

# Apna Skool Newsletter

October – December 2023

Dear patrons and well-wishers,  
Greetings from Apna Skool !!!

The main aim of our quarterly newsletter is to inform you about the events and activities of Apna Skool. Your support gives us extra motivation to serve the children of migrant workers to the best of our abilities. In this edition of newsletter, we bring out the active participation of our children in various competitions, science exhibition, cultural programs, celebrations, and other activities of our students. The happiness seen in their smiles is heart melting. In addition, enrolment of our students in government schools, distribution of uniform and other materials, gracious visitors, and a success story.

## Glimpses of Apna Skool Students Activities





## October 2023

### Apna Skool students' participation in the 69<sup>th</sup> Wild Life Week at Kanpur Zoo.

The 69<sup>th</sup> Vanya Praani Saptah was organized during the first week of October (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>) at the Kanpur Zoological Park. About 1700 students from round 32 schools across Kanpur, participated in inter-school competitions. Like previous years, students from Apna Skool also took part in several competitions such as Mehandi, Drawing, Dance, Drama, Speech, Play, and Essay writing competitions to show their talents. Our student, Pooja, 11<sup>th</sup> class, brought accolades by winning first prize in Ludo (Senior Group) and second prize in Essay writing. The topic being “Manav Ka Paryavaran Se Lagav”.



### Participation of Apna Skool students in the PRAYAS Annual function

Prayas, an endeavour run by the students of IIT Kanpur for economically lower class students, organized its Annual function on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023. The performance of Apna Skool students in the function of was greatly appreciated by one and all. They participated in many events including drama, poetry, recitation, and group dance. Their play highlighting the animals ‘Safed Kabutar’ brought out the hazards of pollution. L K Shukla ji, field coordinator, in his address to the audience, talked about the vision of Apna Skool and the social impact it is creating in the migrant worker’s society. Ashok, our student, compeered the program confidently



## Celebrations of the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri.

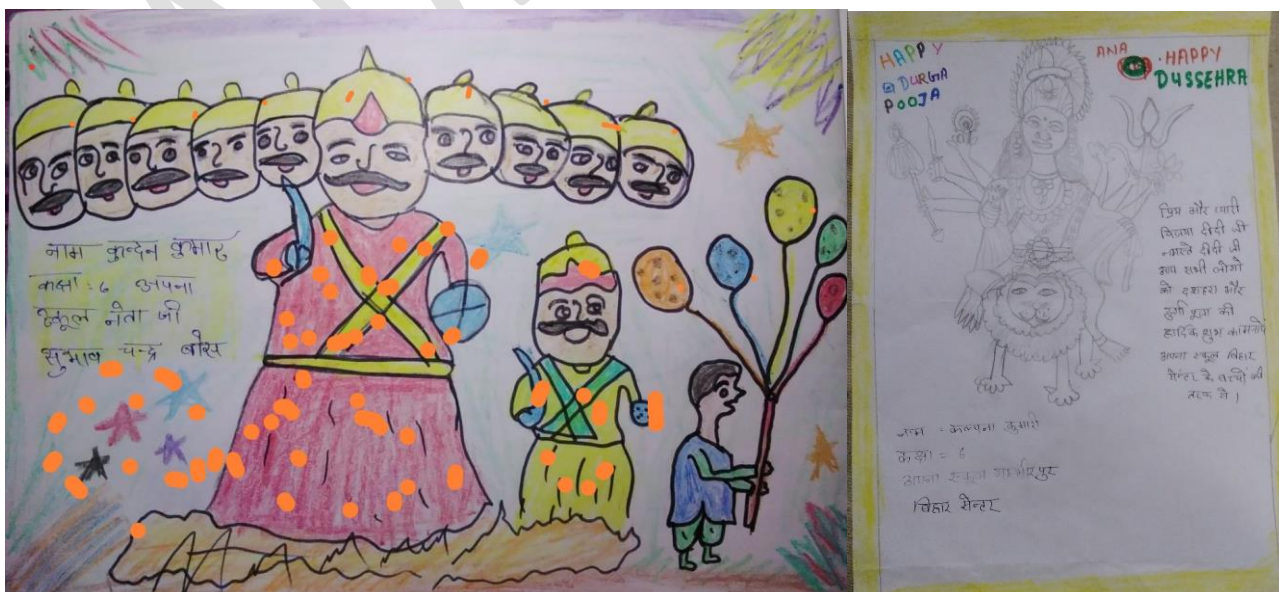
The birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our nation and Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of India, were observed in all the centers of Apna Skool on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2023. As part of the activities, we had organized cleanliness drives and educational activities. All the children, teacher and Coordinator of Apna Skool, marched in Panaupurva village (Kanpur, U.P) and at Gambhirpur, Chiraiya, Paura, Hajipur and Khatangi (Nawada, Bihar) to spread awareness about cleanliness.

