

News from Shishu Mandir



Vol IV, October 2013 to January 2014

Greetings,

Again our newsletter comes with some delay. That seems to be our style, but it also reveals that we are very busy and involved in a variety of activities. This time it was the big celebration of our Founder's Platinum Birthday which was prepared with great dedication by the children and by the staff. But we want to add that we enjoyed every minute of it and hopefully the 2400 guests also. Here is a short review of the main events at Shishu Mandir.

Teachers win TAFET Award

Congratulations to our teachers Mrs. Stella Delvie and Mrs. Jerina for winning the TAFET (Teachers' Award for Excellence in Teaching)! They appeared for state syllabus schools in the pre-primary and middle school category. The event was organized by The Times of India, The Teacher Foundation and Gems B School, and the prizes were presented by the Governor of Karnataka, Sri Hansraj Bharadwaj.

Shishu School in Basketball Tournaments



Shishu children took part in different tournaments in basketball. At the

zonal and district level the Shishu Mandir teams (girls and boys) became the champions and at the divisional level they became the runners up. Following this an inter-school sports meet was conducted by the government in which 2 girls and 4 boys from our school were selected for the state level basket ball tournament. Our boy Ravi of the 9th std. was chosen as the best player of the tournament.

Malala in Shishu Mandir

Rafiki Theatre Troop was back to our school. This time they trained 20 students to evolve a play based on the life of Malala. Every day at 5 pm the training started which took several hours. The idea of this training is to help the students to develop their personality.

Prathibha Karanje

Prathibha Karanje is an inter-school cluster level cultural competition arranged by the state government. 28

schools took part in the events which were conducted at Shishu Mandir. Our School students won 60% of the prizes.



Children who won the first prize could take part in the Taluk level.

De-addiction for Alcoholic Fathers

The fathers of 20 students participated in the de-addiction counselling programme which was held on Sundays for three months. The resource person, Mr. Paul Raj, held meetings in which the fathers shared their problems. Mr. Paul Raj is a professional counsellor. The results are most encouraging: All of them have stopped beating their wives. Everyone went to work and gave their weekly

wages to the family. 5 men claim to have stopped drinking. As this habit is the basic problem of these families, we will continue this programme by all means. We will have to observe for some time to see its effect.

KPMG carries out a Risk Assessment

As a social activity a team from KPMG spent two months assessing all our activities and expenses with great diligence. For the final presentation of the report the Chairman of KPMG Foundation, Mr. Yogender Singh, was present. They identified 10 very important risk factors which we have started to rectify.

KPMG organizes a great Carnival Celebration



KPMG volunteers organized an extraordinary fun-filled carnival for our school kids. Nearly 100 volunteers set up and operated game stalls, a candy machine, a popcorn machine and put up a magic show. We thank KPMG for organizing this great event for our children, who enjoyed themselves to the brim.

Survey on School Dropouts

The government had ordered a state survey of school dropout students. For this our teachers and social workers

got involved and visited around 2000 families. To our surprise there were only 6 children below the age of 14 years who had dropped out from school in this locality. Obviously the efforts taken by the NGOs in this locality are bearing fruits in preventing children from dropping out from school. Shishu Mandir works in 12 villages besides other NGOs. We want to ensure that every child completes basic education till the age of 14. After that our vocational training centre is there for skill training.

Festivals



Deepavali and Christmas were celebrated in their usual way, Deepavali with many crackers given by several companies and Christmas with many gifts given by Mercedes Benz, Biocon and Happiest Minds. In the children's home the children exchanged gifts with their secret friend. From Shishu Mandir itself the children and staff received gifts worth Rs. 400 which were donated by the sponsor parents in Germany.



Support by Target



Evening snacks were initiated in November. The children of class 1 to 10 get snacks immediately after their evening study before their games. These snacks serve a double purpose, once in giving nourishment to the children and secondly in providing an income to the children's parents by buying the items from them. Thanks to Target Company for their support towards this programme! Another service was given by volunteers from Target by **decorating the wall** in the children's home with wonderful paintings.

