

SAKSHAM NEWSLETTER APRIL, 2013

Dear friends,

A lot of good stuff happened during the last twelve months and we would like to share them with you.

As we always keep emphasizing, all of you who have been supporting the activities in many different ways, are all responsible for any achievements that happen at Saksham and on behalf of the children, we would like to thank you all sincerely for the love and commitment that you have generously bestowed on them.

A trip was arranged for a group of around thirty of the senior children to meet Magsaysay Award Winner Shri Rajinder Singh (Popularly known as Waterman) at his Tarun Bharat Sangh Ashram in Alwar.







This was an unique experience for the children, who were taken around to see for themselves how the rain harvesting methods and small check dams built by the villagers under the guidance of Shri Rajinder Singh had changed the moisture content and thence the green cover of the area. They also got to see the Arvari River which was one of the rivers that had dried up and which had come back to life again with the gradual increase in the ground water level due to the large number of check-dams built.



Shri Rajinder Singh spend a lot of time with the children, recounting his experiences and telling them how important it was to preserve the water.



The two day stay at the Ashram is going to remain etched in the memories of these children for sure and hopefully they will do their bit in conserving water and making others aware of it as well. This also gave the children a rare opportunity to have fun together, away from the indigent circumstances of their everyday life.

They thoroughly enjoyed it.

The Shamdasani Foundation has been continuously supporting this project for some time now. Beginning with a small donation of Rs. 2500/- several years ago, they had subsequently increased the amount to Rs.10000/annum and for the past two years to a generous sum of Rs. 1 lakh/ per annum with the condition that Rs.25000/ be set aside as a corpus and the remaining Rs.75000/- be used towards the operational expenses. A suggestion had also been made by them that we should try and work towards raising a matching contribution from the section of the community that was being supported by this project.



The Saksham Trustees did consider charging a small fee from the students, but had unanimously decided not to do so, as we were of the view that providing free education was the least we could do for the children, who were being deprived of the same because of the economic backwardness of their families.

But we did indeed understand the line of thinking that if there was some contribution from the childrens' side, they would indeed get a greater sense of being a part of the whole project.

With the above perspective and with the help of the volunteers working in the IBM India's office located in Noida, an exhibition of the craft items prepared by the students was held in the IBM premises. This was well attended and we were able to raise an amount of nearly Rs.12000/- from the sale of those items.

We also thank the volunteers of IBM for spending time in the school and taking classes as well as engaging them in many other activities.

Our sincere thanks also goes especially to Rajeev Gupta, who helped us getting financial support of Rs.1.5 lakh from IBM.



AvishaSeth, Ritesh,Bisht, Anil, Satyam , Manoj Negi, Deepak and Sadhana and all the others , a really big thanks to all of you. We hope you will continue to extend your hug of support to these children.



The students of Saksham also raised some money separately through the sale of greeting cards, painted by them.



The Shamdasani Foundation has now also sent us their donation of Rs. 1 lakh for the current financial year. Sincere thanks to Shri Ramesh Shamdasani, who had personally visited the school on an earlier occasion and assessed for himself the efficacy of our project. Indeed we regard the financial help as a token of the trust he has in our commitment to the cause.

We also thank Shri Vinay Chaddha and his team of young Engineering students from the Amity College of Engineering for making the older children familiar with the basics of computer programming.

The sattva nutritional supplement sponsored by a well wisher and the banana nutritional supplement sponsored by the Rotary Club, Delhi South, is being continued and we are grateful for their involvement in the project.



The visits of the students of the Birla Vidya Niketan, the DAV school, Father Agnel's school and the Army Public school, along with their teachers was indeed a welcome step on their part.



The participation of the students as well as the books and stationery and other gift items brought by them, all went towards making this a community project, which is how we had envisioned this from the very start.



Thanks again to Smt.Rajeshwari Thiagarajan for her continued active support to the school in many, many ways. Her visits always brought in fresh supporters and new ways of helping the children. We do look upon her as someone who will continue to be involved with the school.

Members of the St. Vincent's Society has been visiting the school every month and distributing buns, biscuits and bananas. For the last Christmas too, they had distributed slices of delicious cake to all the children. Clothes and books have also come in. Thanks to all of you.

The tailoring classes and the weekly medical check-ups are still on.

Interest free loans upto Rs.5000/- , are still being given to at least eight different families throughout the year, which amounts are being returned in monthly instalments of Rs. 500/-

This was a scheme started a few years ago from the funds donated by Late Shri Amit Goel, who was a patron of Saksham from Mumbai and who had desired that part of the money be kept aside for a scheme, that would benefit the families, other than the expenses incurred for running the school , The tailoring class also had its genesis then. The Saksham Trustees had decided to continue both these schemes, the loans because the migrant families in this locality are forced to pay 10% per month as interest on any amount taken from the money lenders and the tailoring class because it equips the girls with a source of income.

On the occasion of Independence day, the students had again engaged themselves in a cleanliness drive and in presenting street dramas on the importance of hygiene, water conservation and the harmful effects of polythene.







A small endeavour has also been started in the school towards reduced use of polythene, by having the children make packets from old newspaper, which are then distributed to the shops in the neighbourhood. Hopefully this will help create more awareness in them about the urgent need to do away with polythene and introduce the concept of re-cycling.

Thanks to the volunteers from the Computer Sciences Corporation who spend their weekends with the students and had also organized other activities in the school, which were both informative and entertaining.









Thanks to Akanksha Yadav who has regularly been holding art and craft classes for the children on weekends.







Akanksha also took the initiative to get an eye-check-up camp organized by the I-Care Hospital in Sec-26, Noida.









Thanks too to Vijaya , who also helped in the co-ordination. Around 400 children went through the examination, in the school, sixty five of them going through detailed examination at the hospital itself. Spectacles were prescribed for twenty one of them and the cost of these spectacles has been borne by some well-wishers.

Saksham is grateful to Dr. Chowdhury, CEO of the Hospital, Shri Srimanto, Chief Fund Raising Officer and Dr. Geetha Srinivasan, who very patiently examined all the children very thoroughly. Thanks too to Shri Mukesh and all the others who helped.

There is a whole network of our regular supporters, mention of whom is not individually being made in this newsletter for the only reason that it would make this letter too long. We are grateful to each of you.

We have been uploading photographs of all the activities mentioned above on our Facebook page.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saksham-Kids/162722063756271>

The regular classes are going on very well and the children have definitely gained from them. Every visitor to Saksham has gone back convinced that Saksham's efforts have not been in vain.

We hope all of you will continue to be part of the Saksham family and support it in any which way you can.

A copy of the statement of moneys received and spent every month for the period 1.4.2012 to 31.3.13 is also attached with this mail. Do have a close look and point out discrepancies, if any come to your notice. As you can see, the expenditure has been increasing and without the financial support of our well-wishers, we will not be able to take this forward. Do pitch in generously

Thanks once again.

With warm regards,
Nadira Razak
(General Secretary, Saksham)