

## **Amity Humanity Foundation**

**World AIDS Day, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007**

**Amity International School, Pushp Vihar**

### **Report**

#### **World AIDS Day 2007**

**Amity Humanity Foundation (AHF)** conducted a one day Programme on the occasion of World AIDS Day with the support of Delhi State AIDS Control Society. The details are as follows :

<b>Project Name</b>	: World AIDS Day, 2007
<b>Project Theme</b>	: Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise and Take the Lead
<b>Supported By</b>	: Delhi State AIDS Control Society, Government of Delhi.
<b>Date</b>	: 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2007 (Saturday)
<b>Target Group</b>	: Men and women from slums near Saket, Pushp Vihar and adjoining areas; and Youth (Students), New Delhi.
<b>Venue</b>	: Amity International School, Pushp Vihar, Delhi.
<b>Time</b>	: 09.00 AM to 04.00 PM
<b>Objective</b>	:Promoting Awareness, Accountability and Leadership to combat HIV/ AIDS
<b>Methodology</b>	:There were two components for the above objective 1. Awareness and 2. Activity component
<b>Activities</b>	: Community Mobilization, Presentation, Interactive Session, Film showing (on HIV/AIDS), Counseling, Interaction with People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), Leader Selection, Pre- Assessment and Feedback from the Participants
<b>No. of participants</b>	: 247 = 180(Men /women) +25students+6 (AHF Personnel) + 10 (teachers) +15(Support staff )+ 11 (guest member & media)
<b>Resource persons</b>	: Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Surendar Kumar, Dr. Chanda Rani Akhouri, Ms. V. Nandhini, Mr. Abhishek Kumar, Mr. Rahul Banerjee, , Ms. Ameeta Mohan, Ms. Divya Bisen, Ms Surabhi, Ms. Nidhi Rawat Mr. Naveen, Mrs. Bhagwati, Ms. Celina, and Dr. Manorma Saxena , Mr. Manoj Gujela and Col. Sharma

**Details:**

Amity Humanity Foundation organised a day long event at Amity International School, Pushp Vihar to observe the World AIDS Day on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007. This programme was supported by the Delhi State AIDS Control Society. It targeted men and women from slums Saket, Pushp Vihar and adjoining areas. More than 200 men and women, including parents of Amitasha children, a school meant for underprivileged children, participated in the event.

World AIDS Day is observed every year on the 1<sup>st</sup> December. The main aim, *inter alia*, is to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS pandemic. The World AIDS Campaign aims at promoting accountability and uniting campaigners around a common campaigning theme.

This year the slogan for World AIDS Day Campaign (WAC) was: "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise and Take the Lead". It was an appeal to all the sections of society such as families, communities and civil society organisations - not just the governments - to take initiatives to fight this pandemic.

The Programme started at 10.00 AM by lighting the inaugural lamp by Mr. Naveen , Mrs. Bhagwati Dr C.R. Akhouri, Officiating Director AHF , Ms. Amita Mohan, Vice Principal, AIS.

Dr. Chanda Rani Akhouri, Officiating Director, AHF gave the welcome speech and highlighted the importance of caution for prevention of this dreaded disease. After contracting the infection there is no cure one can only look for ways of leading a healthy life.

Mr. Naveen and Mrs. Bhagwati from Delhi Positive People's Network shared their experiences in the inaugural session. Mr. Naveen said that it was timely intervention during his wife's pregnancy, that their daughter could be save from getting HIV infection. His wife was given Zidovidine, a drug administered to an HIV infected mother in order to prevent transmission of infection from mother to child. He also shared how he is able to lead a healthy life despite being HIV positive. Despite all this, such is the stigma against this that his daughter could not get admission in any of the schools in Delhi.

Mrs. Bhagwati in her inspiring speech reiterated the importance of Life Skills education for school children. In a very convincing way she said that unless a child knows what is HIV and ways to protect himself or herself from it, he will not able to do so. As any other subject, Life Skills education should also be taught in schools. She also added that a child should know about his or her body, its functions and behaviour patterns to lead a healthy life. She said that she got infected from her husband but she is very much supported by her parents and brothers. Her child is not HIV positive.

Mrs. Ameeta Mohan, Vice Principal, AIS Pushp Vihar, in her speech appreciated the fact that Mr. Naveen and Ms. Bhagwati had come forward to share their experiences and

challenges as HIV positive people.

Ms. Celina from Indian Network of Positive People joined later and spoke on the basic facts and myths about HIV infection, Parent to Child Transmission of HIV and her own experiences of taking on the challenges posed by her HIV positive status. She was driven out of her house after her husband's death due to AIDS but now she is leading a healthy life for the last 14 years.

In her interaction with participants many queries were raised and the participants felt at ease and were satisfied to get clarification for their doubts. Mr. Abhishek Kumar and Mr. Manoj Gujela facilitated the session.

Interactive session was followed by a *nukkad natak* (Street Play) on prevention and misconceptions about HIV infection. 'EQRA (Elegant Quest of Rational Art – the Stage)', presented a very powerful and informative performance using songs and theatre as a medium to spread the message of cautious and responsible behaviour as well as the need for care and support for the infected.

In the post lunch session 5 peer leaders were identified among the participants. Four women and one man volunteered for taking the leadership and provide requisite help to people who need it. Ms. Nandhini and Mr. Rahul Banerjee explained to the participants as to why this leadership is required and their role as leaders. They were also given a special kit of materials in Hindi which contained basic facts and myths about HIV, information about the available services and addresses of centres in Delhi where one can go for testing, counseling and medicines.

