

News from Shishu Mandir



Vol I, January 2014 to March 2014

Greetings,

The year 2014 is a precious year for the Shishu Family. The starting itself was special and joyful. Just follow us through January till March.

Shishu Nrithyotsava

Shishu Nrithyotsava, an inter-school dance festival, in which six schools participated, was held at our school as a first step towards the celebration of the Platinum Jubilee of our Mama. The four forms of dance categories were Folk, Western, Bharathnatyam and Contemporary. Shastry School stood first and won a cash prize of Rs. 15,000. Shishu Mandir secured the second position winning a cash prize of Rs. 10,000 and St. Antony's School bagged the third prize winning Rs. 5,000. As we had organized the event, we sponsored it completely.

Platinum Jubilee Celebration

On Founder's Day the Shishu Family gave a heart-warming welcome to Mama with drums and unicycle presentations. Greetings and birthday wishes were followed by cutting the cake and singing the birthday song. After that a small booklet containing all the seven songs

that the children and the teachers had composed since 2003 for Mama's birthdays, was released by **Mr. Seshagiri**. Then we had the annual sports meet at Samuel Public School which all children expected with great zeal.

Cultural Programme

At M. M. Function Hall where the programme was to be held, a warm welcome was given to Mama and the 2400 guests. As a first highlight Mama released the **Dr. Hella Mundhra's Platinum Jubilee Higher Education Fund** of Rs. 75 lakhs. The interest derived from this fund would be utilised for the higher education of all future children of Shishu Mandir. Community College and Shishu children from different classes showed their talents by giving high quality performances which were enthusiastically applauded. Mama also unveiled the foundation stones of the Multi-purpose Hall and Child Care Centre.

Cycling Project



Ms. Susanne Klier from Henkel, Germany, had raised funds for a cycle project in which she personally taught the children cycling and traffic rules. After three months they had to undergo a theory and practical test. Those who passed were rewarded with a brand new cycle, a head gear and a hand pump, and the others were given a T-shirt with a cycle picture. The new cyclists are of course cycling to school and even for parking a special cycle stand was provided.

Staff Picnic

The school and the community college staff went for an outing to **the Pyramid Valley** and **Muthathi Falls**. Free from the

usual pressures of their tasks they had a day full of laughter and fun and enjoyed it to the maximum.

Teachers' Training



Mr. Vishwanathan and Mr. Satish from UST Company conducted a one-day session for 25 teachers on 'How to Make Learning Fun'. It was based on a neuro-linguistic programme, which describes the fundamental dynamics between the mind and language and how their interplay affects our body and behaviour. The training was a big help to make ourselves better teachers and learners.

Lego Competition



The Lego competition, in which 14 schools from all over India participated, was held at Chennai. Our school won **the first prize for the best Robotic Design** which was based on **Nature's Fury and Flood**. We had to give a demo of our robotic model and later stand three rounds of interviews by seven judges to explain the science behind it. Thanks to **Mr. Sanjay and Mr. Rajkumar**, who have robotics as their hobby and who took keen interest in training us, we reached this high prize.

Adobe Youth Voices

31 Shishu students attended a programme of Adobe Youth Voices, a foundation for empowering **young people's creative skills** in media use. Under the guidance of our trainer, Mr. Ericks, they had shot films on their lives and dreams. A selection of 20 such films from different schools were screened, among them ours on **Gender Inequality** which earned a lot of applause. On April 28th we will come to know the judgment. We hope and hope ...



Visit of CSR

A few employees from CSR, a company for audio and visual products, visited our school to acquaint themselves with a charitable organisation. They played a basketball match with our students and we in turn presented a short cultural programme for them. Their CEO, **Mr. Joep Van Beurden**, donated many articles for the kitchen and furniture for several classrooms and assured us of sponsoring the topper of the class 10 for PUC.



Adoption

4 babies were newly admitted for adoption. Meanwhile two babies could be placed in pre-adoptive foster care with families in Bangalore. But since the procedure is laborious and tedious, 8 children are still waiting for their adoptive parents.

