April 2018 @ Vengapakkam

At the end of the year it is exam time for REWARD teachers. All the teachers, from primary to Higher secondary level, take the exclusive, SMART Test in Math, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English covering the middle school to high school syllabus.

The post lunch session, as usual, was used for assigning the summer project work. It was suggested that the teachers should read the books of recent Tamil Authors (born after 1960). The teachers were divided into 10 groups and the choice of authors included S. Ramakrishnan, Jayamohan, Joe de Cruz, Perumal Murugan, Vinayaka Murugan, Kanmani Gunasekaran, Azhagiya Periyavan, Su. Venugopal, Imayam, Subha. During the vacation each group of teachers has to read at least five books by one of these authors (selected by them), discuss among themselves and come prepared for a presentation of a summary of the works read, the thought and if possible a literary critique of the chosen author.

June 2018 @ Vadakku Vayalur

During this first meeting of the academic year, the REWARD monthly training program commenced with the presentation of their Project work on Tamil Authors.

It was a pleasant surprise for the teachers, as one of the authors they read, Joe de Cruz (winner of Sahithya Academy) himself was present for the project assessment. In addition Vivekanandan- a publisher, Sukhdev-a writer, Muthaiya- a Tamil Literary enthusiast, Manushi Jayabharathi- a research scholar in Tamil, Amarantha- a well known writer and translator, Pon
Dhanasekaran - a Journalist, Vignesh - an Engineering student and a voracious reader of Tamil books listened to the presentation by the teachers. In summing up, author Joe de Cruz was full of appreciation for the teachers and mentioned that the literary criticism by teachers came close to professional ones. REWARD trust is glad to mention that he wrote an article about this event in the magazine "Kakkai Siraginile".

July 2018 @ Vayalur

This teacher training class started with "mathematics of rational numbers and squares" by President V. Sridhar. It was followed by a revision of "reflection on curved surfaces" by resource person Dr S Kalavathi. The training session also has a feature where teachers are selected at random and are asked to take the class they recently took in their school. Teacher Vadivelu elaborated on "Historical events during 6th Century B.C." and teacher Rajasekar gave a class on "Ezhuthhilakkanam".

President V. Sridhar

Aug 2018 @ Sooradinagalam

The first activity of the teacher training program this month was an "introduction to base 2 and conversion from base 10 to base 2 " by V. Sridhar, President REWARD Trust. Following this Treasurer B. Ananthi took a class on Economics exposing the teachers to the introductory aspects at the level of class XII. Resource person Dr S Kalavathi’s class was on "Laws of Chemical combinations" which included problem solving on this concept.
Sept 2018 @ Ammanambakkam

This class started with President V Sridhar explaining the concept of floor and ceiling in mathematics. Subsequently there was the continuation on economics class by Treasurer B Ananthi, where she handled the topic "Production".

Dr S. Kalavathi conveyed concepts behind "Laws of Chemical combinations". Teacher Pavithra, a recent entry into REWARD trust, demonstrated how to introduce addition at class II level. She got a lot of suggestions from other teachers. Teacher Kamakshi, an experienced teacher that she is, demonstrated how a prose class should be done to make it easy for the children who do not have the English speaking background at home.

Oct 2018 @ Neelamangalam

During school visit President V Sridhar identified the abstraction abilities on symmetry in a girl of V class at Parameswara Mangalam Primary School. This motivated him to give a class on symmetry and its mathematical aspects to the teachers. He enabled the teachers to appreciate symmetry preserving reflection (diagonal, horizontal and vertical) transformations. Dr S. Kalavathi took a class on "Mole Concept" and made the teachers solve problems to fix the concept.
Dr. Rani George from IGCAR, a consistent donor for REWARD Trust, who was an observer later joined to visit the homes of Priyanka who is the topper of Neelamangalam High School and got admission in Women's Christian College Chennai and Manikandan also from Neelamangalam who secured admission through written examination to continue his Post Graduation in Chemistry at Madurai Kamaraj University. Both these students, beneficiaries of the REWARD-ASHA initiative, were identified for a scholarship from a fund run by some of the scientists of IGCAR.

Nov 2018 @ Koovathur PS (shifted from Kadambadi)

The teacher training class this month had an interesting speaker Prof. Arasu Former Head and Professor Department of Tamil, Madras University. He presented his thesis on origin of Saivaite Tradition in Tamil Nadu. This topic evoked a lot of participation from the teachers. Especially those with Tamil and History background interacted with the speaker with probing questions. The session was lively throughout with some agreeing and some not with the views expressed.

