

PROJECT ATHENA: A DECADE OF HELPING SINGLE MOTHERS

The trauma of separation. The loss of financial support. The emotional strain of being the sole caregiver for children.

Single parents face these challenges and more, with low self-esteem resulting in withdrawal from society. These stressors have a ripple effect on their children's aspirations, putting the whole family in a vulnerable position when it comes to personal development and growth.

In 2009, SINDA launched Project Athena to help single Indian mothers turn their lives around. Since then, more than 500 mums and children have received the social and emotional support they need to be more resilient in the face of adversities. Empowered, the mums have become confident, independent and self-sufficient individuals. They have formed a support network with us and even tighter bonds with their children, whom we've seen blossom into secure and successful youth.



Critical to Project Athena's success is Mr Rajoo Amurdalingam, whose monetary commitment since its inception has enabled our various initiatives within Project Athena to take off. His dedication further extends to personally attending events to meet and inspire the beneficiaries. He says, "All of us exist in this world for a purpose and that purpose is to make a difference in someone else's life."

The businessman emphasises that "profit must benefit everyone", which is why he gives so much to the community. And Project Athena goes beyond financial assistance and counselling. We provide opportunities for families to celebrate and bond together through carefully curated activities. There is even a fund children can tap on to pursue their sporting interest to nurture their talents. Mr Rajoo, a sportsman himself, is also mentor to some of them.

Nursing student Anu, 17, is grateful as she shares how her younger brothers, Surya and Pravin have progressed in swimming and rugby through the scheme and especially how Mr Rajoo supplied shoes and rugby gear for 11-year-old Pravin. With pride, she shares that Pravin is now one of the best players at Vikings Junior Rugby Club, where he attends weekly trainings and participates in inter-club matches.

Ever the exemplary volunteer, Mr Rajoo's efforts match his generosity. "Do help in deed and in kind," he urges. "Whilst giving money is a noble and necessary way to help, I want to advocate the act of helping in deeds as well. It is great to pay for the meals of the poor, but never let that substitute the joy of cooking the meal, serving it, or even personally feeding the people in need," he says.



EXCERPTS FROM A MESSAGE FROM MR RAJOO AMURDALINGAM Managing Director, The National Forwarder and long-term donor

Time has flown by and it has been 10 years since I made a pledge to help start Project Athena.

SINDA periodically shares stories with me about how the many single mothers in Project Athena have been helped and each time my heart is immensely warmed. It is good to be reminded that life is not just about one's own journey, but also about extending help to those around us. I sometimes wonder who has been more blessed—is it the single mother, or me? I would say the latter.

I can now say that I truly understand the meaning of 'paying it forward' and the joy that comes with it. I want to encourage everyone to nurture this spirit of giving. Sometimes, it is not so much about what you are able to do, as what you are prepared to do.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to journey with SINDA.