

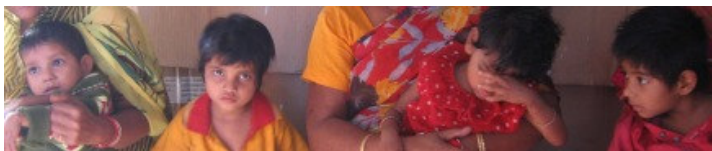


Natural Inclusion

Dr. Michelle Harrison
Mother and Founder
Childlife Preserve: Shishur Sevay

“We didn’t plan on having handicapped children,” I hear myself saying those words to a visitor and I think, “but who ever *plans* on handicapped children?”

We are a new orphanage. One day we went to the government institution to pick up a group of orphans to come to our home. The authorities asked if we



would also take four handicapped children, or at least one or two. We looked at them, four tired and lost looking children on a bench. We could not turn any of them away. I said, “Today we will take any child you give us.” We all piled into our car, seven children in all that day, to come home to Shishur Sevay.

I am a mother, a doctor, a writer, and a visionary. I see things as they are, in the present. Then I have a vision of how they could be, and I want everyone to see and share the new vision with me. All my life I have been this way. Shishur Sevay is a vision transformed to reality, a home for orphans. It is a shared dream of Mrs. Jasvinder Kaur and mine. For the past seven years we have worked together sponsoring children in schools. Now we have Shishur Sevay, with thirteen orphan girls, aged 2-12. The handicapped are the youngest, about 2-5 years. We do not really know their ages. They came without papers or histories.

The children are thriving. All four receive the services of IICP, even at our Home. They will shortly be attending the IICP school. For them, as well as for the “normal” orphan children, education is their best means of overcoming their handicaps. For the young ones, the handicaps are physical. For the older girls, they are social and educational.

The handicapped children benefit from the constant attention of the older girls. The older girls, who have lost their families, soothe their pain by caring for the younger ones. When we all sit together in front of the pandal for prayers, the handicapped sit on the laps of the others. When we set out for the playground the children ask simply, “Can they come too?” Two of the young ones sit in on the regular classes. They cannot speak, but they watch intently. And they try so hard!



Fun in the park



Happy in class.

Trying so hard!



Saying hello to the little ones is the first stop when the girls come home from school.



Playing dress up for a birthday party.

Our handicapped children are an integral part of our home, our lives, our other children's lives, and our hearts. Their energy and drive to do what they see others doing is inspiring. With the help and guidance of IICP we will help them achieve their full potential. They are our children.



Learning at IICP



IICP comes to us