



AN EDUCATION CENTRE FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN



NEWSLETTER

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education@aseema

We, at Aseema, aim to create enriching learning environments for our children to grow in. We believe education is not just about books and numbers, but about the holistic development of the child. Our programmes, therefore, lay equal emphasis on academic and co-curricular work and are filled with educational visits, fun activities and meaningful learning.

Visitors to our school witnessed this and observed our teaching methods at the Montessori Exhibition organized in October. This exhibition was part of the centenary celebrations of the Montessori method. Guests were invited to see our children 'in action' as they explored the special Montessori equipment in a carefully designed classroom. They were very impressed by the independent learning they saw and went home a lot better informed about this unique way of learning.

Aseema teachers and staff also had the remarkable opportunity of learning from other educational philosophies. A special one-week training session was conducted for them at the Sri Aurobindo Society in Puducherry. This education centre is structured around the approach of 'Integral Education' which has been adopted by Aseema. The teachers participated in workshops and discussions on a variety of topics ranging from teaching methods and techniques to yoga and appreciation for nature. Several of their wonderful ideas are now being implemented at Aseema - using music breaks to enhance assimilation of learning, laying emphasis on physical development, etc. The knowledge gained has not only helped teachers enhance their work but has also given them new insights into their own personalities. All the participants came back with a feeling of calmness, renewed zeal and a greater sense of purpose.

Another training session was conducted for the teachers by Ms. Sarah Rees. Her workshops on 'Language Skills' introduced some creative methods of teaching language to young learners. Through interactive sessions, the teachers discovered interesting stories, songs and games to use in their classrooms.



The children too have been busy with visits and other programmes. They were pleased to be special guests at an art competition at the J.W.Marriott Hotel. The competition was organized in honour of the retiring General Manager and was a perfect opportunity for our children to showcase their talents. They were also enthusiastic participants in a workshop on Art and Craft with Waste organized by members of the Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) along with students of the American School of Bombay . Children from both schools were paired up and shown how to make decorative lanterns using cornflakes boxes and other waste material. On another occasion, the children also had visitors from the MET Rishikul Vidyalay who made friendship bands with them. On both days, they had a wonderful time with their 'new friends' and their beautiful creations adorn the classrooms today.

Another fun filled programme was arranged when the very talented circus performer Tahmour Bloomfield visited our school. This wonderful artist took our children on a journey into the life of an Australian clown along with her adorable pet koala. Their costumed mascot bird was a big hit with the children and they were delighted to meet him.

Amidst the fun and games, our Std. VII students are preparing for their final exams and exploring options after school. We believe that vocational education is imperative for those who are less academically inclined and we must make our children aware of the various alternatives available to them. A field visit was consequently arranged to the Joseph Cardijn Technical Institute in Dadar. The Institute offers a variety of courses in Motor Mechanics, Electrical and Carpentry Work, Computers, etc. Our students were curious about the various departments and were given a chance to try their hand at some of the tools. They were all made aware of various career options and two of our students have already enrolled for the Carpentry course. This was a very fruitful experience for our children and we look forward to other such opportunities in the future.



The school semester ended with a Diwali party filled with music and dance. The children painted beautiful diyas and celebrated the beginning of their holidays. They were treated to a sumptuous lunch and brought in the festive season with much enthusiasm and joy.

Through the vacations as well, the children participated in many other events. The Celebrate Bandra Festival gave them a chance to display their talent through an energetic dance performance and their graceful folk dance remains in the minds of many viewers. The children were also part of the inaugural parade organized by Celebrate Bandra. They were delighted to go along in their school bus and enjoyed the performances and celebrations all around them.

Perhaps one of the most exciting days of their little lives was when they were invited aboard a 'Fantasy Flight' organized by G.E. and Jet Airways. On the occasion of

Children's Day, 15 of our students were taken on an airplane ride around Mumbai and treated to snacks and gifts. The thrill and excitement of sitting in an airplane and soaring around the city will remain with them for a long time to come.



Similar zeal was visible at the Tree Plantation Drive in Igatpuri. Senior staff and employees of Mahindra & Mahindra joined hands with Aseema and the local men, women and children to plant 1000 trees at Awalkheda. The land is the site for Aseema's proposed Education Centre for Tribal Children and has undulating terrain. This was however, no deterrent to our enthusiastic volunteers who made sure every sapling was securely planted.

Taking our commitment to holistic growth a little further, there have been several new developments at Aseema. Dance and Story Telling classes have been started for the children, which they are enjoying thoroughly. We have also started a 'Buddies' programme for our children. Our mission is to provide underprivileged children with a nurturing and stimulating educational environment that helps them recognize their limitless potential. In order to create such an environment, it was imperative for us to address the emotional difficulties of the children. Every week, committed volunteers meet with emotionally vulnerable children to give them some much needed support. Interactive sessions for teachers are also held by Ms. Zarine D'Monte, a reputed child psychotherapist. These sessions help give the teachers a platform to address their concerns for the children.

The concern and commitment of the teachers is also seen in their constant attempt to enhance the learning experience of the children. Lessons focus on age appropriate skills, and thanks to the careful guidance of the Aseema teachers, the children have reported enthusiasm for answering their exams and have shown marked improvement in their performance. It is also heartening to note that the children are making increasingly successful attempts to communicate effectively in English. Additionally, regular sessions on value education and life skills have contributed to an all round personality development.

One of Aseema's most popular programmes is the art class. And as always, our children's beautiful art is being used to create high quality products. We now have very attractive cloth bags, mobile and change pouches, pencil and spectacle cases and Christmas cards in addition to our regular products.

We must end this newsletter with special thanks to the American School of Bombay, Ms. Amita Parekh, Blue Mountains Regional Tourism & Tourism New South Wales, Celebrate Bandra, CERe, Citigroup Global Services, Create Foundation, Ms. Donna Barretto, Fidelity Fund Management Pvt. Ltd., G.E., J.W. Marriott Hotel, Jet Airways, Joseph Cardijn Technical Institute, Just Because, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ms. Sarah Rees, Sri Aurobindo Society, Sterlite Foundation St. Joseph's Academy, and The Warriors of Hope. The initiative taken and support shown by these people have greatly strengthened our programmes for the children and we look forward to a continued association.