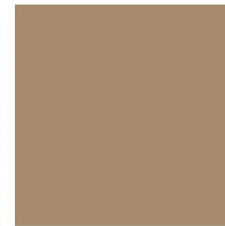
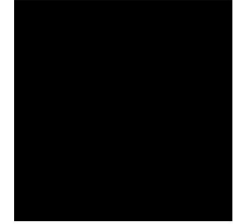




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ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING TRUSTEE



Dr. Sushama Nagarkar

This year has been like no other that we have ever known of. A new normal was imposed upon us with very little warning. And we were not prepared. In the early days, for those of us addicted to our daily dose of TOI along with the cuppa, each morning brought new, occasionally frightening information and a certain unease at the trajectory of COVID-19. As with everyone else we know, we too dreaded the phone calls about near and dear ones, or even people we remotely knew who might have suffered an untimely and painful passing.

As it was with the entire city, we closed 'shop' from the third week of March 2020. From a strong vibrant community of enthusiastic team members, gainfully employed at Café Arpan in Juhu and Accenture, and at Arpan Food Services and trainees regularly and meticulously attending the Skill Development Centre, we all were suddenly isolated into the confines of our own homes. Known routines became defunct and many of our team members wandered around their homes aimlessly with very little of interest in anything except getting back to the familiarity and the family of YCT. It was very difficult for many to comprehend the gravity of the situation. Naturally caregivers and family members were in high anxiety mode for the health and safety of their sons and daughters, brothers, and sisters.

In early April we realized that we needed to mitigate the effects of loneliness and purposelessness that the situation was creating – particularly for our team members. It was obvious that sustaining mental health of our team through this period was of paramount importance and that was where we focused our energies for several weeks. A Zoom account was set up and we ventured into what, for us, was uncharted territory.

Our ever-dependable volunteers rallied around and were ready to roll from the get-go. We set up three to four hours of daily Zoom sessions - cooking, dance, music, art, origami or just fun! Our team was required to do their assigned household chores in the mornings and then log in for the fun in the afternoons. It worked wonderfully. We stayed engaged, but more importantly, connected.

The icing on the cake (and it is a lot of icing) is that since then, there has been a newfound appreciation for our team members' strengths and what they contribute: Pratibha has her own YouTube channel of recipes, Gaurav continues to show an enormous interest and ability in cooking, Darren independently does all sorts of chores around the house. The list goes on.

As with every other small NGO, we were very concerned about resources to meet our annual budgetary needs. Income dropped down to a trickle and we still had to fund staff and team salaries. We crowd funded. The community rallied around us and of course we are eternally indebted. But that is not it. The success of the crowdfunding also soundly reaffirmed for us that we are on the right track as far as our core values, vision, and mission of YCT goes. And therein lies our superpower.

Through this unusual year, the message for all of us at YCT has been clear: Appreciate the simple things in life – family, friends, love, and companionship. The chirping of the birds and the sound of the sea. Our team members remind us of these things daily. We tend to not pay enough attention. COVID-19 has taught us, deviously, to pay more attention.

SURVIVING THE PANDEMIC

This year started on an unprecedented note. For the first time in our lives, the whole world shut down simultaneously. Uncertainty loomed, paranoia grew as everyone grappled with the novel coronavirus.

As a Trust, we had some crucial decisions to make to ensure that our work continues, our team members and staff stay safe and our programs survive the pandemic of the century. As a result of the nationwide lockdown, all our programs were stopped and everyone was asked to stay home. The first thing we did was talk to our landlords - we were going to be non-operational for at least a couple of months and that meant zero income. We requested them to consider reducing or waiving our monthly rent. After several rounds of negotiations, they obliged and agreed to reduce our rent for the rest of 2020; later, we also negotiated the rent for 2021.



ImpactGuru.com



However, rent reduction was not going to be enough. All our staff and quite a few of our team members depended on the salaries that we paid them. The Board decided that we must continue supporting everyone within the YCT family who needed it. It was time for another round of crowdfunding.

