

UPAY NGO's works reveal result-oriented measures taken to help underprivileged

■ Staff Reporter

CELEBRATING its 9th Foundation Day, NGO UPAY (Underprivileged's Advancement by Youth), felicitated its star performers and beneficiaries in a function organised at the Persistent System's Limited APJ Abdul Kalam Hall on Saturday.

Present on the occasion was its founder Varun Shrivastava, an IITian from Kharagpur and executive body members Zonal members namely Vinod Tambi CEO of a company, former DGM MOIL Anjan Biswas, Atul Sir and Kshitij Gupta Pracharak RSS, drawn from different fields, who volunteer to give their time for a cause just to bring a smile on innocent face of a child.

Their 'Reach and Teach' initiative and 'Footpath Shala' is showing results of a hard struggle by its volunteers to get the underprivileged children to take to reading and writing, besides developing other skills like tailoring, singing, learning to dance. One of their students managed to reach the platform of *Sa Re Ga Ma* singing competition.

Impressive presentations were made by volunteers from Gurgaon, Delhi Zone, Bangalore Mouda in Vidarbha, Nagpur Zone. The kind of work that is being done revealed hard work and dedication.

A lot of thrust is being imposed on education of the underprivileged children, de-addiction from *Gutkha* and tobacco, something which the children have picked up from their parents, tackling the problem of dropout, overcoming difficulty of language barrier.

Some of their students have been benefited to an extent that they managed to score 90% marks in Class 10.

One girl has gone ahead and taken admission in ICAD. One boy has secured admission in



Award winning students of UPAY pose with their certificates and medals. Also seen are founder of UPAY Varun Shrivastava and members of advisory panel. (Pic by Anil Futane)

Government Engineering College.

One boy from the UPAY Santra Market Footpath Shala presented a dance mimicking Michael Jackson brilliantly. The performers were awarded medal and a certificate at the hands of dignitaries.

Interacting with the volunteer teaching staff and the students, the advisory body gave good suggestions and ideas. *The Hitavada* Staffer Nandu Andhare also spoke on the occasion and appealed to the Zone in charge to take help of the print media in showcasing their work.

UPAY is taking roots, spreading wings: Varun Shrivastava

"NGO UPAY (Underprivileged's Advancement by Youth) is nine years old and is taking roots, spreading the message and bringing the underprivileged children living in slums, on traffic squares, under the umbrella where free education, skill development is taught to children. They are also counselled by expert volunteers to give up *Gutkha* and tobacco," informed Founder and IIT Kharagpur Alumni Varun Shrivastava, whose mind and soul hovered around the children, who begged at traffic square, rummaged through garbage in slums.

Speaking exclusively to *The Hitavada*, Varun said "I worked with NTPC and hence Kumhari was the place, near Mouda from where it all started in 2010.

There were ten children with three volunteers to work, that led to developing ten volunteer teams that attracted retired teachers, engineers, doctors and working professionals, who contributed their precious knowledge and time. In Nagpur, we have 50 volunteers. Ten centres



Varun Shrivastava

in Mouda. Two centres in Delhi, Two in Pune and Bangalore. I feel proud in stating that 1,700 children are being taught by my volunteers in Mouda, Nagpur, Pune, Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida and Bengaluru. We are also focusing on health and organise checkup and vaccination.

Asked how they could convince the road side begging children to get involved, Shrivastava smiled and said, "Children love games and we used this simple trick to rope them in and then made friends to win their confidence and gradually veer them away from their

squalid routine and sit with us to pick up a book, pencil and a note pad. In 2015 we managed to enroll 40 children in our Santra Market Footpath Shala. At Yeshwant Stadium, we enrolled 20, at Amrut Bhavan, where we held our Paath Shala, we got 30, at Mount Road we roped in 12, at Pagalkhana, we got 20 children. Neetu Mishra is our Zonal Division Manager of Nagpur Zone".

Varun also spoke about its Laxmi Nagar Centre where 'Reach and Teach' system is in vogue. At Jagdish Nagar we have 96 students, at IP Park we have 70, at Sakkardara we have 50, at Wardhaman Nagar we have 65. A big motivational effort is on from UPAY that is showing promising results. One can volunteer with us, adopt a centre, sponsor a child, sponsor recreational activity, sponsor a teacher, donate books stationary, make monetary donations, arrange health checkup, talent upliftment, sponsor a classroom. More details can be had from our website www.upay.org.in.