



NEWSLETTER

March 2008
5th edition

education@aseema

Aseema will celebrate the **Amar Inam Annual Day** on **6 March 2008**

The past few months have been full of new beginnings at Aseema. Amidst the many challenges faced in empowering children with quality education that is rightfully theirs, there have been several moments of triumph and celebration. We have watched our children perform with professionals on stage, started classes in a new school and participated in the Mumbai Marathon. We are proud to share these milestones with you.



On 31 January, 2008, Aseema began its first class at the Santacruz Municipal School. Strengthened by the success and experience gained at the Pali-Chimбай Municipal School, Aseema is now ready to adopt another school for children in Mumbai. Pre-Primary classes have been set up at Santacruz following the Montessori method of education. The staff of DBS has supported Aseema in this endeavour and volunteered their time to help paint the space allotted to Aseema. A new, clean environment and bright

classrooms now welcome the children in school. At present, about eighty five children come to class everyday to explore the specialized Montessori equipment and learn about their world at a pace which is comfortable for each individual child. Under the gentle guidance of the Aseema teachers, these children have now embarked on a journey of discovery and learning.

The aanganwadi that has been set up in Jambhwadi, Igatpuri is running in full swing. The young children of this school went on their first annual picnic in January. A trip was organized to the nearby village of Tringalwadi where the children had a wonderful time sitting by the lakeside and playing games. They were also enthusiastic participants at their Annual Day celebrations

held on 19 February, 2008. The children performed dances, songs and skits and were cheered on by their proud parents and teachers.



Our children at the Pali-Chimbai Municipal School were, in the meantime, busy showcasing their many talents. Sports Day, held on 23 January, 2008, was a remarkable display of the sporting abilities and team spirit of the children. Every child was part of a team race, drill or judo display. As each child was competing primarily with him/herself, every little victory was applauded. The Aseema teachers ensured that the entire event was orchestrated perfectly and played wonderful hosts to the parents and guests present there. Aseema's Sports Day was once again testament to our

belief in integrated learning and in ensuring that every child is made to feel special.

Another occasion for celebration was the stage debut of some of the Aseema children. Twenty-two children were invited by Raell Padamsee's Create Foundation to be a part of their play on the freedom movement. This unique opportunity given to them allowed them to see their classroom history lessons come alive and has made their learning so much more meaningful. The children were delighted to be on stage and are looking forward to the next set of shows to be held in April.

Aseema has been fortunate to have the support of many schools and corporates. In these past few months, our children have been invited to celebrate Friendship Day at Arya Vidya Mandir School (Bandra East) and Family Fun Day at the American School of Bombay, in addition to many other events. They were also taken on a field trip to Madh Island organized by the staff and students of the American School of Bombay. The wonderful teachers and children of J.B. Petit School generously collected toys, books and clothes for Aseema and several other institutes have offered to conduct workshops for our children.



The support of our corporate partners was also evident on the day of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2008. Along with Aseema staff and volunteers, five corporate teams ran in support of Aseema's cause. Teams from DBS, Fidelity, IDFC and Tata Sons Ltd. participated in the Marathon and helped raise a significant amount for Aseema. The enthusiasm and commitment of all the runners was palpable and we are truly grateful for the effort taken by each of them.

The children of Aseema, also had the opportunity to give back to the community. The paintings of some of our very talented artists were gifted to the Children's Ward (HIV Section) at the JJ Hospital. Representatives of the Innerwheel Club of Bombay West accompanied our children to the hospital, where they had the chance to meet and interact with some of the young patients. Our children also participated in the launch of the initiative 'Lean on Me' which supports children and youth who are in stress. Additionally, they visited Mount Carmel's Church and the Little Sisters Home for the Aged where they sang songs and performed plays and dances for the elderly residents of the home. The joy visible on the faces of the children was matched by the smiles of their new 'friends'.

The sensitivity shown by our children in each of these places assured us that their time at Aseema is well spent. At school, they have learnt much more than simply academic work. They have learnt to value and respect differences and have to come to realize that they, too, are blessed.

Even as we celebrate the many achievements of the past months, we feel a deep sense of loss at the passing of some of our committed staff and volunteer members. Zenaida Vaz, Melanie Pereira and Angela Silgado brought so much joy to the lives of our staff and children. We are so grateful for the time they spent with us and pray that they are at peace.

Aseema has grown from strength to strength thanks to the support of people like these and so many others who have contributed immensely to our work. As always, there have been so many people who have given their time and resources to Aseema. We must say a special *thank you* to the American School of Bombay, Amita Parekh, Arya Vidya Mandir School (Bandra East), DBS, Emma Sargeant, Fidelity, IDFC, Innerwheel Club of Bombay West, J.B. Petit School, Jesse Martin, Kishore and Pot Pourri, Lions Club of North Bombay, Little Sisters Home for the Aged, Madhumita Ray, Mt. Carmel's Church, Raell Padamsee and Create Foundation, Ryewood International School (Lonavala), S.N.D.T Women's University, Sophia College, Strand Book Stall, Tata Sons Ltd. and TBWA. We truly appreciate the encouragement and support they have given us.

If you do not wish to receive our Newsletter in future, click on the Unsubscribe Link.