

SOULFREE'S FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT (2016-17)

It is hard to believe that Soulfree is already four years old, but September 7, marks our fourth anniversary. With the blessings of God, Guru and the good wishes of so many people, I'm glad to say that we have done exceptionally well.



The key projects that we are continuing on a consistent basis and improving upon are:

- ★ **MONTHLY STIPEND PROGRAM** – We are consistently providing Rs. 1000 per month for a period of one year for at least 20 persons with spinal cord injury, who are struggling for survival without any source of income. Slowly but surely, our database is growing and we are happy



to reach out to those who are most in need.



WHEELCHAIR DONATION – Soulfree is proud to say that we have provided close to 100 high quality manual wheelchairs from Invacare or Karma for persons with spinal cord injury, in this year alone. We are also providing commode wheelchairs, other mobility aids, as well as hospital beds, as per

requirement.

- ★ **INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM** – With constant motivation, we urge our beneficiaries to do whatever it takes to become financially independent, for example vocational training, entrepreneurship or employment, and ensure that seed-funding, purchase of equipment like sewing machines, or financial support for training is provided on an individual basis.
- ★ **COMMUNITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING** – It is our constant endeavour to connect members of the spinal cord injury community with each other, and we have volunteers to connect groups through conference calls. This may seem like a small activity, but it goes a long way to improve self-esteem, and infuses a sense of camaraderie, cooperation, confidence and hope within our Soulfree family.
- ★ **GIFT BOXES** – Twice a year, our gift boxes, that fill our family members with hope and joy, also provide them with essential medical and day-to-day supplies. We are also adding some

vital products like air beds for those who suffer from chronic bedsores, wheelchair cushions, rubber sheets et cetera to our regular list of medicines and other supplies.

Apart from these ongoing projects, Soulfree has had a few highlights this year. They are:

SOULFREE GET-TOGETHER WITH FREE DENTAL CAMP – Soulfree's second annual get-together was a tremendous success, as it also comprised of a free dental camp and amazing musical concerts from international musicians.

Please find photos on page 1.

RETROFITTED VEHICLES – For the first time ever, and despite facing tremendous obstacles along our path, Soulfree has succeeded in sponsoring three retrofitted BS4 Scooty Pep+ vehicles to extremely deserving candidates, who are able to be tremendously independent and supportive to their community, after being provided with this source of mobility.

PARALYMPIC WHEELCHAIR – For the first time ever, Soulfree successfully sponsored a T-54 class Paralympic wheelchair to Manoj Kumar, who had won the state-level gold medal in the 200 meter sprint, but was unable to compete in national and international level events due to the lack of the proper wheelchair. This wheelchair cost in excess of Rs. 4 lakhs and was imported from the USA. We learned a great deal in the process, and Manoj rewarded our efforts by securing the National gold medal in the event, this year in Rajasthan. We wish to thank Mr Gajendran and Mr Palani, physiotherapists from Sahai Rehabilitation Centre, Coimbatore, who assisted us in this project. Special thanks must also go to Mr Abhay Mandot of Life Linx, who has been instrumental in ensuring the success of not just this project, but of many Soulfree projects.

WORLD-CLASS SPEAKER TRAINING COURSE – Mr Harry Singha, an internationally renowned public speaker, trainer and life coach was kind enough to provide an intensely uplifting and enlightening session for Soulfree's core group of volunteers. We wish to convey our deepest gratitude to him and are sure that his guidance will take us a long way towards improving our communication skills and public speaking ability. We wish to thank Ms Giada Bono, Mr Muralidharan, Ms Malathi and



the entire team of Banca Sella, without whose hard work and generosity, this project could never have been a success.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION – Apart from having the wonderful opportunity of presenting her first ever TEDx talk in Kochi, the Soulfree founder was bestowed with three key awards in 2016-17, and each award has expanded our boundaries in a very special way.

- ✦ **Karmaveer Chakra Award** (instituted with the UN) and the REX Karmaveer Global Fellowship in 2016. This award took us to New Delhi for the first time ever, and gave us a great platform to spread Soulfree's message. Also, we were able to connect with and learn from many new organisations and individuals with similar interests. Such exposure is sure to go a long way



towards establishing Soulfree is one of the leading organisations working for the upliftment of persons with spinal cord injury in India.



On Women's Day 2017, Preethi was honoured with the

Shakti Award by Pudhiya Thalaimurai, a leading Tamil television channel. Apart from providing us with great exposure in Tamil Nadu, this award had another major benefit for Soulfree. We were asked what we would like from the television channel by its CEO Mr Satyanarayanan and he kindly granted us our wish to conduct a massive Spinal

Cord Injury Awareness Campaign from September 5 (World Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day) for the period of one week, till September 11. This was the first time such a campaign was conducted on Indian television, and we are extremely grateful for this incredible opportunity. It will certainly augment Soulfree's constant efforts to raise awareness about this currently incurable condition in India, as it will reach a much greater audience.

- ✦ On August 15, 2017, Preethi was bestowed with the tremendously prestigious "**Kalpna Chawla Award For Courage and Daring Enterprise**" by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, at the

Independence Day Flag Hoisting Ceremony held at Chennai. This tremendous honour has brought us a great deal of exposure, and connected us many government officials at the highest level. It is sure to enable and empower our advocacy work, as well as highlight our request for land allocation to start India's first spinal cord injury rehabilitation centre that specially caters to the needs of women with severe disabilities, especially spinal cord injury.

All in all, it has been an eventful and extraordinary year for us, and we wish to convey our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for supporting and encouraging us in our journey.

Without those who trusted me and contributed to our efforts, we would not be able to do even a small percentage of what we have achieved. Financial support but one important cog in the wheel, it is the time, effort and dedication of our volunteers, the prayers and blessings of our well-wishers, and the grace of the divine that has ensured that all our efforts have reaped amazing rewards. We are transforming lives, there's no doubt about it.

"I am no more than a willing slave, a servant of the divine, who has been chosen to be the face and voice of a largely invisible segment of society in India. I am deeply grateful to all of you for sharing my Soulfree journey and hope that your support and blessings will continue, now and always!"

Thank you,

yours most humbly,

Preethi Srinivasan

Soulfree, Thiruvannamalai

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