

# Piali Ashar Alo School

## Januar - April 2022

---

With great enthusiasm and gratitude we write that the schools in West Bengal finally reopened for all students on February 16 of this year. The schools were closed for two years, so you can imagine that the first day of reopening was very special for both our students and teachers. We were a little hindered by wearing masks and trying to keep our distance, but even that couldn't stifle our joy. Honestly, the rules regarding masks were not very strict, also because we have already entered hot summer months and it would be really difficult with a mask on our faces. So we can say that we are learning and working in a relaxed atmosphere, grateful that we can be back at the school benches again.

Two years without regular classes have left great consequences on children's learning abilities and though there is some talk about this matter there are no specific guidelines for the teachers how to bridge the gap. The level of knowledge of the mother tongue has fallen sharply. Children who have already read fluently stumble upon reading basic texts. Computing skills are also poorer. We are especially concerned about low internal motivation to learn. For two years, our children were more or less left to fend for themselves, they spent their time according to their wishes, and rarely did anyone encourage them to read or write. For our part, during lockdowns we tried to stay in touch with our students as much as possible, but especially for children living in an environment where education is not a value, regular classes are irreplaceable.

So we have no choice but to roll up our sleeves and bravely face new challenges.



## **1. Together again**

Our classes came to life again. We are especially proud of our youngest students. A sincere thanks to all our new godparents!



## **2. Republic Day and Holi**

Those of you who read us regularly will agree that there is no report of ours without mentioning celebrations of one or two holidays/festivals. In India, we celebrate all the holidays with a lot of pomp. And since this has not been possible on a large scale in the last two years due to restrictions, we have made up for it this year 😊.





### **3. Physics Workshop**

When children experience textbook knowledge through their own senses, magic really happens. A sincere gratitude to our dear friend and sister Sushmita Chakraborty who introduced us to Professor Dr Rajib Ganguly, Dean of UEM, and his team of students from University of Engineering and Management. They organized a wonderful physics workshop through which they presented our girls with a number of physical concepts in a very interesting and, above all, experiential way.



### **4. Morning walks**

In January and February, the mornings are still cool enough that we could take advantage of them for morning walks. It was something completely new for our girls, but they were thrilled to discover that they have more energy to learn after such active mornings. At the same time, we were discovering corners of our village that we didn't even know before and collecting different local fruits and even catch fish.



## **5. Board Examinations**

In India, board examinations refer to the public examinations that are conducted at the end of the 10th grade education and at the end of the 12th grade education. The scores achieved in these exams are considered very important for getting into universities, professional courses or training programmes and other occupations. This year 9 of our girls are appearing for their board exams after 10<sup>th</sup> grade and 3 of them after 12<sup>th</sup> grade. We keep our fingers crossed for good results. We are really proud of them that they persevered despite the challenges; while some of their former classmates are already married, homemakers or/and doing maidservant's work.



## **6. Free Eye Check Up Camp**

In collaboration with Lions Calcutta Greater Medicare Center we organized free eye check up Camp for our students, teachers and villagers. The objective of this camp was to spread awareness on eye disorders, early detection of ailments, and to detect refractive errors and provide corrective glasses free of cost to the underprivileged communities. Overall 70 individuals were screened for eye diseases, 15 glasses were gifted to those with refractive errors and more 8 patients were identified for cataract surgery. Some of the people were also provided eye drops and free medicines.





## **7. Room upgrade and green roof**

The construction of additional premises is progressing nicely; we need a few months more to complete it. We have also started arranging a green roof sponsored by Knauf Insulation. We will plant grass, flowers and vegetables, which will be a unique example of a landscaped terrace far and wide. Indoors will be cooler in the very hot summer months.



## **8. Light a Smile**

“Light a smile” is Eastern India’s largest Carnival for lesser privileged children and it was an honor to be a part of it. Lots of music and dance with great singers, dancers, animators and free gifts. Our girls had super fun and we are grateful to Round Table India for organizing such an amazing event.



Finally, this is a photo of the beautiful products made by older girls. We hope they draw a smile on your faces too.



**A sincere gratitude to all of You who stand by our side so that we can continue to help our community.**

Yours Piali Ashar Alo Family

[www.pialiasharalo.org](http://www.pialiasharalo.org)