

News from Shishu Mandir



Vol. XVI, October to December 2016

Welcome to Shishu Mandir! We are pleased to share with you our latest developments and programmes in the quarter from October to December 2016

Adoptions – Unimaginable Arrivals

A research student (PhD) in Pune had no choice, but to give away her baby after having looked after it for over 6 months. She bowed down to keep up her family reputation...

Another newborn baby was abandoned in the open to the mercy of rodents which had already bitten the child before it reached Shishu Mandir. Fortunately the wound healed without complication. But unfortunately a couple appeared, who declared to be the parents of the baby. A DNA test was conducted which confirmed the authenticity of the parents. So we had no choice, but to give back the baby, although we still cannot free ourselves from the thought that they only claimed the child to give it to somebody else for money.

Another baby was delivered by a teenager who parted with the child, as she wanted to finish her schooling. The child, fair and plumpy, was given in adoption in the routine way. But within one week it was returned by the adoptive couple on the assertion that the child is medically 'not fit', as it is supposed to have coarse features and short limbs. Indeed – the child has features of the North Eastern region of

India. Now the child will go for adoption under the category of special needs children - abroad.

A Touch of British Drama

This year's four teaching assistants from UK were a real blessing. They accomplished numerous tasks like creative writing, book clubs, reading sessions, developing teaching aids and more, and five months flew by like lightning. As a climax they staged Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream', which really bore a native touch. Thanks a lot and adieu, goodbye, fare-well, and good luck to all of you!



Upgrading Exam Standards

Special care was taken by the teachers in preparing the question papers for the third unit test, the final one in the first term. Mama personally scrutinized the question papers to make sure that they were student-friendly, covering the core areas of the

syllabus, and maintaining good practices in the evaluation process.

As usual, extra coaching was availed for our students even during the Dasera holidays. This time the students (and the teachers) managed a significant improvement in their results.

Social Media

Shishu Mandir is well known among the multi-national community as an institute with appropriate infrastructure and transparency. In an effort to extend our publicity further our well-wishers Mrs. Aravinda and her husband, Mr. Pritham, produced a film of just one minute starring our children and teachers. It will be uploaded into our website, social media and Just Dial and should indeed prove a boost to our fund raising activities.

Community Development - Medical services

'Once upon a time' Mama as a medical doctor had availed herself to the poor in terms of free medical services in and around Ulsoor, Bangalore. What was pioneered by her some 40 years ago continues even now thanks to Mrs. Vimala of our Child Care Centre who coordinates

Help Age India and MVJ medical college hospital doctors to conduct medical camps for the general public of Kithiganur every fortnight. TE Connectivity contributed a van to Help Age India for this purpose. The fortnightly mobile medical service provides BP and sugar tests besides administering medicines for all sorts of ailments free of charge. By stationing the van at our school the medical service is extended to Bhattarahalli and Jyothinagar.

Saving young Girl from Sex Trade

A 13-year-old girl had to be rescued from her own parents, as she was forcefully taken out of a boarding school to indulge in sex trade. Thank God, we were informed immediately and could intervene in time. She was counselled and admitted in another boarding school. The victim's parents are severe alcoholics.

Parents' Meet



Although the parents of our children have ample trust in us to give the best of education to their children, we want them to share the responsibility for their children's development and success. Regular meetings, which are more and more attended by the fathers also, are held, and Mr. Anand, with his unique talent of keeping a mirror in front of them, gives them a good mouthful of unpleasant and not easily digestible truths.

Library Day

Whenever book exhibitions have been held, there have usually been good responses from the public, which shows that after all the habit of reading has not disappeared totally. In fact we begin to think that the reading



habit is actually picking up in spite of electronic gadgets which are stealing our time away. We decided to put a memorable imprint on the Library Day during which the entire school staff sat together and read books for several hours. Afterwards we held discussions, shared thought and also ventured into enacting some of the stories. Indeed we will remember this day for a long time!

Extraordinary Success of our Past Students

Leelavathi, our past student, participated in a 40 km cycle race at state level and secured the second place. We are over happy about her achievement. Congrats!

It was also a pleasant surprise to see 70 of our past trainees turning up for an Alumni meeting. They keep in contact with us and do a great job in mobilising new students for our courses.

International Competitions

Just as our students, the teachers too have their share of exposures in terms of training programs and seminars. 6 of our teachers are part of a project that has 15 activities spread over eight months. In addition to this, exchange programs with three different European schools are on the cards which may qualify our teachers to obtain the 'International School Award Certificate of Recognition' from the British Council. Winning this recognition for a second time would make us eligible for funds from the British Council for specific educational programs. Our teachers are all set to bag this award.