Impact Guru was our first choice; they welcomed us back with open arms and offered us a zero-commission campaign which we could run on all local donations. With our FCRA certification coming through in February 2020, we were all set to start our second crowdfunding campaign. Straight out the gate, the overwhelming response our campaign received gave us a much-needed sense of relief. We felt truly blessed. We raised almost Rs. 40 lacs in under six months. This was a huge confidence booster.

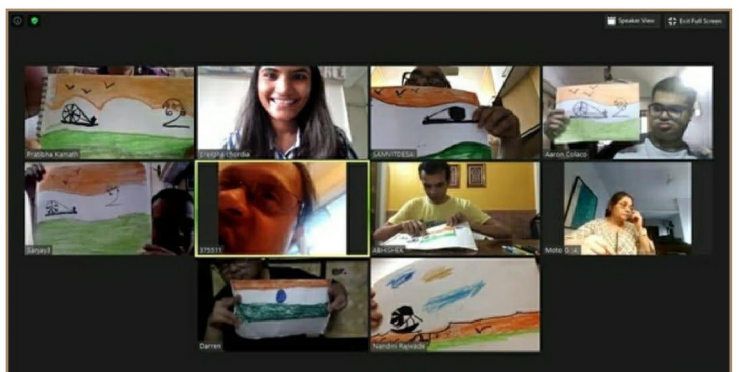
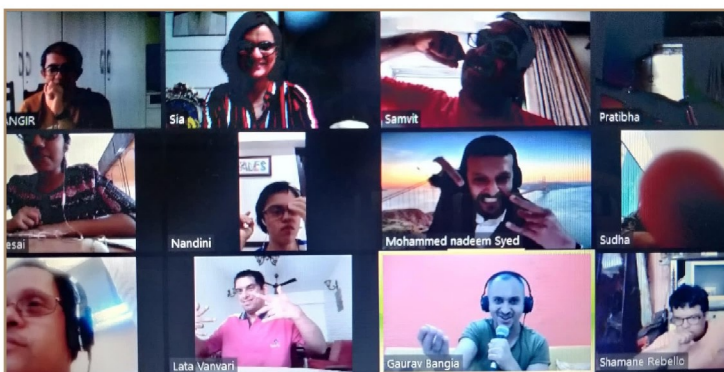
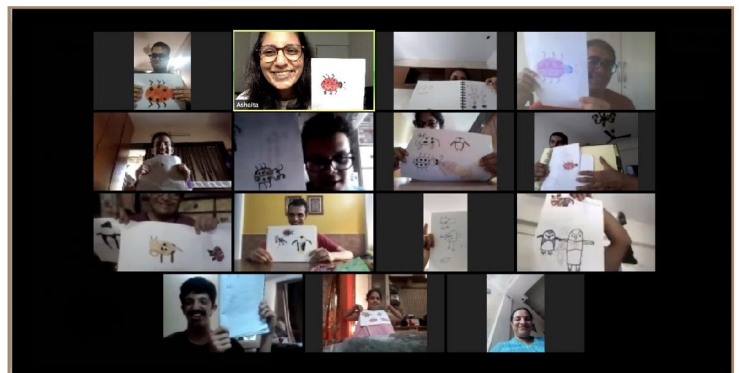
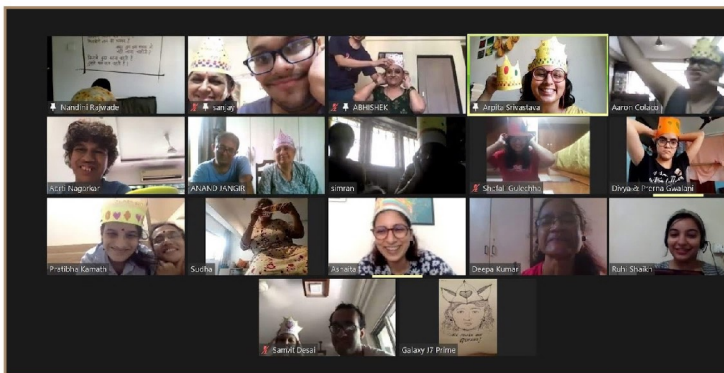
ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORMAL

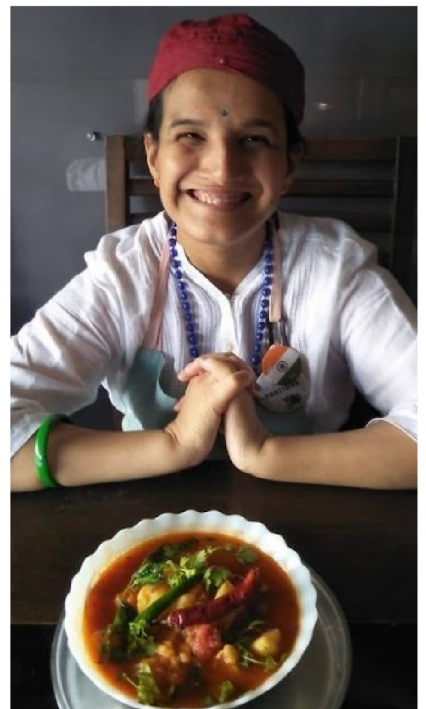
After the initial shock of a global lockdown settled, we jumped into action to find ways to keep our team members connected as much as possible.

Like a majority of the world, we signed up for a premium account on Zoom and decided to start our recreational and enrichment therapies online. Most of our team members were already digitally savvy, many having their own personal smartphones. A quick guide to downloading the Zoom app and we were ready to start. Our regular weekly therapists smoothly transitioned into taking their one hour sessions online; but that was not going to be enough; the team would need and benefit from more. In a few days, we had a long list of volunteers who signed up to take a session or two per week in a variety of subjects from music and dance to yoga and fitness, games and quizzes, to arts and crafts; our team got to choose between a full menu of sessions.

In addition to the recreational sessions, we introduced our regular training as well. The morning sessions focused on learning new recipes, revising the skills they had been taught on site and practicing hard and soft skills required in the F&B industry. Learning on Zoom in itself was a huge step for them - digital etiquette needed to be taught: simple things like volume and camera control was a fun challenge that they eventually overcame.

Over all, our team as well as their respective family members got to participate, stay engaged and have fun every day. We must specially give thanks to Team Spreading Smiles and Mr. Nadeem who went above and beyond to entertain and keep our team meaningfully engaged and happy.





ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORMAL

In early 2020, the Board had discussed discontinuing the Arpan Dabba Service due to reduced orders. As luck would have it, when the lockdown hit, the demand for dabbas or home-cooked meals went up. After we worked out a safe way to operate, we resumed our kitchen service and started preparing and delivering fresh food to those who needed it in our area. This ensured steady income and work for those team members who lived close by and wanted to come and work.



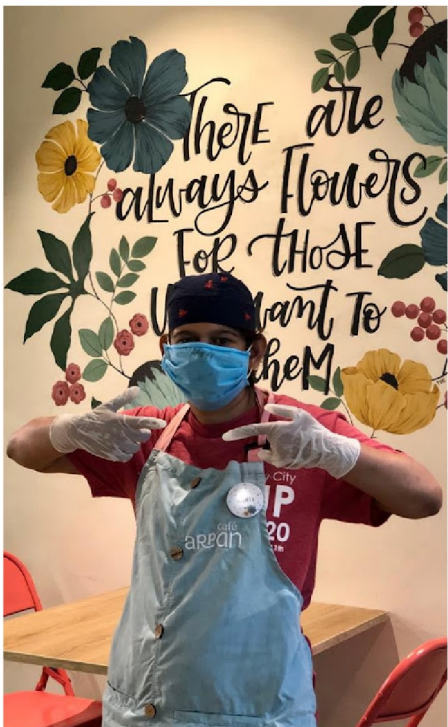
With Café Arpan, we faced a separate challenge. When we launched the café, it was the dine-in experience that we promoted extensively; we wanted our customers to come and experience first-hand what it is like to visit a café run by specially-abled adults. The vibe, the emotions associated with the space, and of course our amazing team members - these were our USPs. With all eateries instructed to stay closed for dine-in services, our USP was meaningless and the café remained closed.

