

OUR AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AT KERE HABBA

'Kere Habba', which literally translates into 'Lake Festival' in Kannada, is a full-day fete that takes place at the Kaikondrahalli Lake in Bangalore. It had its first edition in 2015, and people from across the city got to see Bangalore's lake heritage in all its splendour. This year, to spread awareness about Cerebral Palsy to a much bigger audience, we at Sanmitra Trust put up our own stall in the 'Citizen's Corner' at the Kere Habba, on the 8th January, 2017.



We had been planning this stall for a long time because we all realised the potential of such a huge platform. However, everyone had exams at different times and it was very hard to coordinate timings to meet up and work on it. In other words, we got caught up in our daily studies and didn't really focus on our kiosk. However, in the week before Kere

Habba, we sat down together and worked on the charts and banners. We also designed handouts for people visiting our stall. It was quite exciting to get everything ready! In the end, we allotted time slots for everyone to come and man the stall. This way, we all got to be a part of the event.

At our stall, we had charts, small brochures and quizzes to engage people. We focused on explaining what Cerebral Palsy is, and how it can be prevented and identified early. It was a great opportunity to be able to interact with our local community and tell them about our cause. It was extremely gratifying to see people interested in what we're doing. Around a 100 people even signed up for further updates about the activities of our NGO.





We were pleasantly surprised to meet people who had relatives with CP, and who were interested in spreading awareness about this issue too. One person confided in us about how her nephew has CP and because he wasn't diagnosed, he is permanently in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. However, not all stories had an unhappy ending. One of the people we met had a cousin who had been undergoing physiotherapy since a young age for Cerebral Palsy, and was now looking for

vocational work. The best part of our day, however, was when we met a child with CP, who lives a normal life like all of us, with the help of physiotherapy and regular sports. His story was truly motivational and we were reminded that diagnosing CP at a young age can do wonders for the person and his/her family, and change real lives.

We learnt so much from this day—from being able to communicate with a large number of people, to being able to handle feedback and work harder. Being able to interact with people of different age groups and different backgrounds was amazing and an eye-opener. This was the first time we reached out to a larger public, and the time and effort we put into this was definitely worth it. After interacting with more than 500 people in a



single day, we realised the power of mass communication. We hope to raise awareness on much bigger scales now, so that we can realise our goal of preventing Cerebral Palsy in not only India, but the entire world.

-Mihika Bairathi