

# **Believing in Paragi**

**By Mr. Chetan Parikh (father)**

Paragi was a second child in a family with three girls and was born with normal delivery but it was several years before we realized that she had a low I.Q. and it was still several years later when we became aware that she had intellectual disability. Her milestones were always slow and behind children her age however she was always a cheerful and happy child looking forward to all activities and events associated with children her age. Our family now knows that she wasn't born with I.D. but I.D. came about because of a medical situation during child birth when it is now believed that oxygen supply to her brain was cut off for several minutes. This resulted in her consequential I.D. condition.

At about age 7 we were told that Paragi had intellectual disability and that she going to a normal school would mean a lot or unwanted stress and pressure for her which she was not going to be able to cope with. She spent a few years at Metta School and the last several years Paragi is enrolled at APSN Centre for Adults [CFA] where she seems happy both at work, study and play. School at CFA has always meant a lot to Paragi as she likes having many friends and teachers around her.

Paragi was introduced to Special Olympics Bocce sport through her school – APSN, Centre For Adults in year 2008. Since then she has been hooked to the sport and become a regular participant at Bocce games held by her school; CFA as well as Special Olympics Singapore and in year 2011 she was very proud to represent Singapore at the Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Athens, Greece from 25 June to 5 July 2011. She maintains keen interest in competitive Bocce sports.

Special Olympics Singapore's simple formula of total inclusion for the intellectually disabled and with time, each athlete gains respect, self-esteem and a new found independence in the field of sports and games. As a result, Paragi has benefitted a lot from the various sports programs laid out by Special Olympics, Singapore. Paragi has grown to show a lot of respect and appreciation for her coaches as well her co-sports athletes at S.O. Singapore. The various programs and events laid out by S.O. for Special Olympics athletes have benefitted Paragi as she had the opportunity to reach out to her highest peak and potential as a better S.O. sports person.

Here in Singapore, the guidance and assistance shown in each Special Olympics sports is of great significance to each and every individual athlete as well for their family members as the individual person find their strength, courage and purpose in life as healthy athletes just by being in a position where they are not just participating but also graciously competing in various organized tournaments in active and healthy Special Olympics sports. Paragi has

appreciated this opportunity and looks forward to more activities with Special Olympics in future.

**The uniqueness of Special Olympics is that every athlete is a winner from day one and Paragi too has always been a winner in her own true way.**