It was only in October when the rules were relaxed, that we resumed operations and, slowly, some of our customers started trickling in. Of course, with many people still fearful of eating out, the numbers were less but we remained hopeful and optimistic. The team was simply elated to be back at work after so many months.



The Board used the downtime between April and July to focus on restructuring our organisation - this included creating formal policies and contracts, ensuring complete compliance with all the government regulations and organising our backend to support our growth. With the expertise of a valuable advisor, we successfully created the structure that we had been trying to put in place all these years. We felt very proud that we made good use of the lull by creating something of value.





SPOTLIGHT ON ABILITY

Here are a few success stories to brighten your day

Gaurav Vanvari

"Dreams and Dedication are a powerful combination."

The quote above has been proven true by our SDC trainee Gaurav. His dream to work at Café Arpan has brought him a long way. When he joined us, he didn't show much interest in learning or following the instructions of the special educators. He was stubborn about his decisions and found the routine boring. The primary concern was to maintain hygiene and cleanliness. As he has speech difficulties he wasn't able to express himself and gave up easily.

Through constant reinforcement and support from his mother and the SDC team, he found a way to fulfill his dream. Today, Gaurav is gradually mastering the skills needed for working in the F&B industry. He has become punctual in completing his work. Also, his communication has improved. He is polite and is now able to engage in a conversation with those around him. He is very active during the class and is the first one to come up with answers. He is a talented dancer and is always ready to show everyone his amazing dancing skills. He has recently started his part-time internship at Café Arpan and loves his work.



Ashwini Desai

"I wanted to be an independent woman, a woman who could pay for her bills, a woman who could run her own life."

This is surely the mantra of our very hardworking team member, Ashwini Desai. A very polite and dedicated member of our team. She is a Senior Cook at AFS, who loves to cook a variety of dishes, mastering all the different areas including baking as well as prep-work. She works independently!

SPOTLIGHT ON ABILITY

Here are a few success stories to brighten your day

Bhavya Rajani

Bhavya is the youngest trainee at the Skill Development Centre and has already earned the title of a 'chef'. She is very passionate about cooking and loves to try out new recipes. She is brilliant in academics and has an amazing memory for recipes. However, she did find it challenging to follow instructions and work as a part of a team. It was also difficult for her to express her feelings effectively.

Through a variety of therapeutic techniques, Bhavya now communicates politely and effectively, she works very well alongside her fellow trainees and has made a lot of progress with the challenges that she used to face.



Ankit Khale

Ankit Khale is the most dedicated chef we have at AFS, not only does he love cooking but also enjoys dancing. He is always looking forward to cooking, baking and preparing vegetables. If you live in Juhu, you might see Ankit whizzing past on his bicycle on his way to or from work. He always looks very happy as he smiles all the time and is extremely proud of his independence. He is a quick learner in the kitchen, and in the training and therapy sessions too. It was a proud moment for all of us when he learnt how to write his name in Devanagari script; guided by Anita Akrey (support staff at Café Arpan).



PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Jyoti Desai

Jyoti Desai is an optimist, rational thinker, voracious reader, and traveller. She envisions making the world a better place for now and future generations. As a parent of one of the team, Jyoti has always loved being involved and assisting wherever possible. When Café Arpan at Accenture was launched, she stepped up to take charge as a volunteer two times a week. She considers supported employment initiatives like Café Arpan to be a stepping stone in the real world for special adults. Some of her most memorable moments include seeing her son, Samvit act in a play, play the djembe and even be a part of a choreographed dance at our annual concert, Saarang Sandhya, held each December. She believes that this will give him the confidence to realise his talents. She dreams of teaching her son something new every day!



