

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION**

Press Release

Flag Off of Kalam Express

Chandigarh, 13th July, 2017: “Kalam Express” is an initiative of the Indian Red Cross Society, U.T., Branch, Chandigarh that aims to promote, develop and maintain the skills essential for children with special needs so that they can better perform in their homes and social setting. This is a mobile Educational cum Rehabilitation unit for Children with Special Needs living in slum, rural and rehabilitation colonies of the city, who cannot commute to schools for attaining education and also require different therapies because of their physical limitations.

Indian Red Cross Society, U.T. Branch, Chandigarh had launched its first mobile unit of Kalam Express on 23rd June 2016 with support of State Bank of India under CSR. This effort of Red Cross Society is to provide services to those CWSN who cannot afford it or are confined to their homes, and there is need to include them in the mainstream society. A team of Special educator & a physiotherapist have been visiting these children in the mobile unit equipped with audio visual and tactile teaching aids like Braille kits, toys, special Oro Motor kits etc

The team goes door to door in slum areas to provide education to special children who are unable to attend regular school. The service is free of cost and has helped many children improve & made them capable of attending regular school. It caters to visually impaired, hearing and speech impaired, and the mentally challenged children. The teaching methods to various kids vary depending on the IQ of the child.

For physically challenged children, a set of basic movements is done to ascertain the movement of their joints after proper assessment by the physiotherapist. The families are taught helpful techniques and are asked to regularly practice it with the kids.

The various areas covered under Kalam Express are Maloya, Dhanas, Manimajra, Maulijagan, Bapudham, & Colony no. 4. During past one year, the team has identified 260 CWSN that qualify for this assistance. The team is currently catering 168 children in the city slums. Among these, they have helped 36 children to get admission in various government schools and six kids to special schools such as Vatika in sector 19, Chandigarh.

The community is also supporting this noble cause by donating stationary items, wheel chairs, commode chairs etc for these children. There are many more CWSN living in these areas as well as other slums of the city. They require guidance and

training from special teachers, to enable them to interact and also improve their physical skills. The inability of parents to provide such care, due to lack of resources and awareness, leads to neglect of these children.

The positive response to the service & need for such units to cater identified CWSN , Indian Red Cross Society has developed the new unit of Kalam Express, a fully equipped mobile educational cum rehabilitation unit to cater CWSN at their doorsteps. The new unit will focus on reaching out to more children in already designated areas. The team will work closely with parents in order to enhance independence & social interaction of these special children.