



## **Sanskriti School - Diwali Utsav 20**

Sanskriti School, Special Education Needs Dept. hosts its third Annual Diwali Utsav Career Fair 2020. This Diwali Utsav set out to be different from the previous ones and one sure miss the festive air, colorful streamers, rangoli, decorations and the school all done up to house various Ngos displaying stalls, showcasing the wonderful products and talents of individuals with special needs. To continue with the trend of sharing and giving and holding true to the vision of Sanskriti, the SEN Dept had to resort to Online platform this year.

The Diwali Utsav Career Fair event was a three day event with webinars by esteemed speakers enlightening on the "Importance of life skills and development of pre-vocational and vocational skills for CWSN" and giving us glimpses of the personal journeys of the individuals with special needs by young adults and their parents.

The Day 1 began with a warm welcome note by Head of Learning Centre Dept. Ms Rashmi Dhawan and motivating address by the Principal, Ms. Richa Sharma Agnihotri with a heartwarming takeaway of "Each Child is unique and to Celebrate the differences".

The Sessions began with sharing by Ms. Radha Nandkumar of Gurukulam, Chennai who shared her experiences as a parent of an individual with special needs and a professional to start working on life skills training and soft skills training early on and the importance of physical well being. This was followed by Ms. Shetty from Sense kaleidoscopes, an academy for ASD community Bangalore shared the various Art centric programmes and Academic Curriculum designed with the focus of financial and livelihood independence for individuals with special needs. She also shared the extraordinary Art work which itself spoke for the capacity of individuals.

This was followed by a presentation by a Northeastern Ngo, Sahayika of Guwahati who mapped the local skill needs of their region and built upon them by teaching the individuals the specific skills and also shared about the three skill development centres in the region and the work done by them. There could be no better closing of the first day of the event other than by Dr. Jayanthi Narayan, Former Dy. Director, NIEPID. She focussed on importance identifying the emotional stage parents are currently in and working from that stage and she highlighted how the New Education Policy-NEP 2020 focuses on seamless integration of vocationalisation and importance of working on technology skills for functioning. She shared anecdotes of individuals blooming whose skills and capacities were identified and tapped on at right time in school years.

The Day 2 began with a one min silence in memory of former Principal Mrs. Sahgal who had touched so many hearts and lives. Founder Principal, Ms. Gowri Ishwaran shared pearls of wisdom with parents and professionals on the importance of focussing on life skills and giving the exposure to the children. This was followed by sharing of journey of Nikita Sachdeva, a budding artist and a beautiful message by the parents of giving the opportunity of expression to the children as it is important to express and the medium for that does not matter. This was followed by Ms. Supriya Malik of London learning Centre sharing about the vocational training course in partnership with Ansal University, its eligibility criteria and curriculum content. This was followed by a young Parents Support group Youngistan, Pune by Ms. Pratima Bhinge and Ms. Jyotsna Kumar with the aim of making individuals self reliant and parents empowered. The Day 2 of the event ended by the Dr. Stephen Shore, Adelphi University sharing the nature of individuals with ASD and how their focussed interests can be flipped into strengths and how initial preparation for a vocation begins from home by giving children the chores/jobs at home as it prepares for responsibility, proficiency, regularity and repetitive tasks.

Day 3, the Culminating day by sharing the journey of a parent of Sanskriti with her son who is into baking and also encouraging the parents to never underestimate their children and help them find their passion.

This was followed by a session by Mohit Ahuja, BFG Media, Delhi who teaches Skill of photography to individuals with special needs and he spoke about how important it is to go beyond the labels given by the society and look at the possibilities. Session 2 by Dr. Nibedita Patnaik, Head of Special Education Dept, NIEPID shared the Importance of transition programme and importance of systematic training, exposure to social environment and starting early on. The last session for the day by G. Srinivasulu, Asst. Professor in Vocational and Skill training, NIEPID was on skill training programmes and the importance of working on work competencies.