced by psychotherapist Dr. Laura Vaz has been addressing challenges faced by adoptive families, many of these being similar to those faced by biological parents. It also helps assess the preparedness and capability of prospective adoptive parents to adopt a child. Please feel free to refer these services to those who may benefit from the same.

A big thank you!!



To *Aadrit Ghosh's* heart-warming gesture of raising funds to strengthen our organisation, which brought about a good response and much needed support to our activities. It is most touching to realise the place IAPA holds in the hearts of its families!!

To our supporter and well-wisher *Mrs. Sangita Gala* for donating a wheel chair for a eighteen year old girl with special needs under IAPA's care, who stays in a residential institution!

To *Canara Bank* for donating two tablets for use at our Child Guidance Centre (CGC)!

To all our well-wishers who stand firm as a rock to support our efforts in making this world a better place for children!!



**Indian Association for Promotion of
Adoption and Child Welfare (IAPA)**

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