

## Friends in deed, for the underprivileged

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** While elders always nag youngsters about not spending their time and money more meaningfully, they would certainly approve of the initiative taken by a bunch of college students on the occasion of Friendship Day.

When most youngsters will be hanging out at multiplexes and cafes, Palak Parekh and her friends, students of LD Arts College, have decided to spend an entire day with 31 underprivileged children at the Visamo kids organisation to celebrate the Friendship Day on Sunday.

"Every year we plan some celebration on this day. But this year, we thought about spending time with kids who probably have no friends outside their environment," says Parekh.

Parekh and her friends

are National Social Service (NSS) volunteers, and this plan appealed to them instantly. "It seemed the right thing to do. We were in fact pleasantly surprised to receive a warm response to our idea of spending the day with Visamo kids. Almost all our friends have promised to drop by at the Visamo," says another student, Dhvani Swaminarayan.

Not only are they spending time with the kids, the students have collected close to Rs 4,100 in donation from their college, to arrange for food and games for kids at Visamo.

"We spoke to the principal and other teachers about collecting a fund for the kids and they seemed forthcoming. This encouraged us to collect funds from college students to give a small party to the kids. We were surprised to see so many students donating money for

the cause," says Mohini Vyas, another member of the group.

With the money, the students have ordered a complete meal and have bought stationery for the kids. "We will be with the kids from 11 to 5 and apart from lunch will offer snacks after a round of games and singing and dancing competitions. My brother will also give an acting performance along with a friend to regale kids," says Parekh.

Ask them why they chose friendship day to spend time with the kids, they said, "We always spend money on ourselves on this day and tie friendship bands on each others' wrists. This time around we thought of making the day memorable for Visamo kids by becoming their friends."

"It will be a party with a difference," says Ajay Tolani, one of the friends.