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World Cerebral Palsy Day 2017 - "I am here"

This year, CRP observed the World CP Day on 4th October with the slogan "I am here". The day started with a rally which was led by staff and students from CRP's William and Marie Taylor Inclusive School, along with staff from the paediatric unit and other departments. The rally was followed by an art competition for special needs children and a cricket tournament. There was also a discussion session along with a cultural programme at CRP's Reddaway hall. Savar Upazila Chairman, Md. Fakrul Alam Samar, was the Chief Guest at the programme. Md. Ziur Rahman, Social Welfare Officer, Savar and Upazila Executive Officer, Sheikh Rasel Hasan were present as Special Guests. Md. Nasirul Islam, Acting Head of Education chaired the programme. The aim of this day was to raise awareness about cerebral palsy among the general public and ensure that the rights of people with cerebral palsy in society are not ignored.



CRP's special needs children attended in the Harry Potter festival at British Council

The British Council recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of the release of the first Harry Potter book. WMTS cultural dance students participated in a cultural program at the British Council on 12th October 2017 as part of the Harry Potter Festival that was held there. WMTS students performed a beautiful dance show. The audience were delighted by the performance. At the end of the event, the director of the British Council congratulated the participants for their efforts and skills and gave each one of them a participatory certificate.



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XXI Commonwealth Games, Queen's Baton Relay at CRP

The XXI Commonwealth Games is going to be held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia from 4th to 15th April, 2018. Some members of the organizing team are travelling to 71 commonwealth countries with a baton with the message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

After visiting India, the Queen's Baton Relay team, led by Carry Thomson, came to Bangladesh on October 9, 2017. The team visited the National Monument at Savar the next day. On their way back to Dhaka, they visited the head office of the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), which was a great honour for CRP.

Children, patients and staff greeted the team with flowers. After a welcome speech by CRP's Executive Director, Md. Shafiq-ul Islam, a spinal cord injured patient, Mr. Saleh Ahammad, who has participated in several international Games, shared his experiences with the audience. Afterwards, the children of William and Marie Taylor Inclusive School of CRP put on a show in honour of the guests. At the end, the team was given paintings by two disabled persons, Al Amin (mouth painter) and Ruma. After the programme in the Reddaway hall, the guests visited the facilities of CRP and then enjoyed a wheelchair basketball match at the basketball court. Before leaving CRP, they expressed great appreciation and satisfaction with the day's events.



Nutrition Fair by CRP's Nursing College

To increase awareness regarding nutritious foods and related to health services, CRP Nursing College organised a nutrition fair in its Reddaway Hall on 23rd October 2017. The fair was inaugurated by CRP's Executive Director, Md. Shafiq-ul Islam, and the chief guest was Valerie Taylor, Founder & Coordinator, CRP. There were five different stalls, each focusing on a different group; "Dhan Shiri" for Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) patients, "Bangali Bhoj" for pregnant and lactating mothers, "Kutum Bari" for those with anaemia, "Bhojon Bilash" for sufferers of hypertension (HTN) and "Pusti Villa" for diabetes mellitus (DM) patients. Various types of nutritious and delicious foods were prepared and displayed by the students. There was also a colorful cultural program performed by CRP's Nursing College students. The fair concluded with a thanksgiving speech by the principal, Runu Chowdhur, to all attendees.



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CRP's special children acted in a movie

Three physically disabled students from William & Marie Taylor School (WMTS) had a chance recently to show off their acting skills in "Akhi and her friends", a Bangladeshi film directed by Morshedul Islam. One of the stars, Imtiaz (12), is in class five, and this year he will take his Primary School Completion (PSC) certificate examination. He started using a wheelchair following a non-traumatic spinal lesion (Spina Bifida). Zubayer (14) is a cerebral palsy student in class Three and he is also a wheelchair user. The trio was completed with another cerebral palsy student, Farjana (16), who is in class two. All of them have done an amazing job in taking part in this film. The film was officially launched in November with a song and poster release and a program held in the offices of Channel I, Tejgaon, Dhaka. This film was released on December 22nd, 2017. We wish everyone involved the best of luck.

