

KHUSHBOO SITE VISIT REPORT

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BY

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We visited Khushboo Welfare Society, Gurgaon on 8th Jan 2010. Our father dropped us at a common meeting point in Sector-10A Gurgaon from where we got picked up by Khushboo's van. When we reached Khushboo Welfare Society, the school was already in session. Since Delhi and NCR region was under the grip of a cold wave, most of the schools had decided to remain closed after Winter Holidays. Khushboo had decided to open however the attendance was very low on that day.

We went in Mr. Vijay's office on the ground floor where we were greeted by Mrs. Geeta Chaturvedi, Mr. Ashok Gupta, and Mr. Vijay Pal. We started off by asking them what is new or what has changed from last year. We had tea & snacks as we talked. Following is what we learnt from the conversation

1. We learnt that Khushboo received around Rs. 2 Lakhs through [Concern India foundation](#), a charity partner of Airtel Delhi Half Marathon. Concern India foundation partnered with the Half-Marathon organizers to help them create the "[fundraising for charities](#)" aspect of the event. They have [a list of NGOs](#) who will be benefiting from Half-Marathon fund-raising and Khushboo managed to get in that list. This seems like a step in positive direction for events, communities and companies to link up to local NGOs and channel efforts to raise money for them.
2. We also found out that Khushboo became a board member in local District Collector's office to help the district move towards becoming more disabled friendly. This again seems like a step in positive direction where the local government representatives have started showing interest in making life easier for disabled individuals and their families.
3. We learnt that Khushboo has partnered with [Give India Foundation](#) to receive direct donations from individuals/organizations in India, US and UK. The individuals or organizations can get a tax deduction for the donations in their respective countries. The admin fee is about 9-10% - so if you donated \$100, an NGO will receive about \$90. Here is the link to [Khushboo's page on Give India](#). It seemed like Khushboo wanted this sort of channel between them and its donors so that they can receive donations for education/transportation of children with disability as well as towards their Corpus fund. Since, Asha Austin has not been in favor of funding their Corpus fund this seemed like a good alternate channel to meet their objectives.
4. They also mentioned that they have started a scheme of individual endowments where individuals can donate directly to Khushboo. Here is the [link to the page on their website](#).
5. In addition to that, they mentioned that they added two new special educators. We met one of them that day. The other special educator was on leave. The new special educator was hired for Pre-vocational Jr/Sr class. This class had largely male teenagers who can very active and energetic. The previous educator for this class was uncomfortable handling the students, which is why they hired a new special educator.

After our morning conversation, Mr. Vijay took us on a tour of the school premises. As we

went around the premises, we saw familiar faces of teachers and students from last year. The rooms were same as last year. The teaching structure being followed also seemed the same as last year. Every class has a time-table that they follow - usually they have academic learning in the morning and vocational/arts/music activity after lunch. Teacher shuffle around every once in a few years and teach different groups.

While walking on the ground floor, we saw Sundar standing behind a table next to the entrance. Mr. Vijay introduced him and told us that he has been hired to help putting up a stall to showcase Khushboo's products and provide information to visitors.

When we got to the "Performing Arts" we saw all children attending the music class. Mr. Vijay told us that usually the seniors have music class on Tuesdays while juniors have music class on Fridays but since the attendance was low, they had everyone attending the class today. He told us that they have music, dance, and yoga as part of Performing Arts. The special educators are trained to teach these skills to disabled children.

Something new we saw was petal cutting and packing in Tailoring room on top-floor. Mr. Vijay told us that they recently added this as part of helping children develop motor skills. The students cut petals and pack them using the same sealing machine they use to pack daals. The cut petals are sent/sold to companies that make holi (festival) colors. Other than petal cutting, we saw candle making machine and spiral binding machine from last year. Mr. Vijay also showed a bit of block printing in common area.

Another new thing we saw was a Washing machine on second floor. We learnt that some children have washing machine at their homes. Teaching them how to operate one gives them confidence to do the same at their home.

After our tour we went back into Mrs. Geeta's office, where talked a little more. She told us about AHEAD, a new initiative that Khushboo plans to take in the Health Sector. The idea is to reach out to the mentally challenged individuals and their families through Regional Health Centers - mainly government hospitals and health clinics in rural areas. Most of the hospitals/clinics do not have the ability/expertise to help a family which comes to them with a mentally challenged child. A lot of times families do not know where to from here. They plan to have staff that can be at these centers or got there to help these families. Mrs. Geeta said that she had sent an initial proposal to Asha Austin for funding. They need funds for employing this mobile staff and to cover their commute to health centers.

By the time we finished our conversation, the school session was over and children had left for their homes. We all decided to go for lunch at a restaurant nearby after that. Overall our experience was good. It seemed like Khushboo is doing well and taking positive steps towards helping mentally challenged children.