## Asha for Education

## Site visit report for SAEA 2020

Feb 5,2020

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We planned trip to visit Sri Aurobindo's Educational Academy and Society, (SAEA) on February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. One of the board members, of New Creation International, Bryan Cernicek from St Louis visited the school along with us. Sri Aurobindo's Educational Academy and Society, a non-profit registered society was formed in 2010 with the aim and commitment of improving and upgrading the quality of education in the rural schools of India. The school is dedicated to following the philosophy of integral education and to helping children become productive global citizens. On one hand they are not sufficiently developed intellectually to pursue higher education and on the other they do not acquire the skills required to be employed productively.

Principal and office staff walked us around the school to visit all the classrooms and activities. After lunch they inaugurated their new water filtration system, which made it easier for them to have their own clean drinking water.

At 3 P.M we were asked to distribute bananas for all the students. With generous support from Asha for Education and other organization, school is able to provide essential nutrition for all students daily.

Students demonstrated their march past and pyramid practice as part of their physical education curriculum. Emphasis is given to Physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual education.

Second day we visited lower classes and shared educational material brought by Bryan. We spent time playing with the students and interacting with teachers about their progress and future plans.

We visited each classroom and interacted with students and teachers and Bryan handed pen pal letters from students in St Louis, to second grade students.

We observed students and science teacher working in the herbal harden. Students were learning about the different herbal plants, their medicinal value and they educate their parents about herbs for common ailments.

All the teachers shared their journey at the school. Most of them said it has been a great learning opportunity of new method of learning and teaching as they were taught rote memorization and were focused only at intellectual level.

All the teachers participate in the physical education, morning concentration, and cultural and sensory training program along with students.

<u>English</u> – Unlike most other schools in India where English is introduced through the mechanical memorization of the alphabets. Sri Aurobindo's School teaches it through phonetics and phonemic awareness. Children are also taught vocabulary and spoken English beginning from Nursery. This has made a big difference to their ability to read and understand English.

Second grade students write letters to their pen pals in St Louis, which helps students to practice writing skills, learn about other cultures and world views. Over all school is progressing in the right direction and teachers are working hard to learn and implement principles of Integral Education.

They are trying to create good foundation using more hands on learning projects, sensory awareness.

Customized work books and story books are being developed by volunteers to help them to learn

## **New Initiatives**

School added 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 2019 and are planning to add 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2020.. They plan to get official permission from the government to further extend the classes till the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

A dance and karate class was introduced this year. A teacher from a nearby town comes to the school twice a week. The students and teachers are enthusiastic and involved. We plan to appoint a music teacher also.

School administration took a bold step to set up a hostel for boys. The facilities are rudimentary and basic because of limited budget but the experience gained will help us to accept more boys next year. Parents will gain confidence in our capacity to run a hostel.

We were happy to see progress of the school with limited resources that are available to them and they are grateful to Asha for continued generous support.

















