

Piali Ashar Alo School

October-December 2017

Another year is behind us, we've concluded our very tenth school year! And there's no deserved celebration without a bit of 'pomp'. We celebrated Children's Day, hosted musicians from abroad, organized eye examinations, participated in the cultural program in Kolkata, handed out report cards and decorated the Christmas tree. We also celebrated with our friends from humanitarian organization CED, which celebrated its own 25th anniversary this year.

1. CHILDREN'S DAY



India celebrates Children's Day on November 14th each year. This day marks the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru, who is remembered for his love of and dedication towards children. "The children of today will make the India of tomorrow" is one of his more famous sayings, speaking volumes of the attention he has paid to the children of India. On this day, children are given sweets and toys, while schools organize various debates as well as musical

and dance presentations. Special attention is paid to orphans.

We are of course aware of the fact that children's day is in fact every day – children need and deserve care, love, support and the opportunities to develop their skills, abilities, talents and full potentials all the time. Therefore, despite the fact that our school also celebrates this beautiful day, we really take care to ensure that our students receive the love and support they need the entire time they remain under our care.



2. OUR STUDENTS ON THE BIG STAGE

We are very grateful to Jennifer Heemstra and the Kolkata Lion's Club for providing our students with the opportunity to dance on the big stage of the Cultural Centre in Kolkata. Jennifer is a concert pianist who leads the non-profit organization Kolkata Classics,

which in turn organizes concerts, educational programs and free of charge medical and social support for those in need. She works alongside artists, business people, hospitals and other non-profit organizations to help make a difference to the world around her.

3. CED CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF HUMANITARIAN WORK



The CED Foundation, which funded the construction of our new school building and which also sponsors a large number of our students has stood by our side for several years now. CED unselfishly assists over 500,000 individuals in need over four continents across the globe, irrespective of ethnicity, religion or gender. Their motto 'Let's Help One Another' resonates their heartfelt desire and efforts to assist those in

need, all the while respecting human integrity and dignity.

Anup and I felt very honoured to have been invited to the gala celebration of their 25th anniversary. On this occasion, we had the opportunity to meet a number of project leaders from India, Tanzania, Peru and Romania. We introduced our own school and work to donors, volunteers and our friends at CED. This was a wonderful day of socializing and exchanging ideas and visions for the future, one that will long remain in our hearts. Thank you!



3. EYE EXAMINATION



Sincere thanks to the ARGOBBHAWVA organization that worked alongside Kolkata Lion's Club for carrying out general eye examinations not only for all of our students, but also for their parents and other members of the community. The village elderly are often especially neglected, receiving poor health care and suffering a poor quality of life. What a great result - we are so grateful that some of those tested will receive free of charge cataracts

surgery!

4. CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS



This December, our students also decorated the Christmas tree, acted out the nativity story, sang Christmas songs and enjoyed Christmas cake. Because December also marks the end of our school year, the month is truly a 'happy' one. Our

celebrations were also joined by some of the parents and girls from a nearby orphanage.

5. LIVE IN SERIES



We were so excited to clap and dance along to the excellent American Bluegrass Journeymen band, who strive to introduce traditional American “bluegrass” music to a wider audience across the world. Thanks to “Live in Series” for organizing this special event. While enjoying the music, our students also become acquainted with lesser known instruments such as the violin, the mandolin, the “dobro” guitar and the banjo. The icing on the cake was the unexpected visit of a six year old boy from a neighbouring village, who played a Bengali song for us on the violin.

6. OUR GIRLS

Priya, Pushpo, Susoma, Sima and Joyeeta are among the first students who enrolled in our



school. They have been with us as our story has unfolded: when we were still in small rented spaces with dirt floors and covered in asbestos... when we moved into larger spaces with plain grey walls... and finally now, as we occupy our own school premises. A number of their classmates have left the school and gotten married. Priya, Pushpo, Susoma, Sima and Joyeeta are therefore our heroes! Now young ladies, they have persevered and conquered the many obstacles in their paths. They've successfully concluded the eighth grade and have developed into confident young women who we believe will build a brighter future for themselves. Congratulations on your success!



December is also the month we register a new class of our youngest students. If you know of anyone who would be prepared to help one of our girls, we ask you to please let us know.



Thanks also to Alenka and Bernarda, teachers and pedagogues from my native Slovenia who came to visit us along their busy travels, bringing sweets and balloons for our students. We were also very happy to receive young volunteer Roisin who came to see us all the way from Ireland and who prepared lovely Christmas activity workshops for our students.



On our upcoming 10th anniversary, we'd also like to especially thank all the individual sponsors who've been with us from the very beginning. Thanks to our Light of Hope Association for staying with us, thanks for the translations, the 'homework motivation' stickers, the photography, the web site, the funds transfers, the donations, the action plans you've carried out almost singlehandedly and in a moment's notice. We really appreciate your efforts and dedication to help our kids learn and to keep us running and motivated. Sincere thanks to Mrs. Simona Klancnik for her free accounting services.

You are all warmly invited to the celebration of our 10th anniversary on 24th February 2018 at our school premises at Piali.