Demonetization

November 5th 2016 started like a normal day with newspapers being distributed in the early morning. But what they carried on their front pages was unimaginable: **All 500 and 1000 rupee notes were declared instantly invalid.** It was a blow like a bolt from the blue. A declaration of war could not have been worse. Cashless ATMs and endless queues in front of them were the sight of the day causing enormous suffering to the common man. And Shishu Mandir was no exception to this. Although the day-to-day activities were not disturbed much, Shishu Mandir faced huge problems, when it came to money transactions. Hospital bills, petrol bills, food bills – how to pay all these big amounts with a daily limit of Rs. 25000? It took days to get into the possession of a debit card which alleviated the stress to some extent. But what about all the small households which could ill afford a debit card? Shishu Mandir took the bull by the horns and initiated an awareness campaign by using its past students to teach the villagers the usage of debit cards and mobile phones. All credit to the management!

Children's Day



In Shishu Mandir Education Centre every day is Children's Day, as every activity is centered around our children. On November 14th, however, it was made special by the teachers who wore their dancing shoes and rocked the stage with a breath-taking performance. Also a Kannada skit was performed which really stole everybody's heart.

Exposures



Our children are far from being frogs in the well, as they have enough and more exposures in various fields away from the school campus. Our 5th and 9th standard students were out to HAL Museum to watch a documentary on aeroplanes. They were lucky as they could witness a highly informative discussion. Further, KPMG invited our Aspire Girls to a counseling session on career options. In turn they interacted with differently abled children at Mount Carmel College.

Last not least our Bharathnatyam group gave dance performances at JLL Company in UB City and at the Annual Day Celebration of their dance school, where our girls were shining stars among 80 young girls.

Rotaractors



As members of the Rotaract Club our past students avail themselves of many opportunities to interact with other college students who are involved in various community development activities. Through this exposure they get ideas for their own activities. So they visited old age homes and made themselves useful to the old people, conducted outings on cycles, arranged weekly dance classes and organized activities for students of government schools. Hats off to our Rotaractors!

Volunteering

Rainbow Homes in India are usually run by NGOs using government school buildings. One such Rainbow Home has a visitor coming every week to assist 70 and odd children, mostly orphans. He teaches them English, washes their clothes and cleans their living area. Currently he is mobilizing funds for a water filter besides collecting pre-owned clothes for them. It is indeed heartening to know that the regular visitor is none other than our Shishu child Sudu. Going by



the example of numerous volunteers whom he had seen during his Shishu Mandir days, he has taken up the inspiration and is helping these youngsters to the best of his capacity.

Congratulations

Hearty congratulations also to Anand Babu, our past student, on clearing his MBA in one go in spite of his regular duty at the work front and his self-imposed weekend commitment at Shishu Mandir. Big kudos also to all our college going students who have done well in their exams!



Save the Girl Child



In October our community college students performed a street play on "Save the Girl Child". It highlighted the various government schemes for the empowerment of women, thus paving the way for a new awareness and self-confidence in women. We will not rest until the last husband has stopped beating his wife!

Our Multipurpose Hall – a Delight for the Eye

We are in the final race of finishing our Multipurpose Hall, an auditorium which will hold 500 people. As in any building the end bears the biggest strain. The work is carried out almost around the clock with dozens of workmen hammering, sewing,



welding iron bars causing a deafening noise. Still one person seemed to be nailed to the floor, Mama. With her suggestions, creative and aesthetic interventions the work gained momentum. We keep our fingers crossed for a successful finish till 11th January, 2017 – the Founder's Day.

Two computer labs adjacent to the auditorium too have to be finished till the inauguration. We are grateful to UTC for their great financial support.

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Visit to Germany



For the third time Mr. Anand was invited by the German Shishu Mandir Society for a meeting of reflection and assessment. Our teaching methodology was up for discussion. It was an intensive time of two weeks in which Mr. Anand, Mrs. Vimala and Mrs. Farhath visited several English and German schools. The main difference they found in the individual and self-determined process of learning. The children are guided to know the rules of the task which is expected from them, and afterwards it flows like a silent river. Only here and there the teacher had to give explanations, otherwise the worksheets were self-explanatory and interesting. Although the children could move freely in the classroom to speak to the teacher or take new worksheets, it was always highly disciplined.



Even in kindergardens the small children showed an astonishing silence and harmony which made the visitors wonder. The explanation for this disciplined behaviour was that all children get a detailed guidance in a warm and endearing manner in advance, and afterwards it is closely monitored and enforced. In course of time it gets internalized, and supervision can be reduced to a bare minimum. Thus the learning process is smooth and efficient.

One of the main problems of the Indian team, namely 'How to use phonetics and to which extent is phonetic teaching helpful?' was convincingly answered by the teachers of the English schools. Discussions were also held to highlight certain problems of the primary teachers. It was felt that it is needed to recruit experienced Prep teachers, who will accept our methodology, and maybe also Montessori trained teachers, irrespective of the high cost. Multisensory learning through outdoor activities added a special dimension to the learning process, which extended to the use of utensils like knives, hammers, nails, scissors and more. But above all the impressive degree of discipline prevailing everywhere was attributed to the teaching manner in kindergardens. It was clear, social skills should be the main aim and in the centre of all kindergarden teaching and not the mindless repetition of rhymes and letters in parrot-like fashion. With a head full of impressions and a feeling of a new start all the three returned to India.