**Ummeed Update**

**UDID Camp**

Unique Disability Identity Card

On the occasion of Autism Awareness Month, Ummeed’s Social Work and Family Resource Teams held a camp to assist families in applying for a UDID card for their children. UDID or Unique Disability Identification Card is an identity card with pan-India validity and has been made mandatory by the government for availing any benefits or concessions for people with disabilities.

The camp was held in both online and in-person format and close to 100 families were able to complete online registration to apply for a UDID card. We also invited parents who had availed the UDID card for their children and they shared practical tips and guided other parents on the next step of the process i.e. hospital assessment.

**Walk-in Family Support Group – Re-Gathering Celebration**

With pandemic restrictions easing, the time was right to have a get-together with parents and re-connect with them after 2 years of only online communication. The Walk-in Family Support Group organized a fun-filled celebratory session with families, at the Ummeed Clinic in May 2022. It was an afternoon of meeting old friends, music, dancing, singing and lots of enjoyment.

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**Calling for Parent Volunteers**

**At Ummeed**

**Family Resource Centre**

Is a place where families come together and take the lead in guiding, supporting and helping other families.

We are looking for Parent Volunteers to partner in programs like:

- Fun Clubs and Hobby Classes for Kids & Caregivers
- Parent Support Groups in Schools
- Know Your Rights Workshops
- UDID camps and Hospital Assessment Support
- Creating resources for families
- Guiding newly diagnosed families

Get in touch with us:

- If you would like to help families like yourself and make a difference
- If you are a more experienced parent and can share learnings from your journey
- If you have a skill that you can teach
- If you can spare time for this

Please contact us at 85918 50804 or email frc@ummeed.org

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**In Conversation With...**

Pushpa Subramanian shares her journey with her son and how she formed and supported an active community of families of children with ADHD.

READ MORE ON PAGE 2

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**Creative Corner**

Hriday Jain started playing the Tabla as therapy for low muscle tone due to Cerebral Palsy, but it has developed into a full-fledged hobby which he enjoys tremendously.

READ MORE ON PAGE 3

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**Spotlight**

**Re-Imagining Fun @ Summer Fun Club 2022**

What better time to have fun than during the Summer Break?

Summer Fun 2022 was conducted in May over a period of 4 days. The aim was to explore diverse ways of having fun and chill ways of being, with some unstructured yet influential activities and fun. Kids got to meet Timmy the Frog, did art & craft activities, enjoyed some delicious food with some dance and music.

Fun Club as a space is accessible and inclusive of all the children with diverse needs and is a space of co-creation between its members. The idea is to highlight the importance of leisure and fun in each one’s life.

For the first time post the pandemic, the Summer Fun Club was planned as a hybrid model of both online and offline sessions. The organizing team at Ummeed was filled with immense joy at the overwhelming response by the participants and all the fun had together!

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**Expressions**

Receiving news of a child’s special needs diagnosis is a very distressing time in the lives of families. We share a letter from ‘an experienced mom to a mom beginning her journey’.

READ MORE ON PAGE 3

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**Upcoming Trainings**

Playing games with Timmy the Frog

Proud of our creations

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**Ummeed organizes monthly Fun Club sessions for children with disabilities to have fun through games, arts and crafts, songs, stories, dance and movement, and many more exciting activities. If you would like to enrol your child for Fun Club, please contact us on 9930065662 or write to us at scheduling.team@ummeed.org**

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**Supported by**

Credit Suisse
In Conversation With... Pushpa Subramanian

Pushpa is mother to 32 year-old Sachit Subramanian, who was diagnosed with ADHD as a child. Sachit is currently a business owner, who makes an extra effort to hire people with special needs. Pushpa shares with us her journey with her son and how she helped to form an active community of families of children with ADHD.

Could you tell us a little about your journey with your son?

Once in Grade 7, Sachit failed miserably in an exam, for which he knew the answers quite well. This triggered me to try and understand if there was some other issue. We did not know where to start so we took him to a neurosurgeon, who after conducting a few medical tests, said that there is nothing wrong with his brain and referred us to Dr Vibha Krishnamurthy.

Dr Vibha helped with identifying his condition and gave us various strategies to help him focus better in school. We were lucky to have a school that was supportive. She also prescribed medication and counselled on how we should take care of him. And so began my journey with ADHD and supporting Sachit.

Can you tell us how you supported Sachit?

I can broadly divide my journey with Sachit in 3 phases: As a child, as an adolescent and as an adult.