At Panaupurva, students recited poems and gave talks on Gandhiji, told a story related to the fact that Gandhiji was afraid of ghosts, sang a bhajan – ‘Raghupati Raghav Rajaram’, performed mono acting, and presented a group dance-drama called ‘Tik Tik Plastic’- not use polythene and plastic items., Through these children gave messages about planting trees, cleanliness and saving rivers from pollution. All the children (Gambhirpur, Chiraiya, Paura, Hajipur centre) were shown a puppet show based on the life of Gandhiji (Mohan to Mahatma). All the children, in all the centres of Apna Skool, were served refreshments at the end of the program.



## Dussehra Celebration

Dussehra was celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 at all Apna Skool centres. Children were told about the stories behind the celebration of Durga Pooja and Dussehra. Many children showed their real talent when they drew pictures and wrote poems beautifully related to Dussehra.





## Apna Skool Stall in Antaragni (Cultural festival, IIT Kanpur)

Antaragni is a cultural festival which is held annually in Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. It is an Inter-college cultural festival in which college students from all over India participate. Apna Skool used this occasion from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October to set up a stall to display products made by Apna Skool students. There was a brisk sale of stuffed toy, embroidered cushion covers, terracotta sculptures, bags, greeting Cards, friendship bands, doormat, tapestries wall hangings, letter hangers, and handkerchiefs.



## Survey at brick kilns for migrant labourers' children

After monsoon season, the migrant labours start coming to Kanpur to work in the brick fields from various districts of UP and Bihar. Teachers and field coordinators started doing survey at various brick fields to identify children in the age group 6-14 years. They interacted with the parents and motivated them to educate their children. They met with the officials of brick fields to get information about the labourers. They collected relevant information for enrolling students in government schools.



## Visitor of the month: Mr. Francis Bosco from Don Bosco for Migrants (DB4M)

Mr. Francis Bosco from Don Bosco for Migrants visited to Apna Skool Panaupurva Centre on 14 October 2023. Don Bosco for Migrants (DB4M) is an all-India initiative led by the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) aimed at empowering migrant workers in India. It was first introduced in 2012 and by 2018, there were eight city-level "Migrants' Desks" across various locations.



Mr. Bosco appreciated the traditional welcome given to him by the students by applying tilak on his forehead. He interacted with the students, encouraging them to through questions at him, taught them a song and described the strategies employed in Tamil Nadu for educating the migrant workers' children in the state. The best approach that they have adopted is that the students are taught in their mother tongue. So their organization employs teachers from UP, Odisha, Bengal, Assam etc. to teach the migrant children from respective states. Our students were very happy to interact with him.



## November 2023

### New session of Apna Skool

The brick kiln labourers start coming to Kanpur after the monsoon season from their native places in Bihar and other districts of UP. By mid-October our teachers and coordinators started doing survey in the brick kilns, Kanpur to get the details of labourers having school going children. They started enrolling them in nearby government schools. It was a very tedious task to convince the Principals to enrol the migrant workers children. But with the intervention of BSA and Block officers most of the children could get admissions. In almost all the government schools, we have been given a separate room so that our teachers can provide special attention to these children. They are first generation school going students hence they require our assistance to cope up with their learning. A couple of Apna Skool centres started functioning by October end and many more by mid-November. For those children who could not get admission in the schools close to brick kilns for some reasons (age limit, space and infrastructure issues in schools, etc.), we started opening centres close to the kilns and started teaching them.

Apna Skool is working towards admitting migrant worker's children residing in brick kilns to nearby Government Primary Schools where our teachers teach them separately. For this we have received written permission from the BSA, Kanpur after a lot of meetings and follow-ups for 22 schools in Kanpur city (Chaubeypur, Maharajpur, Kalyanpur area) and 2 in Kanpur Dehat (Bhognipur) under the Sharda program of UP government. Most of the Apna Skool teachers help these first generation school going students by picking them up from Brick kilns, walking them to government primary schools or centres and teaching them there.



