How do we teach our children what is really important? How do we impress on them – in a time where shortcuts and compromises seem to be the order of the day – the value of perseverance and pursuit of excellence? How do we make them believe that in the midst of the chaos of their slum communities or the scarcity of their village houses, they can look within themselves to find beauty, perfection and the drive to keep going?

We ask ourselves these questions every day. And we understand that the first and most essential step is for us to mirror these values for the children. In our schools, we try to create an environment where our children may experience the best of the arts, the most intriguing of the sciences and the most compassionate individuals.

Over the past few months, some of these experiences have stood out.

In March this year, some of our children in Mumbai and Igatpuri were treated to a dance performance by Stuti Nadkarni – a ten year old exponent of Kathak. This young girl who spends hours each day perfecting her dance, inspired our little ones tremendously. They were in awe of her elaborate costume and graceful movements.

Our older children were equally amazed by Lior Suchard – an entertainer who performs incredible mental feats and does ‘mind reading’. The Create Foundation, which invited our children for this show, also gave some of them an opportunity to showcase their dancing talents in a large scale theatre production.

Our theatre and cinema enthusiasts visited Whistling Woods International for a short camp that introduced them to the best of Indian Cinema. As part of their summer activities at the Dosi Vakeel Children’s Camp, a large group of children participated in judo, basketball and badminton training. Some engaged in experiential learning designed to develop imagination, creativity and concentration. Others participated in a brilliant workshop with artist Shital Mehta. The young artists worked on the theme
‘View from my window’ and painted cityscapes, landscapes and the view from their ‘fantasy world’.

A new experience for the students at our Education Centre for Tribal Children was the fun art workshop conducted by Art1st. A group of dynamic art instructors introduced our Pre Primary children to the work of Henri Matisse and other artists. Their colourful murals have been given a place of pride on their premises and were much appreciated by guests at their Annual Day function. The children spoke confidently about their art work, enacted a play on preservation of the environment and sang and danced delightfully.

Children across all our schools worked diligently to complete projects, assignments and exams at the end of the school year. They made us proud with their results at the S.S.C, H.S.C and NIOS Board Exams. As a special treat after their exams, a large number of them were invited to watch an IPL match and cheer for their favourite team – Mumbai Indians!

Our teachers, too, worked hard through the summer to prepare for the new academic year. One group of teachers attended the inspiring Education Camp conducted by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education in Pondicherry. Another group of teachers were trained in the Montessori approach to education by excellent resource persons and completed the Montessori Children's House Assistants Course (CHAC) conducted by Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

Our extended Aseema family – our donors and well wishers – continued to rally around us. The Rotary Club of Bombay West presented an award to Aseema for ‘Excellent Management of an NGO’. We were delighted at their acknowledgement of our work. The Celebrate Bandra Trust donated a brand new school bus which will help us bring more children safely to school. Some of our other supporters organized stationery collection drives, donated school books and clothes, offered paint to refurbish our Centre in Igatpuri and donated play equipment which has brought a new sparkle to our children’s eyes! We are so touched by your thoughtfulness and generosity. A special thank you to –