As a child, small activities like buttoning his shirt or tying his shoelaces were difficult for him. We used to manage one battle at a time, and I used to devote one week to every new activity that he needed to learn. The battles were won slowly and even though some tasks proved to be difficult, we found out ways of managing them. What really helped me here was talking to other parents and sharing my problems and checking if they had a solution. I learnt so many strategies from other parents that were helpful to me.

I found the adolescent phase a bit tough as children become more outspoken, have peer pressure, are going through hormonal changes and are generally resistant to listening to their parents. I had to find out who Sachit would listen to, and that turned out to be his friends. So, I started befriending them. His friends started liking me and in turn, Sachit started to realize his mom wasn’t so bad after all. Once we established that trust, things became easier, and we became friends.

The adult phase was not too difficult as the studies part was done. In fact, I feel that apart from studies, all children with ADHD have high intelligence and are ready to take risks, which really helps them as adults. We need to help them identify and pursue their interests. Sachit used to assist in the sound and light arrangements at programs in our local Chinmaya mission and he got hands-on experience in this area and went on to start a business.

Today he is married, and it was an arranged marriage. He was completely open about his issues and fortunately, it clicked. After marriage, he and his wife came together and met Dr Vibha, so that she understood Sachit’s challenges and how to deal with it.

So that way it has been a beautiful journey although there were initial hurdles.

You helped in building a community of parents of children with ADHD. Can you tell us a bit about that?

It all started with a group of 5 or 6 parents who used to visit Dr Vibha. We decided to be in touch to share useful strategies. By word of mouth the group grew, and we were soon at 150 members. We maintained a list of ‘needs’ of parents and accordingly found a specialist doctor or counsellor who could come and do a small talk and a Q&A session. We also needed to find space to hold these meetings and would request schools or clubs to help with that. Mind you, this was in the days before WhatsApp, so all communication was done through personal calls and records were maintained manually.

How has being a part of a parent community helped you?

When we formed the group, for the first time I realised there are so many other families of children with ADHD. The ‘Why me?’ attitude that I had initially, went away because of this. Another way this parent community helped was that I was able to influence other parents who thought that punishing or being strict was the way to deal with the child.

How else were you involved in helping families?

In Navi Mumbai, where I live, there were almost no counsellors or therapists who could help children with ADHD. I was already helping Sachit with his studies, so I thought why not include other kids who were struggling with studies. I started taking classes free of cost, for children in Sachit’s age group and focused mainly on preparing them for school exams. I didn’t do any special educator course, just by trial & error, would figure out what works for these children. I would also help the families in applying for school and exam concessions that were available for such kids.

Currently, I run an NGO called Sampoorna Shiksha where we are involved in education for children in rural areas.

In what ways do you feel that getting involved as a parent brings in a different perspective than what doctors or therapists are able to do?

Parent involvement is very necessary. Each child is different and only the parent knows the skills, abilities, and challenges of their child. Add to that, there is the maternal instinct, so we are the only ones who understand our kids inside-out. This is not to say that you don’t need therapists etc. Professional help is also required – they give you the necessary guidance and advice but putting it to practice is the role of the parent.

Any advice you would like to give to parents of special needs children?

First of all, acceptance is the key. Understand that these children are different and only then you will be able to find ways of supporting them. Secondly, always be true to your child. Give them the assurance that whatever happens, you will always be there for them. At the same time, give them their freedom. We are so used to doing everything for them; that sometimes they feel they aren’t allowed to make individual choices. Fourthly, you need to have patience. Whatever the strategies you are following, don’t give up mid-way because you don’t see results. It takes time for the results to be visible.
Hriday had Cerebral Palsy since birth and due to low muscle tone and issues with thumb movement, functioning of his hand and fingers was impacted. At the age of 7, we got him started on playing tabla initially as therapy as it involves a lot of use of fingers. The first 2 years was only focused on using fingers one at a time. But we persisted and he continued to learn. He has now completed the first 2 levels of music exams and really enjoys playing. In fact, he has developed a great sense of rhythm and now plays other percussion instruments like Djembe and Clapbox as well. He also participates in Mumbai Drum Circle events. He has given tabla performances in his school and building functions.

Learning tabla has not only improved his fingers and hand movement, it has also helped his thinking skills and improved his memory. It is an engaging hobby for him, and he can play for hours when he is happy and even when he is angry and needs to let out his frustration.

You can connect with Hriday’s mother Chetna Jain @7738340336, if you would like to know more.