World stroke day observance at CRP-Mirpur



For the first time, CRP-Mirpur celebrated World Stroke Day. The theme this year was 'What's your reason for preventing stroke?' and 'Know Stroke: save a life' and was held on 29th October at its premises. All health professionals including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech & language therapists, doctors, nurses, prosthetists & orthotists took part in the day long programme. The event began with a rally led by the centre manager, Manjurul Karim. All staff and stroke patients, along with their carers, participated in the rally. The rally was followed by a seminar on the topic of stroke prevention and what to do when a stroke occurs. Awareness raising materials, such as brochures, banners and posters, were displayed in the seminar.

Later, many of the stroke patients participated in a game show and a gait fashion show. At the end, the convenor of the event, Ms. Rumi Akter, Senior Physiotherapist and In-charge Stroke Rehab Unit, thanked everyone for taking part in the programme.



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IDLC Finance Ltd's community engagement day at CRP

IDLC Finance Ltd celebrated their community engagement day with the students of William & Marie Taylor School (WMTS) at CRP on 4th November, 2017. A total of 60 staff from IDLC participated in different activities with the WMTS students. Events included an art competition, inclusive sports and a cultural program. At the end there was a certificate distribution ceremony for IDLC volunteers and prize giving ceremony for the individual event winners. IDLC donated five assistive devices including four wheelchairs and a walking frame to the students. They also gave some stationery, including school bags, water pots and tiffin boxes for 50 special needs children.



A bus donated by Trust bank for CRP Nursing College

On November 8, 2017, Trust Bank Limited handed over a beautiful 30-seated minibus to CRP Nursing College. The hand-over ceremony and programme was held at the headquarters of Trust Bank Limited at Shadhinota Tower, Dhaka Cantonment. On behalf of Trust Bank Limited Major General S M Matiuur Rahman, Vice Chairman and Mr. Ishtiaque Ahmed Chowdhury, Managing Director and CEO handed over the keys to CRP's Founder and Coordinator, Valerie A Taylor. Md. Shafiq-ul Islam, Executive director, CRP, along with other staff members accompanied her during this programme.

WMTS in International Art Exhibition

On November 9th, 2017, four special needs students from the WMTS Inclusive School participated in an International Art Exhibition at Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka. They were Anisa Sarkar, KG class, Suria Akter Koli, class Three, Nury Akter, class Three, and Ahanaf Sadman. The Chief Guest of the programme was the Honourable Minister of Cultural, Mr Asaduzzaman Noor. All the participants received prizes and certificates for their exhibited paintings.



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International wheelchair basketball tournament

The Nepal Spinal Cord Injury Sports Association (NSCISA) organized the International Wheelchair Basketball Tournament, 2017, in association with Innovative Ghar Nepal and Theater Mall. The participating countries were India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Unfortunately the Pakistan team withdrew just before the tournament.

The tournament was inaugurated by the Vice President of Nepal Government, Mr. Nanda Abrader Pun. Other guests included Mr. Rajendra Chhetri, Chief of Army, Brand Ambassador Mr. Maha Jodi, Secretary of Sports Ministry and other government and non-government representatives.

Both male and female wheelchair basketball teams represented CRP during the tournament. The female team won the runners up trophy and the male team finished as second runners up. Two female players from CRP won the Woman of the Match trophy (best player), and both teams received the fair play trophy for best observation the IWBF rule and regulations. The total prize money received by both the male and female teams was 35,000 (Thirty five thousand) Nepalese Rupee, and each team received a memento of the event. Mr. Rajendra Chetri and Mr. Andre Paquet, Head of Mission, ICRC, Nepal, handed over the prizes to the winners and participants.

The Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC) sponsored the accommodation and a day's complementary meal. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sponsored the camps and all costs of the Nepal trip while CRP provided the logistic supports. The Head coach of the Bangladesh Basketball Federation (BBF) led the practice sessions at CRP and also accompanied the team to Nepal. Our participation will hopefully pave the way for participation in future international tournaments.

World Day of Remembrance for road traffic victims

CRP observed the world remembrance day for road traffic victims on 19th November, 2017. The day started with a rally inaugurated by CRP's Founder and Coordinator Dr. Valerie Taylor. Many staff members, students and patients joined the rally, which was led by CRP's Executive director, Shafiq-ul Islam. Then a debate competition was held in the Reddaway Hall where a team from BHPI competed against a team from Jahangirnagar University. The topic for the debate was 'only awareness can reduce the rate of road traffic accident'. The BHPI team supported the motion and won the competition. At the end, all participants received prizes.



