

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant."

-- Robert Louis Stevenson

Each and every day Jeena tenaciously plants the seeds of acceptance and opportunity for children with developmental disabilities. Since the year 2000, our value system of respect, integrity and commitment has provided a framework to help Jeena children reach their highest potential. Together, we are a source of emotional support and a conduit of information between one another. It is our firm belief that every individual has a voice and we, the community, will create opportunities and provide supports so every voice may be heard.

As most of you know, this organization was started after my daughter Gina died at the age of sixteen months- a life altering event which marked the beginning of our journey. Eleven years later, what you are participating in today- all that you will experience- the Spirit of Jeena, the Celebration of Life, and our children's accomplishments, is a result of how well we've nurtured and shaped that kernel. The success of Jeena is built on collaboration with one another, with experts working in special needs areas, with volunteers, with local businesses, with community organizations and with agencies in the larger community. We are working hard to construct a platform for our children who are diagnosed with autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, rare genetic disorders and other developmental disabilities. Our perseverance continues to be fruitful.

Last year, the parents and children of Jeena participated in "Sevathon" organized by India Community Center. By participating in this event along with other organizations in the community we sent a very clear message - creating an island and keeping individuals with disabilities at arm's length is not an option. Our children showcased their talents in multiple events organized by Mona Khan Dance Company, India Fusion Dance Academy, Pt. Habib Khan School of Music and Genius Kids. Chandu, a Jeena teen, performed on Andaaaz- a Sony TV program, broadcast in many countries! We are grateful for these opportunities which highlight the potential of our children, enhancing their self-esteem and giving them the confidence to progress further. Jeena was recognized by Matters of Community, a non-profit focusing on improved integration of children with special needs in the mainstream community. We thank them for acknowledging the presence of a very courageous population- the parents of children with special needs.

All year long, parents partner with experts, so as to equip themselves with strategies that support their children in becoming independent and productive citizens. Multiple workshops are organized relating to topics such as relationship development intervention, conservatorship, behavior management, and alternative and augmentative communication devices. Through playgroups, field trips, a teens' dance, a Halloween party and our year-end get-togethers the children are able to experience the small pleasures of life.

Jeena depends on the larger community to maintain itself and grow stronger. We rely on your support to keep building awareness of children with developmental disabilities. Our special thanks to employees of Adobe, Cisco, Charles Schwab, Direct TV, Google, eBay, IBM, Hewlett Packard, Oracle, and SAP for generously contributing time, talent and financial support.

As a community, we are known for our persistence and our underlying principles of inclusion, empowerment and self-advocacy. I invite you to use this tenacity and these principles to build a society that respects life and embraces every individual as an integral member of our community.

Here's to Jeena - TO LIFE!

Rajni, Founder