

Nina Foundation - Foundation Day Darshan Visit – 9th March 2013 – A Report

Our precious, annual ritual and celebration time, 9th March 2013 noted as Founders Day in the calendar set up in memory of Dr. Nina Doshi on her birth anniversary was no different this year around. A soul-searching spiritual outing was very well organised by Bhavna, Madhu, Oliver and Pooja for not only friends with spinal injury from the Nina Foundation but also Sharan and Paraplegic Foundation. Dr. Riten Pradhan, Dr. Ketna Mehta Dr. Abha Inamdar and Vidya Shenoy represented Nina Foundation.

This year's jamboree took all to the Hanuman Temple and Swaminarayan Mandir in Nerul, Navi Mumbai. In spite of the sweltering heat, over 90 visitors that included friends with Spinal Injury accompanied by their family members, friend's escorts, Trustees and Associates of Nina Foundation, students of We School and MGM Physiotherapy College made this event a grand success.

Our gratitude to Mrs. Maya Kishor, In-charge of SHARAN Rehabilitation Centre, New Mumbai, who had specially visited the Hanuman Temple to find out about its accessibility features. Thanks to Trustee, Mr. Chidambaram and Mr. Subramaniam who had taken personal care to organize our visit with detailed effort. A special puja and *Aarti*, as also a short talk by the head priest gave an insight into the history of the 12-year old temple which houses the largest most beautiful 33-foot granite-carved monolith of Hanuman, the Wind God. Special mention was made of the importance of reciting the Hanuman Chalisa in our daily lives. For which, every visitor was given booklets of the Hanuman Chalisa and the Ganesh mantras. The highlight of this visit that it was on a Saturday, considered a special day for Hanuman worship, each one of us repeated the Chalisa led by the head priest. To top it all, a privilege for each one to be allowed 3 *parikramas* of this mighty Hanuman! This darshan ended with Prasad which included meduvada from the haar made as special 'or

The next halt was at the Swaminarayan Mandir, again at Nerul. Shaileshbhai Yagnik with his Team cheerfully warmly welcomed each of us with a rose and some water. Thereby, the heat of summer was forgotten instantly and we settled in the cool habitat of the Mandir. Bijal and Gauri sang bhajans beautifully well-received by all.

After introductions, Shaileshbhai gave the history of the Swaminarayan Mandir as also its Gurus. He spoke of why people visit temples. Here, lady volunteers of Swami Narayan Temple put a tilak on everyone's forehead, after which a holy thread was tied on the right

wrist. An *Aartithali* with flowers and diya was handed for each one to perform their own personal offering as the priest performed an *Aarti* for our group. There was not a dry eye in the gathering when this was over with.

Asked to speak on behalf of Nina Foundation, Vidya Shenoy began the address by thanking Shaileshbhai and his Team, including the lovely ladies, who very sensitively made arrangements that were so well done and fine-tuned. Not missing an opportunity to give her personal touch, she explained the meaning and importance of tilak, thread and diya as per ancient scriptures. How, these are just symbolic expressions and must be applied and should be a way of life in our daily lives. Also, student volunteers of WeSchool and MGM Physiotherapy College were awarded certificates of appreciation by Dr. Riten Pradhan, Trustee, Nina Foundation who came specially from UK to be there on this special day and Mrs. Maya Kishor. Blessed Mahaprasad was given as lunch.

Nina Foundation gave a token of appreciation for their magnanimity to Mr. Chidambaram and Shaileshbhai. God knows no differentiation and those who visited included those from all faiths. All in all, the day that began well, ended truly blessed for each one. For, is it not special when our members get the prized privilege of getting Divine attention on a personalized, individual basis?

May the Lord Bless one and all!

TO WALK TOGETHER FOR A WONDERFUL TOMORROW.