### Distribution of School Uniform, winter wear and Stationery

With the beginning of the new session when the children returned from their native places, school uniforms were distributed at all centres of Apna Skool. Shirts, shorts / skirts, slippers were given to all the students. Educational materials such as text books, note books and stationary material like slates, pencils and erasers were also distributed. As the winter season set in, the children required warm winter clothing so sweaters, caps and socks were also distributed.



## Diwali Celebrations

Apna Skool children and teachers celebrated Diwali on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 by making beautiful rangoli, greeting cards and posters at all the centres. Diwali is the festival of lights, and depicts the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and it is celebrated all over the world. At the same time, teachers told all students about the negative impact of firecrackers on our environment, all students agreed to not use firecrackers. On occasion of Diwali, Laiya, Khilona, Gatta, Apples and Sweets were distributed to all students.



## Children's Day Celebrations

13<sup>th</sup> November was celebrated as children's day in all the centres of Apna Skool in the fond memory of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Teachers told the students about his biography. After that garlanding the photo of Nehru ji some children drew the pictures of him. On some centres, some science experiments were done and games were also arranged in which kho- kho, rope skipping were main.

## Celebrations of Guru Nanak Jayanti

On 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 all the centres celebrated Guru Nanak ji's birth anniversary. Children were told that he was the Sikh Guru and founder of Sikhism. On this occasion, teachers explained about Sikh religion's traditions to the children.

## Bihar initiative (July to November 2023)

### Continuation of Apna Skool in Bihar during the monsoon break

Every year Apna Skool teachers go to Bihar during the monsoon season. This year, two teachers, Pradeep Kumar and Pradhyumn and one college-going girl student, Hema of Apna Skool were in Bihar from first week of July to 15<sup>th</sup> November. In addition to teaching our students, they surveyed Chiraiya, Gambhirpur, Hajipur, Paura and Telari villages for vaccination and labour registration work. They had organized many vaccination camps in these villages with the help of local government hospitals.

Apna Skool runs a permanent centre at Khatangi Primary School in Khatangi Village in Nawada, Bihar. This is managed by Ms. Chandani and she inspires students to read books in the library setup by Apna Skool.





## Seasonal Centres of Apna Skool in Bihar during the monsoon break (July to Nov.)

1	Chiraiya Primary School	WARSILIGANJ	BIHAR	71
2	Chiraiya Village (Evening Classes)			
3	Gambhirpur Primary School			
4	Gambhirpur Village (Evening Classes)			40
5	Hajipur and Morarbeegeha School			60
6	Paura Primary School	NAWADA		
7	Paura Middle School			65
8	Telari Primary School	ROH		40
Total Number of Students				276

## December 2023

### Drive for enrolling students in Government Primary Schools.

One of the nagging concerns for Apna Skool is the issue of continuity for the educational process for the children when they return to their homes after the seasonal work comes to an end in the month of June when the monsoon season sets in. Many labourers do not return to Kanpur in October. Realizing that this will mean interruption of schooling for the children, who were attending Apna Skool in Kanpur, we try to integrate with the regular schooling, as far as possible by enrolling the children in government schools. Apna Skool has started admitting the children to nearby government primary and junior schools. As per a provision of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, children aged 6 to 14 who are not in school should be located, enrolled in age-appropriate classrooms, and given special instruction. The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the "Sharda" scheme to find and enrol such students. SHARDA (SHARDA -School Har Din Aayen [Come to school every day]).

So our staff members have regular meetings with Basic Shiksha Adhikari and other officials at Kanpur office. We had submitted an application requesting for permission to admit our children in government schools. We had identified more than 20 schools in the proximity of brick kilns and obtained permission. With the help of this letter, we were able to admit many students to government schools close to brick fields. However, more than 100 students at various brick fields could not get admissions in nearby government schools. We have set up centres for these students. Some students are admitted to private schools also because their parents find it more comfortable with the nearer private schools rather than far-off government schools.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2023 our staff members went to Basic Education Directorate, Lucknow and met with the Director General, school education, Shri Vijay Kiran Anand and other officials to highlight the problems we are facing in getting our children enrolled in government schools, space and infrastructure being the main reasons. Though they technically ensured help to us, we are facing lots of practical problems during implementation.