Prof. Arasu

The post lunch session had a class by Teacher Rajarajan on Tissues in Biology. This topic, considered as tough to grasp for the students on its first introduction was presented by the teacher with lots of enabling pictures. It was followed by a class by Teacher Thanuja who elaborated on the History of Stone age. Her picture collection on the various evidences of lifestyle of the people, their tools and so on gave an experience of visiting a well preserved museum.

Teacher Rajarajan

Teacher Thanuja
Dec 2018 @ Nerumbur

November had the first SMART test of the year and hence this class had a long session on discussion of the SMART paper. Teacher Kanimozhi gave an excellent poetry class with a number of charts and pictures and almost took the whole lot of teachers through a train journey.

Teacher Kanimozhi  
Teacher Kumaresan

This was followed by teacher Kumaresan who continued the lesson on Tissues by focussing on "Animal Tissue".

Ms. D. Jeeva  
Listening to the details of a novel course

This session also had a student Ms. D. Jeeva from SVYASA University Karnataka, sharing her experience in her Bachelor in Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences (BNYS) Program and describing how this course can be a career option for some of the interested students

Jan 2019 @ Anaicut

A quick test on units in physics by Dr S Kalavathi initiated the training program for this month.  
V. Sridhar introduced Sets and Probability. Discussion on December SMART test paper followed subsequently. There were two interesting classes by teachers. One on "Farm Fresh" for primary children by teacher J. Arulmozhi, with real and paper earth worms, which was appreciated by the new recruits of REWARD trust as a model to be followed in their classes. The other was by Senior Teacher Divya who demonstrated how triangles in mathematics must be introduced with lot of electricity free teaching aids.
Post lunch session had a guest addressing the teachers. Sundararajan from Eternal Arts, shared his experience in writing poetries, stories. He also shared his experience in encouraging office attendant boys, coming from poorer sections, to read further, attain higher qualifications and reach better stations in life.

Feb 2019 @ Pandur

Training session at Pandur started with an "introduction to factorials" followed by SMART Math paper discussion by the President V. Sridhar who went in detail explaining to the teachers the nuances of problem solving. Math questions are always something beyond the book but answerable with the knowledge base acquired up to class IX. Resource person Dr S Kalavathi discussed about "Electrical resistance ". Treasurer B Ananthi and Biology Resource person R Megala clarified doubts in English and Biology respectively. The teachers had a lot of questions to ask which made the session highly interactive and productive.
It is heartening whenever the HM's of the school volunteers to address the teacher. The H.M. of the Pandur Higher Secondary School, addressed the teachers citing anecdotes from her log career in Govt. schools at various places as a chemistry teacher and as a H.M.

March 2019 @ Irumbulichery

REWARD teachers render their services with deep involvement and convergence to the ideal of the trust namely reaching to the marginalised, first generation, rural students. The services of the teachers are appreciated when economy permits by giving them a performance based incentive.

This year the incentive was presented to the teachers in a function organised at the Irumbulicheri Middle School on 30.3.2019. It was a colourful function presided by Prof. Sa. Madasamy, (Retired
Professor and Author of many books in Tamil about School, curriculum, modified teaching approaches and on student friendly class rooms) and Dr. Velmurugan Retired Scientist (who served till Feb 2019 as Director, BARC Facilities. He studied in Tamil Medium, Govt. aided school, was a lecturer at American College Madurai. He later joined DAE through Training School and rose up in the Dept. Along with appreciating the teachers through an incentive, the function also gave awards to the students who excelled at inter school level in the SMART test during 2017 and 2018. Many friends of REWARD trust and local donors attended the function.

Ajith Kumar, Star performer of SMART 2016 receiving award from Dr. Velmurugan

Ajith Kumar, Star performer of SMART 2017 receiving award from Prof. Sa. Madasamy

Dr. Velmurugan

Trustee. Dr. Sengathir presenting a book to Prof. Sa. Madasamy

Children from five schools (Irumbulicheri, Idayathur, Kalkulam, Vadakku Vayalur and Latur) gave meaningful cultural events covering traditional invocation dance to saving trees and the intrusion of commerce in converting natural food into chemically preserved canned food with health consequences.

It was heartening to see that student Ajithkumar (vide photo) from Kalkulam, now doing his X in Thiruvadhur, bagging a lion's share of inter school SMART prizes. Since his VI class in 2014-15, he has been getting prizes in VII class in 2015-16, VIII class in 2016-17 and in his IX class in 2017-18. He also won Prestige prizes by crossing the bar we set for SMART tests.

A surprise element was a poetry, calling women to break away shackles, composed and recited by a SMART interschool prize winner Nasreen of Thirukazhukundram North Middle School.
Notable feature of this function, as usual, is that the expenditure is totally shared by the trustees and teachers alone - consistent with our Zero Overhead Policy!