

Activity Report of Sanctuary Schools from April 2009-October 2009

Given below is the month wise report of the activities in the Sanctuary Schools for the period beginning April 2009 to October 2009. Note that this does not include the routine daily schedule of the schools.

April: Groups 3, 4 and 5 had their year end reviews. This was to assess their learning levels and plan for the coming academic year. One student, Raghupathy, from Chamanthi School completed class 7 and passed the examination held by the school with an aggregate of 55%. Five students (3 girls and 2 boys, one each from Parijatham and Chamanthi, and 3 from Sampangi) moved into class seven for the academic year 2009-10. They will be appearing for their class 7 examination at the end of this academic year.

There was a 3-day English workshop for all the teachers in the second week of April. This was conducted by Ms. Srirajani Ranganathan a teacher from The Valley School. The focus was on creative writing, translation and vocabulary. (*See pictures on the workshop*)

May: The summer week-long pottery workshop was held in the first week of May, one day in each of the schools for all the students and teachers, and 2 days at the Centre for a few students and all the teachers. This was conducted by Mr. Hanumanthappa, a pottery teacher at the “Art Village”, The Valley School.

Schools were closed for summer vacation from May 11 to June 10. However, the students continued to have their afternoon meal in the schools.

June: Teachers started work from the 1st of June. The first week was used for planning and preparing for the classes. Two days were used for a science teaching workshop. Teachers prepared topics in science along with experiments and demonstrations and conducted mock classes.

Schools re-opened on the 10th of June. Parijatham School has now 35 students and Mandaram has 33 students. The other schools have retained their old strength of students. The Parijatham teacher Mr. Jayapalappa takes the help of some of his older students to help him. Mandaram School has two teachers.

Four students (Ashwathi, Yashoda, Sundaramma and Raghupathy) and one teacher (Sumitra) were registered for a Junior Embroidery Course offered by Madura Coats in December 2008. The fourth week-long contact programme was in the third week of June at Bangalore. Ms. Yasmin Dabar conducts this programme.

July, August and September: Additional English programme in the schools - This is conducted by Mr. Karthik. This is in addition to the English classes in the school which are taken care of by the teachers. Given below are the overall objectives and approaches of this programme.

The Additional English Programme

Overall Objectives:

- To be able to read, pronounce correctly and comprehend several words and sentences in English
- To be able to form short but meaningful sentences in English
- To be able to speak simple English
- To work together in groups on various tasks
- To learn to use the dictionary (English ↔ Telugu) comfortably

Approaches:

- To know several commonly used words along with their meanings in Telugu, the idea being, to increase the number of words children use
- To understand sentences with such words and translate them into Telugu
- To be able to form simple sentences using these words on their own
- To read and understand plenty of short stories
- To read out stories to the children clearly with proper pronunciation and punctuation
- To understand the significance of the use of punctuation.
- To have a conversation in English while being involved in other activities like gardening, carpentry, community work and so on.

The *craft skill programme* for this academic year was started from the first week of July. Carpentry, candle making, embroidery and herbal garden work continued to be the activities. A new group of 8 students have joined the earlier senior group of 6.

The next two embroidery sessions at Bangalore were in July and August. By this time the group was very confident and was able to produce embroidery work of excellent quality. (*See pictures of some of the embroidery work.*)

Sreshta, an artist from New York visiting The Valley, conducted a day long workshop at the Kaigal Centre on perspective drawing for some of the students and teachers on the 6th of September. (*Pictures attached*)

All the teachers participated in a conference on “Folk Medicinal Practitioners” organized by KEEP and Dravidian University (Andhra Pradesh) at The Valley School on the 26th and 27th of September.

October: There was a review of all the teachers on 6th and 7th.

The students who were registered for the embroidery course completed it and were awarded certificates.

A brief note on Raghupathy who completed class 7 in April

Raghupathy joined Chamanthi School in 2003. He had been to a government school for more than 5 years before he joined the Sanctuary School. At that point, to the teacher's surprise, Raghupathy was unable even to recognize alphabets in Telugu and his basic skills in mathematics needed a lot of attention. It needed plenty of hard, patient work, planning, innovative approaches, individualized attention and affection from the teacher team to bring him to this level. Not too academically oriented, Raghupathy resisted continuing his schooling. He has now joined an internship programme started by KEEP. This programme offers him opportunities to learn livelihood skills, earn a scholarship and over a few years time help him complete his class 10.