

VIDYA Mumbai

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VOICES



An eventful quarter just went by: Summer camps were in full swing at all the centers with plenty of dance, drama, art, literature and field trips. Children rejoiced in creativity and new experiences while the VIDYA team were on their toes planning exciting activities and events.

As we take some time off to rejuvenate for another fun-filled year ahead, let's look back at the snapshots of successful moments at VIDYA.

And before we go back with renewed vigor, to our mission to Educate Empower and Transform, we invite you dear reader to be a part of it. Come volunteer, sponsor a child or program or simply spread the VIDYA word! As you educate a child, you educate a nation but more importantly you continue to educate yourself.

Three cheers to knowledge, three cheers to VIDYA!

EVENTS

VIDYA kids get filmed for in the opening ceremony of Commonwealth Games! Backpack Films invited 15 VIDYA children to the filming of "As Live" – a short video documentary featuring the exuberance of children from various NGOs. This film will be screened at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games 2014 at Glasgow. Various dancers, folk musicians and children came together to represent the colour, tradition and pride of India. Students also got the opportunity to meet their idol, cricket legend and UNICEF India Ambassador, Sachin Tendulkar, at the event.



Summer Camp Finale @ Powai: The month of April marked the beginning of the much-awaited Summer Camp. At the four Beyond School centres across Powai, the camp brought out the theatrical and artistic abilities of the children. The children embellished the settings of their stories with colourful props. VIDYA Nattya House which was founded two years ago, by theatre artiste Anita Salim, came alive again, giving the children a platform for complete self-expression and confidence building. The grand finale of the Summer Camp at Powai was attended by Ms. Rashmi Misra - the founder and Chairperson of VIDYA. The event created a peer learning environment where the children enacted on various social issues ranging from elections to child sexual abuse. The dance, songs and plays kept the audience engaged throughout.



A Magical World: Students of the Bhavishya-yaan project went into the world of fantasy and imagination this summer, exploring cartoon characters, both national and international. From Aladdin and Jungle Book to Chhota Bheem and Barney, the classes came alive with movies, word games, story-telling, art and craft and tips on animation. Books were made by hand, skits were performed and songs were sung. Some Bhavishya-yaan centers also took field trips to the museum and a biscuit factory while others busied themselves with debates, mock elections and dances.



“The biggest compliment was when a parent told us that she hoped that Bhavishya-yaan was a part of her life when she was growing up, in that case her life would have been considerably better.”

Firoozi Bhatena,
mentor, GK Marg

Sports Day: The last Sunday morning of April witnessed more than 150 VIDYA children coming together from all the centres for the Sports Day. Games like short put, relay and football were enthusiastically played and cheered by children, participants, friends and donors of VIDYA. Teachers and adults participated too and everyone played and competed with full gusto. The event came to an end successfully with a vote of thanks, leaving thrilling memories of everyone present.

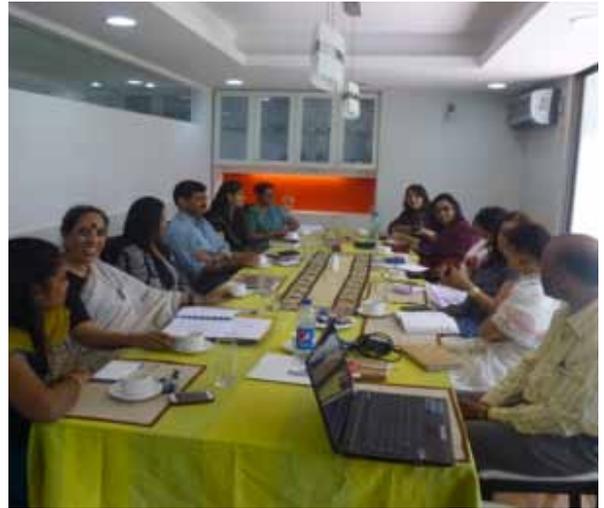


Education & 'Empowerment':

Action Breaks Silence founded by UK-based Debi Steven conducted two workshops on personal safety and self-defence for VIDYA's students of the Bhavishya-yaan project at the Vile Parle and Banganga centers. A highly trained team of men and women from UK led by Debi and assisted by trainee self-defence instructors from CSK Kalari, Marari Beach Resort, Kerala and the Red Brigade from Lucknow, encouraged the girls to shed their inhibitions and fight back at the right times. The workshops provided the girls with both useful techniques and a sense of empowerment.