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Children's Day celebration

November 20th was declared International Children's Day in 1954 by the United Nations. Since then, the day has been celebrated worldwide. This year, CRP celebrated Children's Day at its premises. The paediatric unit and the William and Marie Taylor Inclusive School jointly organized the day's events. A total of 100 children took part in different activities, including drawing, painting and essay writing. The themes of the programme were child rights, child protection and child education. The celebration ended with Mina cartoon show and prize giving. This program helped raise awareness amongst the parents regarding children's rights.



Sri Lankan MP visited CRP-Sylhet



On 21st November, Mr. Bimal Rathnayake, Member of Parliament (MP), Ex State Minister of Labour & Employment and National Organizer, People Liberation Front (JVP), Sri Lanka visited CRP-Sylhet centre. As a guest of our Sylhet land donors, Md. Moinuddin Ahmed Jalal and Dr. Nazia Chawdhury, Mr Rahhayake observed everything that we do there.

Mr. Bimal was very interested in CRP's IGA products, made in our own workshop, as Sri Lanka imports these type products from other countries. He also showed interest in contributing to the cost of CRP-Sylhet's building construction. He left with a very positive opinion of CRP. It was also a great opportunity for CRP to receive an honourable person such as Mr. Bimal.



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The Bangladesh Health Professions Institute (BHPI) and the Paper Technology Unit organized an eight-day workshop on "Appropriate Paper-Based Technology" in November 2017.

Thirteen participants, including eleven SAARC students from the Masters in Rehabilitation Science programme, attended the workshop. In addition, one participant from the Parents Forum for Differently Able, PFDA-Vocational Training Center, also attended. Janet Ivin and John Carter, both from England, conducted the training program. They were ably assisted by Shathi Rani Das (APT technician, CRP).

The objective of the training was quite straightforward; to learn how to make APT items for indoor or outdoor use in dry countries or for use in any community room. The program was very relevant to the participants, as the devices made by the trainees not only had therapeutic value but also were valuable in terms of recreational activities for the children. "Appropriate Paper-Based Technology" (Apbt or APT) is a cost-effective way of producing personally designed assistive devices and other useful objects. Materials that can be recycled in this process are waste paper, thin cards and corrugated cardboard boxes. Flour is used to make the paste and waterproof paint is helpful to coat the completed items. The only other things needed are a kettle or a pan to boil water, a suitable receptacle to make the paste, knives and a smooth stick. Once the technique is mastered, endless varieties of equipment can be made easily.

The workshop was very successful method of transferring the technology into practice, and the participants all agreed that they will be able to use their new skills in their different areas of work in their own countries.

APT Training by John and Janet



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Amy Taylor, Occupational Therapist, UK

I am Amy Taylor. I am 24 and I came from England. Professionally I am an Occupational Therapist and I looked for a place to volunteer via google. So, I learnt about CRP through Google search.

I came to CRP in the middle of July in 2017 and stayed for two months. During my stay I worked in the occupational therapy department and learnt the difference in practice, especially specific skills in neurology. I was providing a small amount of therapy and mostly observing the practices. I had a very positive experience about this visit. CRP has an amazing occupational therapy team. All the people are very friendly and welcoming. I have learnt how to take culture into account during therapy and also some specific skills in neurology. I would love to come again if I have the chance.

Mike Lawrey, Occupational Therapy Student, UK

My name is Mike Lawrey. I am 27 and an occupational therapy student at the University of Liverpool, UK. When I was looking for a place for my elective placement I learnt about CRP as a result of searching the internet.

I came to CRP in the middle of September and worked in the occupational therapy department's SCI inpatient unit. During my nine weeks stay here I assisted the therapists and gathered a lot of experience about how occupational therapy works in a low resource setting like Bangladesh.

In CRP I particularly enjoyed the inclusive environment. There is no discrimination in regards to a person's disability. Instead of the language barrier, everyone is very friendly, helpful and tries their best to include you.

My stay has given me the opportunity to see how occupational therapy operates in a different culture. I enjoyed my time with the patients most. I will return to my country after having training in boxing from Thailand. I will definitely come again if I get the chance.