Shishu Enclave

The land, which Shishu Mandir purchased eight years ago for the benefit of some children and staff members, was ultimately transferred to its new owners. All beneficiaries made a trip to their land and erected a name board with the name '**Shishu Enclave**'. Altogether 20 sites were allotted to our past students and aunties who could purchase the land at an exceptionally low price thanks to Shishu Mandir's advance payment. Still they required eight years for the full payment. Our past students were lucky, as they got the land due to an extra donation from their sponsor parents in Germany.



Admission for Community College

January is the month of admissions for the Community College. **Mrs. Neeraja and Mr. Lazar** conducted the interviews for the newcomers who chose their trade according to their interest. In the first two weeks we introduced them to all our trades to give them an idea of the different branches. Then we started regular classes. As usual the applications for Computer classes were the highest followed by Automobile training. Altogether we received 87 applications from whom we selected 55 students.

"There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure."

The Story of Davy Schneider



When we hear of a child being adopted we assume a poignant story of despair, of a mother forced to abandon her child, messed up and tattered with broken emotions, parting ways with her newborn child. We think of a child dealing with feelings of abandonment, searching for a home where someone cares about his or her existence and left to wonder where he or she came from. We ponder over the selfless adopting parents who love unconditionally and raise a child not born out of their own womb, but that of an unknown one and wonder what brings such an outpour of unconditional love and complete acceptance to a stranger from another land. The story of Davy Schneider is that of adoption, but not of despair or heartbreak. Instead it is of gratitude, happiness and acceptance. In 1982, Davy was brought to Shishu Mandir as a newborn and soon adopted by his German parents, the Schneiders.

They embraced him as their own. Davy only knew Germany and didn't feel the connection to India at all. For all practical purposes he is German except for his appearance. He talks nonchalantly about his younger brother, who is the only birth child of the Schneiders as a blue-eyed, white young man, and simply his kid brother. His parents did not try to force Davy to study the Indian culture, nor did they hide his background. Davy never felt the need to find out about his natural parents. He had heard that his natural mother was a young 16-year-old who took the decision not to "throw him away", and he feels grateful that she gave him up for adoption.

"I always felt there was a part of me that I cannot explain. Even though I tell everyone that I am from Cologne, Germany, no one really understands that because of my external appearance," explains Davy. Davy knew nothing about India and its people, but in his late 20s he wanted to know more about the particular side of him that was Indian. He contacted "Mama" (Hella) and expressed his desire to learn more about himself and traveled to India with her. With no expectations or foreseen outcome, Davy stepped out of the airport and was received by a van full of Shishu kids. In an instant he felt he was home. He sat among them as one. He had never felt in his entire life that he was incomplete, but being with the children he felt replete. Suddenly his life had changed. He felt a sense of purpose and the meaning of his being. A piece of puzzle, which was his external self, was now clear.

2009 was supposed to be just a visit, purely out of curiosity and ended in a way of life, chartered beyond his imagination. Today Davy is 32 years old. Although the smell, the crowd, the dirt and the chaos of India are clearly visible to him, it does not deter him at all. He is home. He has no plans of moving to India, but in the last five years he managed to visit once or twice a year. He takes back with him a report of how Shishu operates, the work done in creating opportunities for underprivileged kids to the extent it becomes their home, and he is fascinated at the sheer gratitude the kids have of their existence. He is amazed that they have very little, but thrive in it with immense happiness and peace.

Davy is struck by how loving and incredibly caring the Shishu staff is. Their support toward the Shishu children can be likened to that of loving parents, which explains why the children feel like they are home. Anand Sir is one of the strongest contributors to Shishu, who works tirelessly, always smiles and is a great problem solver. He believes this organization's most hardworking person and the reason for the children's and staff's wellbeing is Hella Ma'am. This is her life's calling and dedication, says Davy, clearly moved by her energy.

Davy is an educated professional with a Degree in Osteopathy. He is young, confident and extremely privileged with a great network of friends. Davy has contributed significantly by bringing in a lot of donors for Shishu. He also brings large groups of people to come to see how Shishu operates. A decision taken by a 16-year-old girl is now a driving force of Shishu Mandir in Germany, standing in full support of children who could possibly have the same privilege as him. Davy works to provide the kids a chance of that opportunity, he is so grateful he could have. This could only be possible in an environment such as Shishu Mandir.

Davy's story was written by Sima Mehta