### Celebration of 113th Birthday of Shri R. Venkataraman



On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the 113th birth anniversary of the former President of India, Late Shri R. Venkataraman was celebrated in all the centres of Apna Skool. He was the eighth President, a long term parliamentarian and one of the most erudite statesman of our country. The students were apprised about his work and contributions. All the students were given an apple each.

**Education is the key to unlock our potential and create a better future.**

- Subramania Bharathiyar

## Participation in Science Exhibition

A science exhibition was organized by Apna Skool and Swami Vivekanand Vidyalaya (SVV), Lodhar, Kanpur on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of December, 2023. Apna Skool children from all the centres of Kanpur participated with great enthusiasm, presented models related to science and geography, biology, organic farming, and environmental issues. Some of the science experiments exhibited were Electrolysis of water, Photosynthesis model, Air pressure experiment, Working Model of Heart, Water and Water Cycle, Oxygen and Oxygen Cycle, Chandrayaan 3, Matching of State and Capital, Windmill project, Etc.

About 500 people came to see the exhibition including students and professors from IIT Kanpur, apart from students and parents from near-by area. Participation in such events give our students an opportunity to develop their scientific temper.



## National Mathematics Day

The government of India in 2011, had declared 22 December to be celebrated as National Mathematics Day every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of the great Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. He was born on December 22, 1887, in Erode, Tamil Nadu. The celebrations aim to honour the achievements of great mathematician, spreading awareness about the importance of mathematics and the contributions made by him, in the field of mathematics.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023, National Mathematics Day was also observed at Apna Skool Centers. Quiz competitions involving small maths questions were organised among the children. They competed enthusiastically and enjoyed a lot. Our children are encouraged through activities to engage in critical thinking and logical reasoning.



## Christmas Day Celebrations

Students were told about Christmas festival celebrated on December 25. The day commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of god as believed by Christians. Students and teachers of Apna Skool together decorated the Christmas tree with balloons, toffies, balls, flowers, candles etc. They were thrilled, danced, sang poems and songs and enjoyed.

At Apna Skool Murari centre, teachers and children cut a cake and celebrated the group birthday of all the children of the centre. Special Halwa, chocolates, and toffies were distributed to the children at all the centres.



## Bihar Project:

A permanent Apna Skool Center is running in Khatangi, Bihar for the last two years. This year, the old seasonal centres at Chiraiya and Ghambhirpur, Warsiligang, Bihar were converted into permanent ones. These are being monitoring by Apna Skool teacher Pradeep Yadav.



S.N	Center's Name	Area	State	Number of Students
1	Khatangi Primary School	SIRDALA	BIHAR	33
2	Chiraiya Primary School & Middle School	WARSILIGANJ		37
3	Gambhirpur Primary School			16

**Do not let society's norms define you; be true to yourself and follow your own path.**

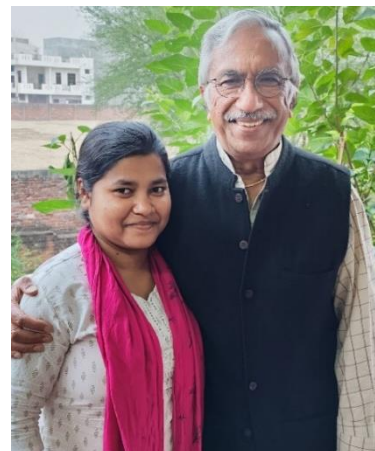
- Subramania Bharathiyar

## Visitors of Apna Skool

### Dr. Ashok Gupta, Ohio University (30 Nov. to 4 Dec. 2023)

Ashok Gupta, an alumnus of IIT Kanpur, visited Kanpur and had detailed discussions with the teachers and Co-ordinators of Apna Skool. He took the opportunity to know about the workings of bricks-kilns and the many problems faced by the workers. He was keen to know about the laws and schemes available for labourers in India and wished to do something to ensure that the laws are implemented to benefit the workers.

He freely interacted with the students, enquiring them about their scholastic progress. His foundation is also providing scholarships to a few students of Apna Skool and interaction with SOS students.



### Professor Adhip Agarawal, Soumya Sur and Ph.D Students from IIT Kanpur, Physics Department)

Professor Adhip and Soumya from IIT Kanpur visited some Apna Skool centers in Chaubepur on 18<sup>th</sup> December and interacted with the students and teachers.



On 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 Professor Adhip, Soumya and other Ph.D Students visited and conducted science experiments at Apna Skool Samrat centre for the students. These Science experiments provide a hands-on, practical approach to learning. They allowed students to actively engage with scientific concepts and principles, moving beyond theoretical knowledge to practical application.



