

# A noble beginning

Delhi University student Sunil Gupta, 17, is the Delhi finalist for the AIWA awards for his volunteering services in various fields

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THE ASIAN AGE

Seventeen-year-old Sunil Gupta decoded the mantra for genuine happiness pretty early in life. In his own words, for this Delhi University student, it's the service to the society that gives him satisfaction.

For the past three years, Sunil has been working tirelessly to make "whatever little difference" he can to the world around him. Be it spending time with underprivileged kids or campaigning for animal welfare, his "motivation comes from within", he believes. He has been organising blood donation camps and has worked with wheelchair-bound athletes.

His efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Sunil has been nominated for the Apeejay India Volunteer Awards, 2011 from Delhi in the NGO category.

But how did this noble journey begin?

It was an ordinary incident that changed the then 15-year-old Sunil's worldview and gave him a "lifelong" mission to pursue. "At a general store, I spotted a donation box put up by an organisation which was working for the underprivileged kids. Just out of curiosity, I called up to check if I could visit the organisation. After I got to know more about their work, I felt that my little money won't make much difference to them. So, I volunteered my services instead," says Sunil.

"And when I got the opportunity of

working closely with these kids, I was surprised to witness their plight. They literally belong to another world," he adds.

But Sunil also saw hope. He was impressed by the kind of work this NGO had done when he got to meet youngsters who had managed to get education and thus undergo a complete life transformation. Since then, Sunil hasn't stopped.

On his own, he started collecting clothes and books to distribute them among the needy. "I have taken up every kind of charitable work. Be it on holidays or on weekends, I am always working," says Sunil, who balances his active volunteering services with a full-time Bio Medical Science (Hons).

While Sunil wants to take up a job that will fall in line with his cause, he is convinced that even a busy professional can take out time to give something back to the society in the form of social work. "What matters is the will to do things," he says.

Presently, Sunil collects used notes from students at his college to be converted into books by the Deaf Association of Women in Old Delhi.

"I may not be living a life like others my age. I don't hang out much with friends, instead I am surfing Facebook for organisations that may require my volunteering services. Whatever be it, I feel satisfied with every opportunity I get," says Sunil, who takes pride in his association with Eco Savors Foundations, Red Paws and Commonwealth Games.

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