

We shall overcome

Anjali Mehta (12 years)

In December 2004, I had an opportunity to visit a school in Jodhpur called Sucheta Kriplani Shiksha Niketan. This is a school that houses about 500, K - 12 Students. It follows the national curriculum. The big difference is that all the students have had polio and are crippled by it in some form or other. The other difference is that this school is run entirely form charity.

I have the good fortune to be a part of a charity group called Take Action, which is based in London UK, who have been active in helping to raise funds for this school. The group focuses on the artificial limb workshop. All money that have been raised by them has allowed many of these children to be fitted with Calipers. it also funds the equipment and the doctors and special rooms where measurements and fitting take place.

I myself raised \$1600 and used all the money to pay for the cost of measurement and fitting of these calipers for each and every child in the school. I was given the opportunity to work and help the doctors in this process. I also spent 1 week with the children and spent time teaching them English, dance, karate, and in return learnt from them the meaning of overcoming any obstacles in life to achieve one's goals and dreams. These children inspired me so much and have had an everlasting impact on my life."

In italics is a song that these children taught us, and had become their motivating factor: In Normal print is a poem I made up around their song.

We arrived at the SKSN camp,
And met children who suffer from polio,

They truly showed us they were champs,
And sang for us this valiant chant.

*We shall overcome,
We shall overcome,
We shall over come someday,
Oh, deep in my heart,
I do believe,
That we shall overcome some day.*

As these children live their lives,
They understand what is asked of them,
They live with joy and sorrow and hope,
And confront any obstacle given to them.

*We'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand someday,
Oh, deep in my heart,
I do believe,
That we shall overcome some day.*

And these children work together it seems,
Through every hardship to obtain their dreams,
And though they may have fights and battles,
They are together right 'till the earth rattles.

*We shall all be free,
We shall all be free,
We shall all be free some day,
Oh, deep in my heart,
I do believe,
That we shall overcome someday.*

Chanchal was one, whom I met there,
Her courage was to be admired,
For she would fly, willing to die,
Forgetting their blights with a smile.