New Courses at the Community College

Tech Mahindra urged us to start Tally and Hospitality courses for school dropout students, which they offered to finance. So we arranged these courses on Sundays and made 20 students pass the Tally training and 18 students the hospitality training. In our old courses, i.e. Fitter, Automobile, Electrical and Computer, we completed our 6th batch and with that 98 students altogether. The last batch wrote a government exam and also organized a breath taking exhibition of what they had learnt. It was on a very high level, for instance the automobile students composed a small motor vehicle entirely from scrap material and could made it run. In the tailoring section we have 10 girls/married women.

Life is an MCQ – Hussain KA



An 8-year-old boy, scarred by the memories of his abusive alcoholic father, secure because of his strong mother, grows up to be independent, positive, refusing to slip into the cracks of an impoverished upbringing. The future holds great promise for Hussain, a 20-year-old Shishu student, who relentlessly pursues goals he set for himself and calling life a “Multiple Choice Question” (MCQ). He explains quite simply that life is an MCQ, because in everything we do we have a choice. To be the master of your own destiny or its slave is a choice, to choose happiness over misery is a choice, to focus on achieving your goals rather than dwelling on reckless activities is also a choice. Instead Hussain reminisces on the strength and support of his incredible mother who endured much violence and adversities, yet worked tirelessly to bring dignity and opportunities for her two children, aged 8 and 10. She chose to divorce her past and instead opted to fight the battle of life ahead of her. Hussain clearly has inherited the tenacity and persistence of his much-revered mother.

Today at 20, Hussain is pursuing Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) and Chartered Accountancy (CA) at the same time, no small feat. He has four main goals of his life. One, to complete all three levels of his CA and get into one of the top four audit firms – KPMG, PWC, Ernst & Young or Deloitte. Second, to inspire his older brother who could not pursue higher education due to health and economic reasons, to

complete his education so he succeeds in his life. Third, to open an animal shelter because he feels humans get all the help, but animals don't, and lastly a sacrosanct desire to let his mother be happy and see a smile on her selfless face. From a terrified 8-year-old boy, who entered Shishu Mandir at 3rd grade level traveling alone while changing three buses to reach school, to a focused, goal oriented young man, Hussain attributes all his success to his mother and to Shishu Mandir.

He fondly remembers his ‘analytical thinking’ class at Shishu, where he was taught how to think differently, out of the box, which made him, see life from a more positive angle. There are more sides to a situation than is visible, he says. His most favorite teacher Meena instilled a love for literature and reading in him. A positive comment from Hella Madam for a play called “Lonely Cry” in which he played the part of a boy who grows up without a father and how the mother sells herself to support the family; is precious irreplaceable treasure for him. He credits Anand Sir to give direction to his life. At every step of the way, the presence of Anand Sir brought security, focus and positivity in his life. Anand Sir saw a spark in Hussain and encouraged him immensely. Hussain fondly calls him a “Serious Saint”, someone who is wise and always seems to know what is right for you.

Hussain watches inspirational videos in his spare time. Steve Jobs and rapper Eminem are his favorite. He jokes that Eminem's life is very similar to his, abandoned by their father, raised by a strong mother and he loves how Eminem expresses his feelings through rap. He believes very strongly in paying forward and wants to make enough money so he can give back what he received and be an inspiration for others. He has no tolerance for people who don't respect women. He abandons every bad behavior, staying away from alcohol, smoking or drugs. For a guy who doesn't believe in destiny, who wants to draw his own plans, who finds most of his contemporaries immature and goalless, Hussain prefers having faith in his own self. He learnt that from Shishu Mandir, he says, a place he calls a world within a world, where children don't just learn academics, but art, personality development, life skills and much more. Teachers at Shishu are like parents who want to make sure their child grows up in the right environment. Will the ever-smiling Hussain succeed in his endeavors? Will he continue to remain positive when life throws challenges at him? Will he succeed at inspiring others? I believe he already answered that when he said, “Life is an MCQ.”

Hussain's story was written by Sima Mehta.