Mangala Rajwade

Mangala Rajwade is a teacher with a masters in biochemistry and also a parent of one of our team members. She has also doubled up as a tutor for our team members in literacy and math. Through her experiences of teaching them, she has learnt to appreciate their abilities and focus on what they can and like to do. She believes that everyone is made to feel part of the YCT family so when one is given a job, one feels totally responsible for it as no questions are asked.

Charmaine Colaco

“Meeting people who want to make a positive difference in this world has been the highest point of my volunteering experience with Café Arpan. The team here is inspiring and motivating. There is positive growth in my life too“.

Charmaine Colaco, a homemaker and parent of one of our team members, has been associated with YCT for the last three years and is a dedicated volunteer at Café Arpan.



VOLUNTEER SPEAKS

Anjana Kamat

“I was depressed due to personal unfortunate events. I volunteer here and that has healed me and given me a new goal. The kitchen here is my second home, and YCT is my family.”

68-year-old Anjana Kamat has an infectious smile and amazing cooking skills. She has been associated with YCT for 5 years and knows all the ways to involve the PwIDD in all the steps of the cooking process. She focuses on the strengths of each beneficiary and continues to give feedback for improvement.



Sulekha Malkani

“I have no children, and I was getting anxious about ‘what will I do after I retire?’ YCT has given me children and a mission. I celebrate all my events here with my lovely children. The kids here are not flesh of my flesh, nor bone of my bone, but still miraculously my own.”

Sulekha Malkani, a retired banker, joined us as a volunteer in 2018 and has become indispensable to us! She meticulously manages all our dabba orders and maintains the accounts for the same.



Deepali Aphale

“No management book would have taught me what I learnt in a single day, be it planning of event, costing, profit margin and marketing.”

Deepali Aphale is a Chartered Accountant and has worked with various corporate organisations over 10 years. In 2016, she decided to prioritise her role as a homemaker and quit the corporate world. She has been a volunteer with us since 2018 and plays an active role in teaching accounting to the team members working at the café. Her most memorable experience was one of our first catering events where the team prepared and served biryani to more than 500 attendees of a conference organised at St. Xavier’s College.



OUR FINANCIAL REPORT

PARTICULARS	FY 2019-20 (INR)	FY 2020-21 (INR)
Income		
Donation	1,32,92,391	73,35,906
Interest Income	9,91,071	11,38,901
Total Income	1,42,83,462	84,74,807
Expense	44,72,337	56,63,129
Opening balance carried forward	18,08,668	1,16,19,793
Closing balance carried over to balance sheet	1,16,19,793	1,44,31,471



IN GRATITUDE

We cannot do everything we do without community support - by way of donations as well as time and energy spent helping us to better what we do. Our heartfelt thanks to the following:

- **Anand Mahajan**
- **IP Integrated Services Pvt. Ltd.**
- **Sahachari Foundation**
- **Ion Foundation**
- **Messe Frankfurt Trade Fairs India Pvt. Ltd.**
- All our **wonderfully generous individual donors** who supported our crowd-funding campaign on **Impact Guru**
- A special thank you to ALL of our Zoom volunteers. **Team Spreading Smiles**, we appreciate your ever willing support!
- Among our consultants, are two very special mentions: **Ms. Zeenat Bandukwalla** and **Dr. Uma Kulkarni**. Their enormous professional expertise has been of great value to us.

Our families for always being there and last but not the least to our team members who remind us every day that a warm smile, a touch, a hug or a joke is all it takes to make for a happy day!

If you wish to contribute towards our cause, you can do so using one of the methods below:

By Cheque-

Made out to 'Yash Charitable Trust'.

By Direct Bank Deposit-

Account Holder :Yash Charitable Trust
Bank and Branch : Kotak Mahindra Bank, JVPD
Savings Account No. : 7711476797
IFSC Code : KKBK0000661

Scanning the code below will take you directly to our donation page -



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