



MIRACLE HEARTBEAT

Our Valued Community of Monthly Partners

Mentoring in the COVID times

“Children were so happy and excited to see us in their family homes” - says Suganya Vishwanathan, Education Coordinator for our projects in Southern India. In the last quarter, the Miracle Foundation India program and finance teams began their in-person mentoring visits after a long gap of 15 months. There was a surge of emotions as we saw children doing well and happily settled in the families. A majority of these children were re-integrated overnight last year during the national lockdown - when the government directed children to be immediately sent back to their families. While the others had been re-integrated before the pandemic.

We had a tête-à-tête with Suganya and were happy to share an excerpt from our conversation. Happy reading :)

We are so excited to hear all about your mentoring visit. How are the children?



Suganya following up with a reintegrated child Maala*

The children are doing very well. Their social worker had already informed them of my visit and I was welcomed into their homes with such warmth and love. I have been mentoring this bunch for almost three years now and I knew each one by their name. They were so chirpy about how things have been since they have been re-unified, how useful they find the tablets, their participation in spreading covid awareness in their community, and all the new things they have learned over the months. All through I could sense their joy of being back home, in the care of their families and siblings. We are abreast of their welfare by their caseworker but to see them in person and meet their families made all the more a difference.

This was your first mentoring visit post the lockdown. Was your purpose met?

The purpose of my visit was to of course meet the children and families in person, review and discuss their education performance and observe how the children were faring in their re-integrated families with the support we have extended. I was extremely pleased to see that each family and child were progressing as per the quality of reintegration we had planned.

With the ongoing pandemic, I would say everyone including the children has settled really well to the idea of remote working. I have mentored these children remotely all through the lockdown and tracked their progress on our Home Thrive Scale. However, in the social sector - nothing can replace the learning, observations, and the reality of an in-person visit. Going into the community, meeting with the families and the other people around the children is very important for us at Miracle. We are glad that the pandemic situation is under control at the moment and we will be able to continue in-person visits hereafter.

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Can you share a few highlights from the visit?

I have so many stories to share from the field. Let me tell you about Suchi*. Suchi is a single mother with three daughters. She is a worker in the nearby mill and had to separate her children from herself when they were very young. She had no support to take care of her girls when she was away at work. She would always be worried about their safety and ended up making the decision of sending them to institutional care. Miracle re-unified the siblings with their mother last year and has been supporting them for education, counseling, and other services. The oldest is currently also being supported for her higher education. The internet-enabled tablet the girls share has helped Suchi in making her children have access to education in these tough times.



Suchi with her daughters*

There is another family of a single mother where we re-integrated her two sons. Based on the gaps identified on the thrive scale, we extended support for livelihood and education for the boys. For livelihood, we supported the mother to start a cart to sell handkerchiefs and garments. Her business gradually picked up and she now makes a profit of Rs. 300 daily! Isn't that great?



Vimla expressing gratitude towards the received support*

How was it meeting with the on-ground team?

We had so much to discuss. From life skills sessions to coaching teachers' plans to sharing observations to debriefs. Yamuna who manages the program also joined us remotely to plan the next steps and interventions. I also organized a team activity to understand the need for guidance and planning for a social worker. These social workers are the backbone of our program and do such great work on the ground.

Thank you for giving us a sneak peek, Suganya. Where are you off to next?

I have mentoring visits planned for the next couple of months to our projects in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Telangana. But you will see me next in Telangana.

Safe travels.

For more information on how you can support these vulnerable children, write to us at Giving@MiracleFoundation.Org

*Names being changed for identity protection & privacy purposes.