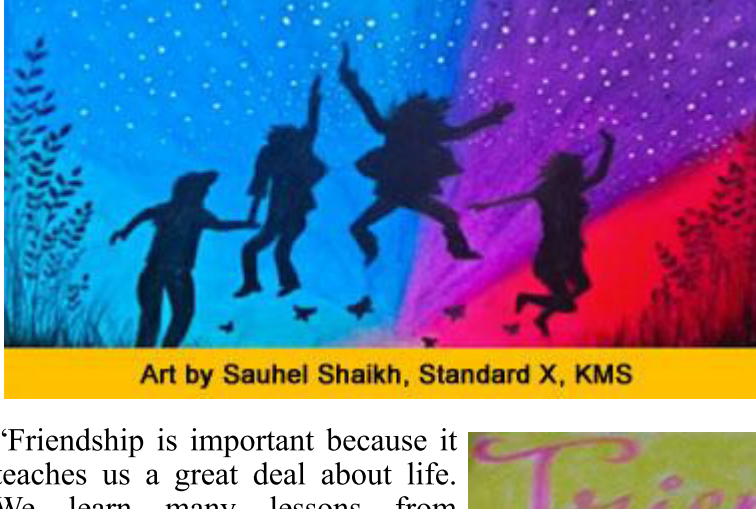


This edition commemorates Friendship - one of the most beautiful relationships in the world. In India, Friendship Day will be celebrated on the first of August, however as our children are Back to School for a new academic year, we are celebrating these special bonds.



Art by Sauhel Shaikh, Standard X, KMS

Philosophers, poets, artists and song writers have over the ages defined, written about and glorified friendship. But how much do our students appreciate friends and friendship? What is their perception of it? Is it a one way relationship or two? Is it easy or difficult? Temporary or permanent? What helps a friendship blossom?

We decided to ask our students, teachers and volunteers.

“Friendship is important because it teaches us a great deal about life. We learn many lessons from friendship which we won’t find anywhere else. We learn to love someone other than our family. Friendship never leaves us in bad times. We learn how to understand people and trust others. Our real friends will always motivate and cheer us. They will guide us onto the right path and save us from harm. Friendship also teaches a lot about loyalty, how to be loyal and get loyalty in return. Our friends are the ones that can change our lives.”  
*Sauhel Shaikh, Standard X, KMS.*

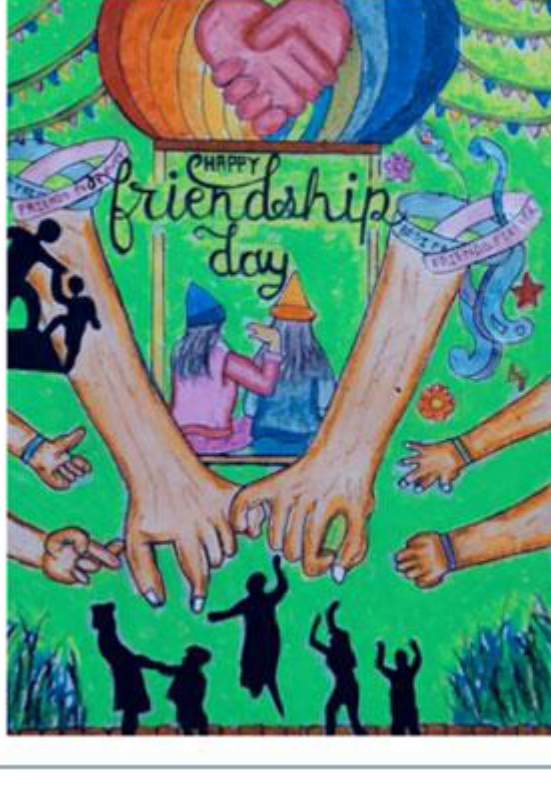


Art by Shradha Mourya Standard X, KMS

“Crédit Agricole CIB started working with Aseema in 2015, and each passing year has seen our ties grow stronger.

We have done several funding and support projects with Aseema over the years; our staff members have enthusiastically represented Aseema in the Mumbai Marathon every year; held art competitions, participated in friendly football matches and dance and play sessions with the students along with Tree Plantation drives for their school at Igatpuri.

