

# ANNUAL REPORT

ARUNIMA: A PROJECT FOR PERSONS WITH  
AUTISM



## WE ARE 10!

Project Arunima turned 10! 2nd April 2021 marked 10 years of learning and growth. There have been many hurdles as well as celebrations along the way, but we would not give up a single struggle. How else would we be where we are today? The pilot project, started by a family that needed to plan the future of one of their own began a trial in a little village tucked away in the foothills of the Himalayas. In the first year it seemed that India was not ready for the idea. But 2 years down the line, we were answering calls from people who had only heard about the place from the other families. Arunima is home today to 19 adults with autism or other developmental disabilities. We also have a sound skilling program for 26 (including our 19 residents) people who are differently abled.

THE YEAR BEGAN WITH A CELEBRATION OF AUTISM AWARENESS DAY AS USUAL, A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO COME OUT OF THE ISOLATION THAT COVID HAD BROUGHT AROUND THE WORLD. NEIGHBOURS AND LOCAL FAMILIES JOINED IN THE FUN AND GAMES, ENJOYED PERFORMANCES BY OUR FRIENDS, AND REALLY SEEMED TO BE CELEBRATING LIFE ONCE AGAIN. EVERY DAY IS AUTISM AWARENESS DAY FOR US, AND WE BELIEVE THAT BEING OUT IN THE COMMUNITY IS THE BEST WAY TO REMIND PEOPLE OF OUR PRESENCE.

## BACK TO WORK!

Going back to the office - Arukriti - full time, took some adjusting, but we were soon back in our routine as if nothing had ever changed. Sanitizing and masking was part of the package, and it did not deter us from enjoying our work day to the fullest!





Staying motivated and interested during Covid times was difficult, and we had to keep thinking of creative ways of doing things. We started a weekly inhouse café, giving some of our friends the opportunity to feel like they were at work. The success of this idea motivated us to continue the weekly café at the office, and it also meant inhouse fun for our other friends who got to go to a café once a week. Needless to say, the training for the café employees was invaluable.

In fact, with everyone doing so well in this role, we decided to move to twice a week, this time doing Saturday café for the public too! It continues to be a weekly event to wait for. Movement is slow but again, like any other journey, we know the pace will pick up. We are so grateful to our hard working staff **Vaishali, Shaelesh and Rubi**, for volunteering even more time on Saturday evenings for the café, despite their super busy schedules!

We have thoroughly enjoyed the days when there has been a line of customers waiting for a seat. Oh and imagine our surprise when we were suddenly visited by a well known **Food Vlogger, Anubhav Sapre**, who then put up a video about Café Arukriti on his Instagram page! A generous donation by the **Dalmia Bharat Foundation** helped us purchase café friendly material, and now we cannot wait to be able to open our own regular outlet, the first completely inclusive Café in Dehradun!



## FESTIVE TIMES

Diwali always brings a buzz of excitement at Arunima. Shopping for diyas, painting, stringing Torans, receiving orders – what more could we want! We loved getting pictures from happy customers displaying our products in their homes. Diwali celebrations, prayers and a lit up center were part of the festivities.

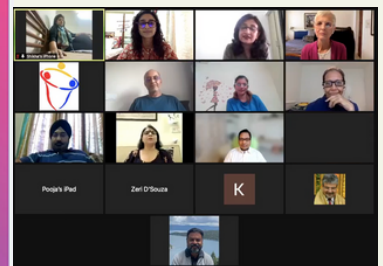


## Hosting our first Webinar

ARUNIMA PRESENTS  
ITS SEMINAR SERIES:  
"CREATING A SOCIETY WE  
WANT TO LEAVE BEHIND"

**"LEAVING THE NEST"**  
JOIN PARENTS & CAREGIVERS AS THEY SHARE THEIR LEARNINGS, CHALLENGES, & DECISIONS IN LETTING THEIR CHILDREN FLY

SEPTEMBER 26 | SUNDAY | 4 PM ONWARDS  
Join us, here, on our "Arunima Facebook" page to Watch & Ask your





It never is all work and no play at Project Arunima. Hikes and picnics continued each weekend, but we had the added excitement of a wedding! One of our long term staff, Reena got married this year, and as usual, our friends and staff enjoyed being part of the celebration.

## FESTIVE TIMES

Lasagna, Apple Cider Garlic Bread, Gifts and Carols rang in Christmas, before all the friends and staff went home for a break. It was a time for family reunions, and relaxation, both so welcome!



## FUNDRAISING

This was the first year we worked with a specific person in the role of a fundraiser. Kethayun Mehta has been part of Arunima for some time now. Infact her entry into our organization started with a short visit in March 2019, meant to last 3 weeks, but ended up being 8 months long, thanks to Covid. Ketha, as she is commonly known, did a fantastic job raising close to **43 lakhs** in the next 8 months as fundraiser, including funding to buy equipment for our café, a not-so- future dream for us!

The highlight for the year, though, was being able to impact the salary of our dedicated staff, who are no less than family! We are finally moving closer to better rewards for effort.

## TAKING STOCK

Project Arunima started off as a pilot assisted living center in 2011, spurred on by the desire of a single family to create a safe space for their dear Runi, who was 31 then. The dreaded question "what after us" kept them and numerous other families awake at night, and this seemed like the right step towards an answer. However, as the program grew, the management realized that it was important to go beyond a care giving home. This had to be a place where people had numerous opportunities to live the best life possible - with dignity, experiences, jobs, friends, CHOICES! And that is how the skilling program, ARUKRITI was born. Arukriti has now become a place of training, employment and connections to jobs outside of Arunima. We were able to expand our work significantly thanks to the generous backing of the people listed below:

Thank  
you!

### INDIVIDUALS

Andrew Das  
Arvind Chatrath  
Anant Poddar  
Mr. Bothra  
Kalpana Samtani  
Neeraj Gupta  
Pankaj Rastogi  
Pooja Uttam  
Vijay Pal

### CSR

CMS  
Dalmia Bharat Foundation  
Ganga Acrowools  
IPSPL  
Ram Saran Das Charitable Trust  
Securitrans  
Woodapple Interactive Pvt Limited

Thank you Pabrai India Pvt Ltd for your ongoing support of our website

We are grateful to each one for your belief in our work, and hope you will continue to stay connected with us over the years as well.