

Reaching out to the city of dreams

Underprivileged kids wanted to visit Mumbai, an organisation made it possible

Meghna Sharma

Haven't we all dreamt of traveling to beautiful locales? Though not many of us, get to fulfil our desires. However, there are few good samaritans among us who help others realise their dreams.

Children of Udayan Care Orphanage, based in Delhi, always dreamt of coming to Mumbai. It was the city of their dreams, towering skyscrapers and high-rises and the presence of the film industry fascinated them and made the city more alluring. The organisation which came forward to fulfil this little dream was GoAir. The airline flew children from New Delhi to Mumbai and back and also arranged for their accommodation. The children were taken to various places in the city including Taraporewala Aquarium. The exciting part of the journey included an outing on the beach and shopping at Bandra. GoAir, a low-cost carrier, organised a free trip for 12 orphans. The airline has been associated with social causes since its inception in 2005. "In India, such children need special attention and we have the power to reach out to them. Some of the children face abject poverty and when Udayan Care Orphanage approached us, we were eager to join hands with them to make a difference to the lives of such children," said Rakesh Tiwari, vice president (commercial operations), GoAir.

The orphanage was established 15 years ago and works towards development of underprivileged children besides taking care of all their needs. "Be-



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ing an NGO, we get children from various backgrounds. Sometimes, it becomes challenging to deal with the diversity. But overall, it is a really soulful experience to work at the grass roots and understand children closely," said Hemanti Sikdar, a child counsellor with the orphanage.

Tiwari feels that as a responsible corporate citizen, GoAir will remain committed to the cause. "Holistic development of children is important for the fu-

ture of the country. They need to be moulded well. Our approach will make a big difference someday," added Tiwari.

COMMUNITIES HEALING AGENTS

While some kids want to come back to Mumbai to fulfil their dreams, others were happy to just have fun. "We were always fascinated about Juhu beach and

vada pav in Mumbai. These things drew us to the city," said Pooja Udayan, a class IX student.

As they say pictures speak louder than words. Before flying back, the children drew some pictures capturing their experience and what they loved most about the city. Most children sketched illustrations of them enjoying at the beach. Moreover, since it was their maiden flight, they depicted how they spend time on the aeroplane.

FACT FILE

History: Fifty two year-old entrepreneur, Kiran Modi opened the orphanage 15 years ago. Modi's son, Udayan who was studying in the United States passed away in a tragic road accident. She later learned that her son would work over the weekend and donate his savings to an orphanage. After his passing away, this became an inspiration for her.

Uniqueness: Since the orphanage gets children from various backgrounds, the organisation has given a common surname 'Udayan' to all the children to break the barrier.