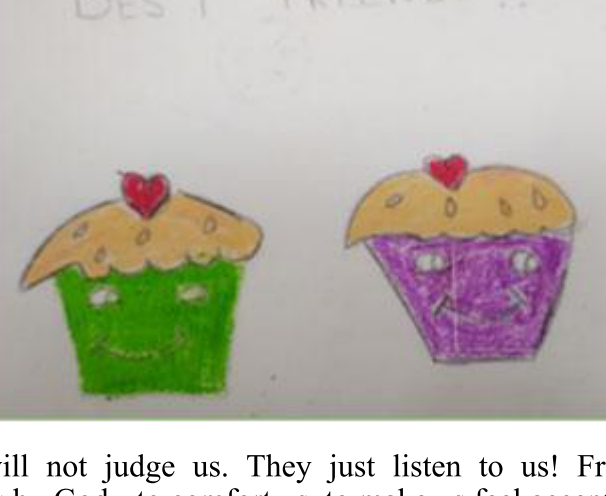
Each interaction has drawn us closer to the simple, nurturing ethos that represents Aseema and we remain truly impressed by the commitment of the Aseema team – ensuring that children from underprivileged backgrounds get quality education and a way out for lives entrenched in poverty and despair. We are proud to partner Aseema in its journey ahead!”  
*Credit Agricole CIB Team.*



“We know real friendship is a very valuable gift. We are social animals and need people with whom we can share our insecurities in depth so as to find a good solution. In this drawing I have tried to express concepts related to the bonding of friends and how we give them importance in our life. When we are all together we enjoy, dance, sing. We help each other in every situation and we’ll always assist the other in every circumstance. I have also shown two girls sitting with each other, to show how we give time to our friendship and how important the other is to me. No matter that we do not have any blood relation with our friends but it is so strong and promises to protect the other even in the worst of the times.”  
*Art by Nitin Chawla, Standard X, KMS*

“Friends! This word itself holds a sea of emotions. It reflects a sense of love, belonging, caring, sharing, humour, joy, partnership and everlasting memories. It is a friend with whom we laugh and for whom we cry. We can share our joys, our little doubts, our secrets. We do not hesitate to pour out our sorrows and worries in front of our friends because we know that they will not judge us. They just listen to us! Friendship is a unique relationship gifted to us by God - to comfort us, to make us feel accepted as we are. As time passes by, we realise that our friends have played a special part in the journey of life.”  
*Rehana Shaikh, Teacher.*

“How happy we were to go back to school. Dear God, please make the virus go away so I can be with my friends again. I want to go to art class again.”  
*Samta Sonawane - Std VIII – SMS*



Art by Vishal Dikar Std II, PCMS

“Friendship is a restful place  
Friendship is a pillar of strength  
Friendship is a green shore.”  
*Namrata Balu Pawar, Std VIII, ABSK*



Art by Midhat Fatima, Std. III, PCMS

“It is hard to find a genuine friend but once it works out, we make some brilliant memories.”  
*Aliya Ansari Std X, KMS*

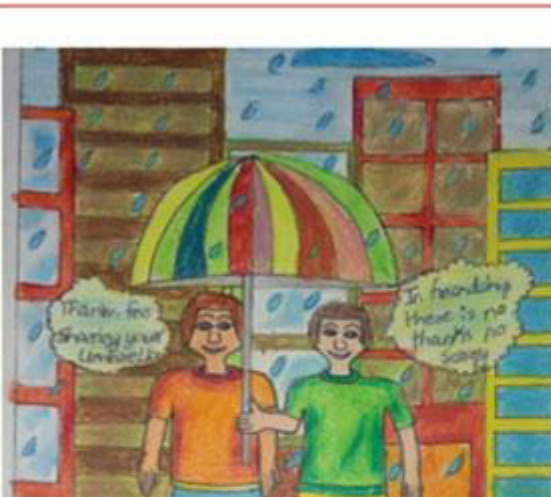
“The definition of a true friend is someone who has your back no matter what. One who watches out for you and ensures you are not in danger. Someone who will never deliberately lead you to making decisions that aren’t good for you. A true friend will always have your best interest at heart.”  
*Savina Patil, Teacher.*

“We often consider the people we meet as acquaintances and later form a bond with, as friends. This further blossoms into lifelong friendships. However, we often underestimate certain relations that also have the same value as a friendship between two people and that’s the bond between a mother and a daughter or a father and son.



