

September 16-22, 2007

★ MAKING A DIFFERENCE

No care like mother's care

Children abandoned and neglected by society find a home at Udayan Care. Brainchild of Kiran Modi Udayan Care's concept to care for the neglected and abandoned children through 'Mentor mothers' is unique. "I always wanted to do

something for society and when I got the opportunity, I grabbed it," says Kiran.

When children enter Udayan Care fold they are provided family-like environment. 'Mentor mothers' stand as vanguards for Udayan Ghar.

"Before starting Udayan project I and other volunteers did research on various children shelters and found they lacked a sense of bonding and social integration. Also, the children

didn't have much exposure. Then, we came up with Udayan Ghar model," she says. Each Ghar has a family of 12 to 13 children with 'Mentor mothers' assisted by care-givers, psychologists and volunteers. Together they form a whole new world for these children. There are a total of 19 'Mentor mothers' and two 'Mentor fathers'. International volunteers from Denmark, Finland and Holland also assist.

Tracing her journey, Kiran recalls, "At the age of 17, I got married with a dream to become a doctor. I was the eldest sibling at home. Later on, I switched plans and did Ph.D. in Literature

from IIT Delhi". She is also a gold medallist, topping BA and MA in English literature.

In 1994, she started Udayan Care. For all-round development of the children Udayan ghars are situated in busy neighbourhoods where community owns them up. When it comes to education there are no compromises. Children are sent to prestigious schools in Delhi such as DPS, Tagore International, Sanskriti, to name a few.

Along with formal education, children are imparted the awareness that they have to take charge of their destinies. This makes the children more ambitious and self-

dependent. "I want to become a pilot," says Sulochana, VII Standard student from Sant Nagar Udayan ghar.

"I like this place. We all are sisters and live like a family," says Pratibha, a VIII Standard student. They are also provided facilities like computer education, counselling and guiding centre, cultural centre for arts, music, theatre and pottery. "Children are our future. Society itself has to come forward and give its best to help the disadvantaged," says Kiran. Indeed, there is no care like mother's care.

— VANI VYAS