Future talk: With social media being the buzz word these days, Alpna Manchanda, an expert in the field visited Mumbai to brief the team on its benefits for the social sector. Chairperson Rashmi Misra, who was also in Mumbai, spoke about her own vision for the organisation in the years ahead. The two-day meetings held at IIT Powai, concluded with a motivational session by Prof Mohan Krishnamoorthy, CEO, IIT-Monash, on the benefits of making Big Audacious Goals (BAG) both personal and professional. Team bonding, visionary insights from the founder and SMART goals captured the essence of the meet.



Sugary Moments: It was a day where our tiny tots turned into bakers! A visit to Monginis Factory in Bhiwandi turned out to be a sugary day. The children learned the methods of baking and garnishing the cake. They also tried their hand at decorating muffin cakes, which turned out very beautiful.



Go Green: The older kids at the Beyond School programs in Powai visited a farm nursery at Panvel. The children experienced a plethora of medicinal, indigenous, developed plants, rare varieties and tabletop landscapes. A soothing experience for all!



Highlights

Election mat-ters: As election mania took over the country, our students weren't left far behind. A non-profit company working toward disseminating information about the elections, Election Mat-ters generously sent a bunch of paper table mats for all the Bhavishya-yaan centers. These mats had creative puzzles and election trivia that could be easily comprehended by the students, as they had fun solving them.



Seven White Knights: A young team of 7 led by Ms. Asha Sunderajan, Director, Children's Technology Workshop, presented a low-cost solution named 'Shakti' to forecast landslides. Shakti is made using a Bisleri bottle and electrical circuits and can create awareness and perhaps save lives and loss of property. The team presented facts on landslides and their effects and then taught the making of the model. Thanks to the workshop, the students now plan to make more models and install them in landslide prone areas in the city.



Social enterprise expo: Members of the Women's Program and the office staff from Vidya Powai participated in Abhyuday 2014, an organized NGO and Social Enterprise Expo during a first of its kind social festival at IIT-Bombay in early March.

Tech-savvy: Computer Certification of Big Byte, Tally and NIIT were awarded to students of VIDYA's Computer Centre who had successfully completed their course.

Scientific gyan and more: Dinesh Hedda, from Goa, a full marathon runner SCMM 2014 and a science hobbyist, shared his running experience and gave the children some scientific gyan. Beyond School students enjoyed the 25 science kits he had brought for them.

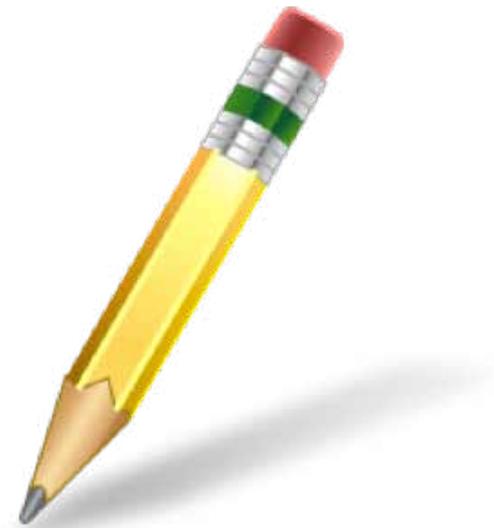


Birds and the world: 45 students from the Beyond School Program showcased their handiwork at the Environment Exhibition. This was the culmination of the 16-session program conducted by SPROUTS Environment Trust that followed a curricular approach, focusing on activity and learning, and helping children interact with and observe the wonders of Mother Earth.