“Friendship helps us in good and bad times.”  
Art by Sufiyan Shaikh Std IX, KMS.

During the lockdown we really had the space and time to rekindle relationships and bond with the people whom we have usually been taking for granted. Mothers and fathers are the ones whom we hold in high esteem and maintain a distance with when it comes to expressing emotions depending on their moods and natures. Sometimes this perception may prove to be wrong, more so when you discover in them kindred spirits. This pandemic has helped us value our parents as much as our friends. For me my mother is my only resting place. Sharing thoughts, supporting decisions and building confidence in the face of every storm single handed, is what I admire about her. Abraham Lincoln wrote, ‘All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe to my mother.’ His statement holds true in my life too. May this friendship season strengthen the existing friendship between people and help those looking for genuine friends.”  
*Ramona Dsouza, Secondary Incharge.*



“When I was working on this drawing I was imagining that one is me and the other is my friend. Friendship means sharing, caring and we do share everything.”  
Art by Varun Chourasiya Std VIII, KMS



“I wanted to paint a fantasy world where friends can play together.”  
Art by Ashish Jaiswal - Std X - SMS

Friendship is a promise true,  
To fix it you need no glue.

Friendship is not just a matter of a day or two,  
It’s a blessing each one must value.

Friendship is like a flower that will blossom in every way,  
Not just in August it should be celebrated every day.

Real friends are gems rare to find,  
They shower peace on your soul and mind.

Real friends never move apart,  
They are closest to the heart.

*Asma Qureshi, Teacher.*

“Where communication is wordless,

Where happiness does not require laughter, nor sorrow a display of tears,

Where all is understood wordlessly- this is Friendship.

One whose presence is subtle and although silent, can be a constant companion.”  
*Neha Gujar, Teacher.*



‘You’ve got a letter.’ Such a simple sentence but it filled our students with excitement to receive their first letters from their new pen pals.

The pen pal project, a pilot project with seven students participating, is a letter exchange programme between children from Aseema and the United States of America. It was launched in March 2021.

The students were clueless about pen pals and the fact that they could write and post letters to others in foreign countries was an eye opener to them. They were both nervous and excited writing to strangers, making new friends and exchanging letters, sharing their experiences, interests and hobbies.

Aseema’s students learnt that the pandemic was just as bad in the USA and that the students there too experienced the same feelings during the lockdown. They also learnt many things about their new friends and their interests.

We hope new bonds have been forged that will grow into strong friendships.

“This last year and a half we have witnessed a plethora of emotions. It has been a roller coaster ride. The complete lockdown threw life out of gear. But we human beings are tenacious creatures. The extra ordinary situations called for extraordinary solutions. Cloistered and quarantined, I turned to my virtual teacher friends’ group on Fb, WhatsApp, Twitter and have even made new buddies. My circle of friends has grown. I have connected with teachers from every corner of the world. It is exciting to say the least. We all have diverse hobbies, passions and strengths. Some are adventure sports enthusiasts and I lived vicariously through their escapades. I even discovered a hidden passion for these adrenal pumping exercises. The Liberal Arts group and I attend book launches, poetry reading sessions, music recitals and theatre performances; We even visited the Guggenheim Museum together, albeit virtually. Such escapades are normally followed by intense discussions and reviews of the event over endless cups of coffee late into the night after all lockdown forced chores are done.

There were the travel enthusiasts with whom I travelled to far off corners of the globe; again from the comfort of my drawing room. As a perennial budget traveller, I would never have such exciting company, travel so extensively or learn as much as I did if I set out on my own.

Though we are diverse in culture, race and religion yet we have bonded. We discuss pedagogy in the new normal, we support, encourage, advise, laugh and even mourn together. Our very distance strangely brought us together through the gloom and doom around, to spread a message of hope and resilience.

As much as I await the lifting of this lockdown, these virtual friends have become an integral part of my life and have a special place in my heart.

They are friends who have become family.”

*Confessions of a teacher  
Maria D’Souza, Acting In-charge*

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