A short film, 'Masks', produced by students of Amity School of Communication, 'which has received the first prize in National Competition on Public Service Advertising' was screened. The film carries the message that everyone is vulnerable to HIV infection. The HIV virus does not make any distinction between man or woman, rich or poor, young or old.

Another film "Parikshit – the tested one" produced by AHF was also screened. The film is about Amba, who was driven out of her house after she contracted HIV infection, from her husband. She tells her story to her friend Damli, who had broken the news that she is expecting a baby. Amba was driven out of her in-laws house after she, her husband and their son had tested positive for HIV. She struggled to find means to lead a respectful and healthy life. The main message of the film is to encourage expectant women to go for a HIV test so that if found positive, the child could be saved by timely intervention and medicines meant for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV during pregnancy, caesarian delivery and proper counseling for breast feeding and weaning after six months of breast feeding.

Maj. Gen. (Dr) Surendar Kumar, Vice President Amity Humanity Foundation delivered the valedictory address and emphasised the importance of joining individual efforts and turning it into a wave. In an inspiring speech he reinforced the importance of empathy, concern and taking care of the infected. Emphasis on sanctity of husband-wife relationship and being faithful to each other, according to him, were key to preventing men and women from going astray

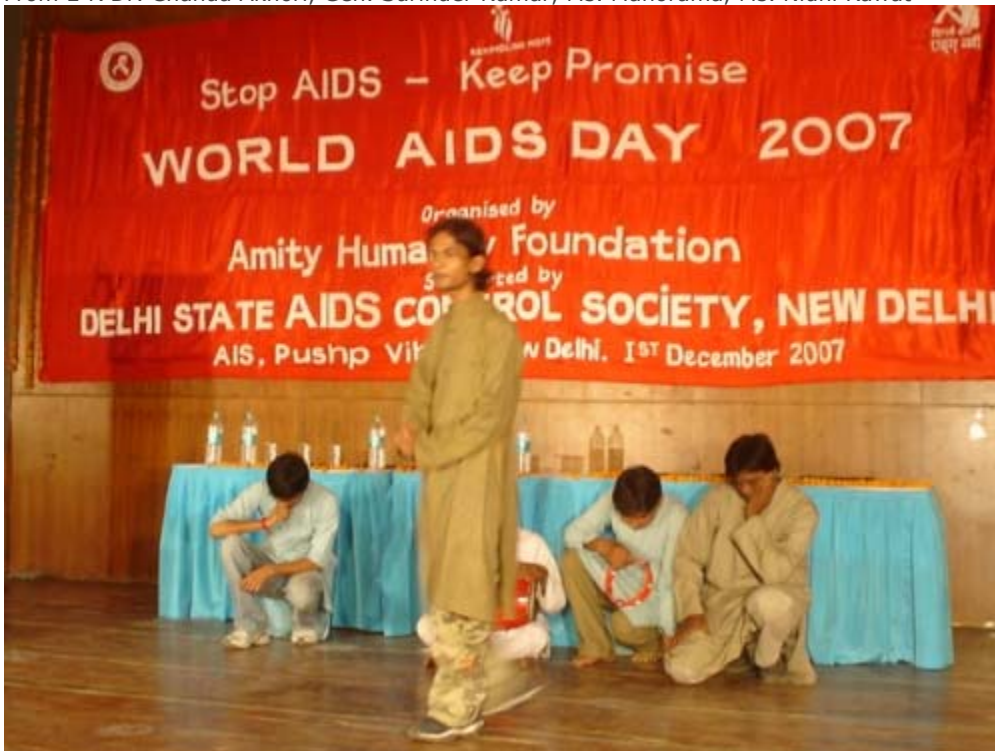
Talking about the stigma attached to AIDS, he said that no other word evokes as much fear, revulsion, despair and utter helplessness as AIDS. Despite increased AIDS awareness, the terror persists. People need to be considerate and caring towards their fellow beings who are HIV positive. They should not be castigated or looked down upon by society. Outlining the several possible reasons of getting infected with HIV virus he said that HIV is transmitted primarily by sex, by injections (sharing contaminated needles for drug use or accidental piercing with a contaminated needle), or from infected mother to child through pregnancy or breast-feeding. He further said that HIV infection is not the end of life. People can lead a healthy life for a long time with appropriate medical care which is easily available in medical colleges, district hospitals and non-profit charitable institutions.

Ms. Nidhi Rawat, Work Place Coordinator from of Delhi State AIDS Control Society, appreciated the efforts taken by AHF for the World AIDS Day. She said that simplest step to prevent Parent to Child transmission is to advice the expectant mothers to go for institutional check up and delivery. According to her, it was nice to have young men and women as participants and expressed her appreciation for the five volunteers for coming forward as leaders in the community. They could take the addresses of centers where such check ups are being done from the Amity Humanity Foundation.

Dr. Chanda Rani Akhouri gave a vote of thanks to the Chairperson, Dr.(Mrs.) Amita Chauhan who gave her whole hearted support in organising the event. She conveyed her best wishes to the people who volunteered to lead the movement against HIV/AIDS, DSACS for its support, the Vice Principal and administrative staff from Amity International School, Pushp Vihar for providing all the help, participants for making the event worthwhile by responding to the invitation at a short notice, media team, the Television Channel *Dill Aaj Tak and Rahstriya Sahara (Hindi Newspaper)* for covering the event, student volunteers and each and every one responsible for making the event successful.



From L-R Dr. Chanda Akhori, Gen. Surinder Kumar, Ms. Manorama, Ms. Nidhi Rawat



Skit presented during the event



Participants interacting during the event



Ms. Celina, Social Activist addressing the gathering