

These past few newsletters consisted of us driving to various places from our hub, Bhavnagar, where we had planned to stay for four days.

On the first night, on the 14th, we celebrated the kite flying festival and met the council members at the Mamasa farm in the evening.

On the 15th and 16th, we drove about 2 hours to Mahuva, where we met with the various seniors and kids and their parents and also visited the Happy Kids school. We have enrolled a few kids for the first time this year. We needed to see that school firsthand and ensure that it met our requirements.

On the 17th afternoon, we sat in the Council Chamber to meet with our welfare recipients. As we mentioned in our earlier newsletter, we now have more and more people approaching us for monthly support to make ends meet, for various medical help, and ancillary expenses, such as furniture, clothes, burial expenses, etc.



*Shukhar team meeting with seniors at the Bhavnagar local council chambers.*

These are just some of the cases we would like to share with you.

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Noorbanuben is a 75-year-old widow who is the beneficiary of our welfare program. Her condition was so weak that two people brought her to meet with us. Besides being fragile, she also has dementia and needs constant supervision as she gets lost if left alone. Her daughter, Mumtazben, a widow, is her primary caregiver and, as such, is not working.

Mumtazben's daughter and Noorbanuben's granddaughter is Samira, a 31-year-old mother of 9-year-old Insiya. Samira, too, lost her husband recently and is the only bread earner in the family. She works six days a week from 9 am to 9 pm at a local garment shop and brings home 6000 rupees per month, which is not enough for all these three ladies.

Insiya, the daughter of Samira, is in our education program and is studying in grade four at the Rajkot school and resides at the hostel.

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Rashidaben is a widow and a mother of four dependent children. She recently lost her husband to COVID. Her relatives were able to arrange for a home in Rajula for the surviving family. Her brother-in-law Mukesh bhai provides for daily food allowance. The oldest daughter is 21 years old and is engaged to be married in the next six months. The two other daughters attend a local Gujarati medium school. The son is in grade 10 and will write his board exams this year. They were under the local social welfare program for additional financial support. The local council has stopped supporting her, and she is looking for that allowance from the Shukhar Foundation.

The Bhavnagar local council fed us a lovely lunch. We truly appreciate their hospitality and tireless ongoing service to the community.

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Later in the evening, Razia's loyal driver of 15 years, Salim, invited the entire Shukhar team to his son's wedding reception. The reception was at a nearby hall next to our hotel. There was great Bollywood music, good food, and dessert. We all dressed and attended the wedding reception, where we were treated very special and felt like royalty.

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Our next newsletter will cover our visit to Junagadh where we will visit some of our education program kids at The Podar International School.

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