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Experience: 1st Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Symposium (APOTS) and 6th Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Regional Group (APOTRG) General Assembly

Two major events were held in Taiwan in October 2017: the 1st Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Symposium (APOTS) and the 6th Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Regional Group (APOTRG) general assembly.

The theme of the symposium was "Contextualizing Occupational Therapy: Research, Practice and Education". The title was really appropriate as none of these three strands should stand alone. As a first alternate delegate, Shamima Akter, Assistant Professor, attended the general assembly as a representative of the Bangladesh Occupational Therapy Association (BOTA). The conference was packed with scientific programs, oral presentations, posters, workshops, a keynote speech, a plenary speech and informal discussions between students and professionals from 20 different countries.

The scientific program was divided into different sessions according to current occupational therapy practice dilemmas. The session on 'Upskilling occupational therapy students and practitioners through interprofessional education' was particularly informative. The session was moderated by Mike Sy, a PhD student, and his professor, Nobou Oshima, both from the Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan. They were assisted by another professor, Bumsuk Lee, from Gunma University, Japan.



Photo courtesy: APOTS photography group

Shamima said afterwards, 'I was able to achieve my personal and professional goals after attending APOTS 2017 in Taiwan because I was able to learn about the current developments in IPEC with other professionals and students who are committed to championing IPEC in their respective spheres of influences around the world.'

In addition, there is a possibility of a visit from a team of professors from Gunma University, Japan in September 2018. The onus is now on the BOTA to take the initiative and progress this opportunity further.

Highlights of the APOTRG general assembly were the election of Patrick Ker (Singapore) to the role of President of APOTRG and Lynette Mackenzie (Australia) as vice president, and the signing of an MOU between the Philippines and APOTRG regarding the hosting of the 7th Asia-Pacific Occupational Therapy Conference (APOTC) in 2020.

In addition, it was an honour to have the WFOT president Marilyn Pattison with us for 2017 APOTS. On the 2nd day of APOTS, she talked to delegates from almost all APOTRG countries and provided them with advice, information and resource links. The two-hour long discussion centred on the theme of occupational therapy practice in Bangladesh: its strengths and weaknesses. Marilyn expressed an interest in organizing the upcoming WFOT Executive Meeting in Bangladesh. Her advice to CRP is to grab the opportunity as her organisation is willing to provide training on current evidence-based practice along with advocacy and networking activities with the Government during their visit to Bangladesh.

Another significant opportunity came about after a long discussion at the symposium with Professor Lorie Gage Richards from University of Utah, who is also the editor of the American Journal of Occupational Therapy (AJOT). Dr Lorie also expressed her willingness to collaborate with the Bangladesh Journal of Occupational Therapy & Rehabilitation (BJOT&R).

We can further progress opportunities by developing a strategic action plan as well as maintaining contact with professors and clinicians from different countries to upgrade our profession using the platform of the BOTA.

Shamima Akter
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Shaown leading an independent life

Shaown is 19 year old young man who has a spastic type of cerebral palsy. He is currently living with his family in Sonargaon. His father died when Shaown was very young, and being unable to support him, his mother sent him to the 'Ashanir Home' in Mymensingh in 2006.

He came to CRP in 2009 and was admitted to the Special Education Needs Unit (SENU) in CRP's William and Marie Taylor Inclusive School. After receiving physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy, his motor skills began to improve. Though he cannot talk, he understands everything and communicates through gestures. To help his condition, he received a special mobility seat following his admission to CRP.

After completing his special education in 2016, he received vocational training in shop management. He returned to his home where his mother lives with his sister. As he is a grown man, and his mother is very old, his sister is the only person who can physically manage him now. However, his mother is able to care for him in other ways. Considering his family's financial condition and their limited finances, CRP built an accessible grocery shop that has been run successfully by Shaown and his mother since 2016. The shop is adjacent to his house and accessible to him. Furthermore, CRP's occupational therapists modified both his home and the shop to aid his comfort.

In this project, CRP's long standing friend and donor, Carol Bennett's daughter Laura Bennett, helped raise the money for Shaown by crowd funding. At present he is living happily with his family. His local community is also very supportive, as Shaown's store is the nearest grocery shop for them.