Receiving news of a child’s special needs diagnosis is a very distressing time in the lives of families. There are feelings of confusion, grief, fear, anger, and uncertainty all at once. One of the best things that can happen at that time is hearing from other families that have been on this journey.

We share an open letter from ‘an experienced mom to a mom beginning her journey’.

Dear Mom

This is not the end of the world. Things may look bleak – but coming from someone who’s been in that position a few years ago, there is hope at the end of it all. Take your time to process all this new information. You will find acceptance at the end of it. Your child is the same wonderful child you had yesterday.

You are probably heartbroken that the dreams that you had for your child now seem unlikely to happen. Don’t be disheartened. Your child still has dreams. Get to know them and make some new dreams together.

The most important thing you need to know is that you are not alone. There are so many families like us who are dealing with similar challenges. Get to know them. You will meet them in therapy centers, in training programs, in schools. Reach out to them and find your tribe.

There’s a whole new world that you will now need to navigate – you will learn new words, new things, new information. Take the time to learn about it. Don’t think you have to have all the answers right away. Ask for information, speak to those who know more, learn from the professionals who are helping your child.

You are now your child’s most important ally. No one understands your child better than you and you will know instinctively what is best for him. You are the window to the world for your child. You may need to follow strategies, techniques, protocols that professionals will recommend. If it feels like hard work, just do what you can and only do what you and your child enjoy. Don’t think you have to do everything yourself. Take the support of your spouse, your family, your friends.

Don’t dwell too much on WHY it happened to you or your child. And most importantly, don’t blame yourself. It is not your fault.

This is the beginning of a challenging, at times frustrating, but ultimately a beautiful and rewarding journey with many special moments. You have it in you to handle it. Your child will do things no one thought they would, only because you never gave up hope.

Keep the faith!

Best wishes from a mother who’s been there
## Upcoming Trainings at Ummeed

Please visit our website [https://ummeed.org/training-calendar/](https://ummeed.org/training-calendar/) for more details on program overview and course content. Contact us at [training.ummeed.org](https://training.ummeed.org) for any queries or message at 85932 91603 (9am-5:30pm). No calls, WhatsApp only.

For Apna Adda and Fun Clubs, please contact 9920656662 or write at [scheduling.team@ummeed.org](mailto:scheduling.team@ummeed.org)

Please follow us on Instagram and Facebook on @UmmeedTrainingUpdates for information on all upcoming trainings.

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know Your Rights</td>
<td>23 July 10 am - 1 pm</td>
<td>24 Sep 10 am - 1 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know Your Rights - Marathi</td>
<td>16 July 10 am - 1 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know Your Rights - U/D/D Step by Step Application Process</td>
<td>26 Aug 10 am - 12 pm</td>
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### PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS - Open Support groups for parents of children with disabilities

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<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea &amp; Talk (English)</td>
<td>6 Aug 3:30 pm - 5 pm</td>
<td>3 Sep 3:30 pm - 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walk-in Family Support Group (Hindi)</td>
<td>16 July 3:30 pm - 5 pm</td>
<td>20 Aug 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17 Sep 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm</td>
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### AUTISM FOCUSED WORKSHOPS

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<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UPPA (Ummeed Parent Program for Autism)</td>
<td>1 Jul - 12 Aug 12 sessions, Every Thu &amp; Fri 2 pm - 3:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let’s Get Started Workshop for newly diagnosed families of children with autism</td>
<td>5 Aug 10 am - 12 pm</td>
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### IMPARTING SPECIFIC SKILLS

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<th>JULY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Made Easy</td>
<td>14 &amp; 15 July 10:30 am -12:30 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play Made Easy Using Play to teach skills</td>
<td>3 Aug - 4 Aug 10:30 am - 12:30 pm</td>
<td>10 Sep 10 am - 12 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing for Puberty</td>
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### MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS

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<th>JULY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is Mental Health? Well being of caregivers</td>
<td>27 Aug 3 pm - 5 pm</td>
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### FUN, LEISURE & MEET-UPS

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<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fun Club Fun activities for kids of different age groups</td>
<td>22 July 4 pm - 5 pm</td>
<td>16 Sep 4 pm - 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 4 - 8 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 Aug 4 pm - 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 8 - 12 years</td>
<td>9 July 10 am - 12:30 pm</td>
<td>10 Sep 11 am - 12:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apna Adda Meet-up for Young Adults with Disabilities</td>
<td>23 July 4 pm - 5 pm</td>
<td>24 Sep 4 pm - 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27 Aug 4 pm - 5 pm</td>
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