



Edition 44

Editor's Desk

Dear friends,

A fortnight away from World Disability Day, this quote caught my attention - "often it's the small changes rather than the big ones that work best and make a big impact in your life".

This edition looks at the small changes in the landscape of Chennai impacting lives.

Happy Reading!!

Regards,

Bhavna Botta

connectspecial.in

**SENS, a sensory-friendly
show for individuals
with special needs**

-Mrs.Mala Chinnappa



For most of us, going to a theatre to catch a screening of our favorite movie is nothing out of the ordinary. However, for families of individuals with special needs, a trip to the movies can turn out to be an extremely challenging ordeal.

Individuals with sensory processing issues, particularly those on the Autism spectrum, can be hypersensitive to things encountered at the movies. Loud noises, long queues, sudden changes in light and large groups of people can be particularly overwhelming and in some cases, could even trigger a meltdown. "I have never taken my child to a theatre to see a movie" said many parents.

That's when an online forum for special needs children, aSPECIALworld, decided that something should be done about this .It was important that it had to be long-term, sustainable and so approached SPI Cinemas.

From the word go we found the SPI Cinemas team

very receptive to our needs. They had such a great 'let's get it done' attitude. Otherwise this would never have been possible. -*M.A.Chinnappa, Founder, aSPECIALworld*

SENS is the first-of-its-kind in India screening sensory-friendly versions of popular movies, offering a comfortable and adaptive movie-going experience for individuals with special needs and their families.

Features of this show include:

- Dimmed lights throughout the duration of the show
- Lowered sound levels
- Unrestricted movement and chatter within the cinema hall
- A longer intermission
- Sensitized attendants as ushers and in the washrooms
- Special parking facility for wheel chair users
- Attendants ready to wheel them and transfer to their seat and of course there is a lounge to help them calm down.



Additionally, keeping their dietary restrictions in mind, the menu offers specially designed sugar-free, gluten-free and casein-free foods.

“Introducing these special shows allows us to not only build an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere, but also to be more socially aware. Our aspiration is to make our cinemas accessible to everyone and even though we have a long way to go, SENS - which is part of a our project called #cinemaforeveryone, is a small step towards achieving that dream” *Bhavesh Shah, Head of Experience, SPI Cinemas.*

The SENS shows were launched simultaneously at Chennai and Coimbatore and over the year have proved to be a mega hit. SENS shows have been running to packed houses since August 2018. Apart from special families, some special schools have decided to make this their monthly outing- children, parents and teachers enjoy, clapping cheering and sharing popcorn !

These shows have now become a wonderful way of community building. Regular cine-goers also come for the shows, saying their child prefers 2D etc, they observe the SENS families and want to be associated with this movement !

The SENS shows are on first Sunday of every month, 10.30am in Sathyam Cinemas Chennai as well as The Cinema- Brookefields Mall, Coimbatore.



On an interesting note, we often spot families that have booked tickets without knowing that it's a special show. When we speak to them later they agree that the show was good for their kids too. This is inclusion at its best. !!!

The pride of taking my son to a theatre on a Sunday morning show.. with all the public around me.. in Sathyam with a separate screen just for us for whatever we are ...has no words to describe. Thanks Sathyam to show us to the entire world with full of pride and happiness.. that we also exist like others -*Jayanthi Anand*



What is the future of the SENS shows? We are glad to say that it will soon be rolled out to all the Metros in India. aSPECIALworld is glad to have played a part in this new paradigm of inclusion in India.

Inclusive park

Inclusive Park, Santhome, has been created to provide a space of leisure for all children, with or without any disabilities. The wheel chair accessible swings and the low level merry-go-round make it inclusive along with the infinity walkway that comprises various elements such as sand, pebbles and fibre.



Metro Train

An accessible public transport in the city making commuting easy for people with disability.



Scuba Diving

Ektha, Disabled People's Advocacy Organization working towards making the rights real for Persons with Disabilities. Ektha had previously conducted Paralympic game Boccia, at State & National Level .This month Ektha has organized a special scuba diving training session for PwDs in partnership with Mr. Aravind of Temple Adventures .It was adventure all the way for the participants at YMCA swimming pool.

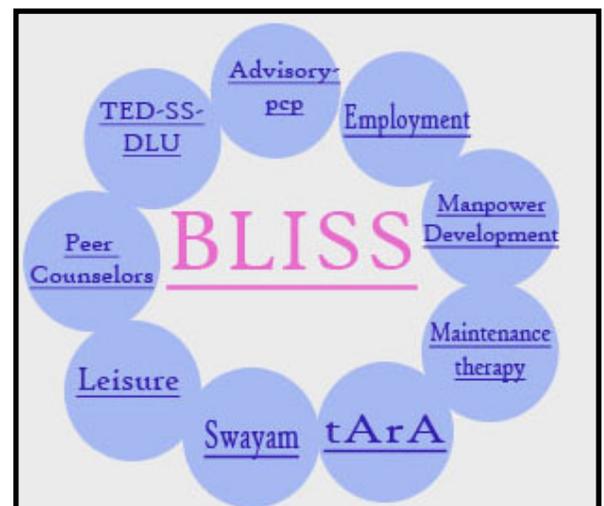


BLISS(Begin to live Interdependently with Support Systems)

BLISS(Begin to Live Interdependently with Support Systems),is an initiative led by Poonam Natarajan, founder of Vidya Sagar and ex-chairperson of National Trust Govt. of India .

BLISS is focused on creating support systems in society so that adults with disabilities can live interdependently just like anyone. This ecosystem is an answer to the anxiety of many -"what happens when my family size diminishes",and will be made possible by the nine pillars of BLISS-

- Advisory center ,gives complete information on the services available for adults with disabilities.
- Employment center looks at creative solutions in skill training,open placements, entrepreneurship and also train job coaches.
- Manpower Development advocates ,builds and nurtures cadre of skilled rehabilitation professionals ranging from personal attendants to job coaches.



- Swayam/ Group Homes are residential facilities to develop individual support systems in the community.
- TARA - Team for Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation works on access in personal spaces, like homes and workplaces. Get Going ,accessible transport, is already making it easy for people with disability to reach work place , recreation places thus increasing socialization and inclusion.



- Maintenance Therapy to focus on evolving therapy and grooming program .
 - Leisure - This facility will advocate and expand choices in leisure for adults with disabilities. Peer Counselors to develop peer support for persons with disabilities.
 - Disability Law Unit focuses on developing Trusts with support circles and relevant campaigns like housing and personal attendants.
-

For subscribing -botta.bhavna@gmail.com

For sharing log on to -<http://www.connectspecial.in/>