Success Stories

RTE Implementation: This year too VIDYA took up the RTE Act as tool for creating awareness in the communities. VIDYA helped more than 10 parents in simplifying the process of admission under RTE Act by assisting them in school visits, filling up forms and interacting with children and their mothers. Out of the 10 applications submitted, 2 of the children were qualified and chosen for free education till they reach class 8. In the coming months, we plan to form community help desks and reach out to more and more children.



Urmila Waghmare: 30-year-old Urmila Waghmare joined VIDYA's women's empowerment program Margam in October 2012. With great dedication, she completed all the courses offered: sewing, beautician and Warli painting, in a span of a year. Urmila now feels more confident and independent as a person; she says 'I feel like home at VIDYA and recommend it to women who wish to sharpen their personal and professional skills.' Today, Urmila is working as an assistant trainer and helping in spreading awareness on the values of VIDYA Margam.

Teacher Speak

Girl power unlimited: The Debi Steven event on self-defence at Kavlemath Banganga Municipal school on 11th April 2014 created quite a stir at our centre. Debi Steven's team at Action Breaks Silence dressed in red t-shirts and stood out prominently. Debi spoke about herself and the work she and her team had done so far for underprivileged women in India. Our girls cheered loudly when Debi announced that each of them could participate in the exercises.

What amazed our girls was the fact that being tiny did not matter while tackling even the heftiest of assaulters. They were shown parts on the assaulters body which they could attack and then bring them down to the ground.

What inspired the girls more was watching us teachers also do the same moves. The hall was buzzing with excitement and shrieks of awe as teacher and student alike, overcame the powerful, strong trainers.

Having Debi's team as part of the Summer Camp proved to be an exciting addition as one of the themes selected by the Banganga centre for the summer camp was 'Save the Girl child'. A play on this theme was performed for parents and Rotarians as part of the grand finale.

For girls who suffer from poor self image issues, due to old and suffocating mind sets of uneducated family members, this workshop brought a modicum of self confidence that something can be done to defend oneself from abuse. It brought a ray of hope and showcased the inherent

strength of a female.

**By Jhanvi Vissanji, mentor,
Bhavishya-yaan program**



Educational Tips

Explore and Express: An approach that brings exploration and expression together in order to help children learn better, Integrated Arts in Learning (IAL) is a unique methodology that brings different art forms together. Once these art forms are woven together, into a theme, students engage in a joyful and wholesome form of experiential learning.

IAL does not art forms like drama, music and writing, as distinct resource but integrates them in the planning and implementation of a classroom task. This provides the students with a non-threatening platform for learning.

In IAL, exploration and expression are facilitated via drama, art, craft, music, movement and rhythm; use of indigenous materials and body work - all providing limitless

opportunity to think, feel and create.

The crux of the approach is the belief in this method and the attitude of the facilitator. Respect for individual expression, encouraging every learner, providing opportunity to experience different forms of stimuli are integral parts of IAL. An experience of IAL in the classroom leads to the following:

- Enables learners to choose their own learning styles.
- Provides options to work with varied materials and optimize their benefits.
- Leads to goal-oriented learning
- Builds problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- Nourishes self-esteem and confidence
- Instills a sense of cooperative learning with peers

At a workshop conducted in April, teachers were taught the effective use of this technique and shown how they could apply it for the summer camp when literature and theatre would be in focus. The process was emphasized and elements like treatment of the script, characterization, props, sound and music were discussed.

The participants discovered their own potential and formed strong connects with their work and the approach, with some saying they had truly worked with their hearts: 'Dil se kaam kiya!'

By Sangeeta Gupta, Vice-Chair, VIDYA, Mumbai



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