## Health-hygiene

At all our teaching centers and associated brick-kilns, we are providing a first Aid Box at all our teaching centers; the First Aid box contains both allopathic as well homeopathic medicine. Apart from this Apna Skool is also providing vitamin tablets such as Vitamins A and C, B-complex, Calcium, and Iron tablets on weekly basis. We also provide coconut oil with camphor, soap, hand wash and sanitary pad. We measure height and weight of students periodically and advice children to maintain proper health and hygiene for good health.



## Apna Skool Library

Apna Skool has set up 2 libraries. A library is set up in Gambhirpur Village (July to Mid-November) where our students and other literate villagers enjoy reading children books. This is well managed by Ms Chinta and Ms. Kalpna. In the second one, Ms. Chandani inspires students to read books in the library setup in Khatangi village primary school. We run mobile libraries providing books in all the centres we run in Kanpur, UP and Nawada, Bihar.



## Apna Skool nutrition program.

Apna Skool provides hot-cooked meal at most of the teaching centres and distributes fruits, snacks etc at the remaining centres. In the weekly food menu, we include fruits for two days, paneer, chapatti on one day, and sabji – rice, daal –rice –chokha, kadhi-rice and tehari –salad other days. Once a month, we provide kheer. We also distribute eggs, chikki ,laddu and Jaggery to the students. We make sure to provide nutritious food to all our students.



## Success story

Each one of us has been gifted with some talent or skill. It is for us to recognize and nurture this talent to create a good career. Here is a success story of Divyam Singh, a student of Apna Skool from 2006-10, who has chosen to become an entrepreneur in the field of videography. Divyam's parents worked at construction sites, in the Panki area, Kanpur. He would lend his helping hand to them but continue his studies at Apna Skool. He was a very regular student and showed interest in his studies. After completing his primary school, he got admitted to Jawahar Lal Nehru Inter College, Kalyanpur, Kanpur. He passed with flying colours securing first division in 10<sup>th</sup> class. While there are many students in this environment who are vulnerable to drop out of education and their dreams, or take up some odd jobs to help the family, Divyam continues his studies and obtained First division in 12<sup>th</sup> class and set an example with his persistent diligence.

He continued his studies in Skilled Shine Academy, Kanpur by taking a CCC course, to get basic knowledge of computers from Skill Shine Academy, Kanpur. There he also learnt video editing, photography, Video Production, Video Creation in videography. With this knowledge he started his own business venture and opened Divyam Singh Photography Studio. Now he records live events and is engaged in video productions. He is able to earn well and look after his family at such a young age of 24. We wish him the best for his future.



Apna Skool is dedicated to the primary school education of brick kilns and construction workers' children. Even if they complete their high school or higher secondary school, it is an achievement for all our efforts.

## Functioning Centers of Apna Skool (Oct. - Dec. 2023)

Currently, 15 Apna Skool teaching centres are working in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh and 8 in Bihar. In this session, we have more than 600 students and about 20 teachers in Apna Skool.

Functioning centers of Apna Skool (Oct. to Dec. 2023)							
S. N	Name of Centre	State	Name of Teacher/mentors	Centre Timing	Student Enrolment		
					Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	Panaupurva Apna Skool	U.P.	(1) Urmila	1:00 pm to 6:00 pm	21	32	Closed
2	Gangaganj Apna Skool		(1) Renu	2:00 pm to 5:30 pm	25	26	31
3	Dedupur Apna Skool (Rama + Vishnu B.K)		(1) Pankaj	3:00 pm to 5:30 pm	12	Closed	Closed
	Primary School Dedupur		(1) Kuldeep	9:00 pm to 3:00 pm		28	28
4	Kalra-3 Apna Skool		(1) Nirmala	12:30 to 5:00 pm	11	20	Closed
	Primary School Mariyani (K-3)		(1) Nirmala	9:00 am to 3:00 pm			21
5	Primary School Dhamna		(1) Mithlesh	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	16	16	33
6	Primary School Fattepurva		(1)Ugrasen - Oct.,Nov. (2)Anuradh (3) Sunita	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	24	24	55
7	Primary School Meghnipurwa		(1) Raksha	9:00 am to 3:00 pm		30	30
8	Samrat Apna Skool		(1) Pradhyumn	9:00 am to 3:00 pm		28	50
9	Primary School Gadheva		(1) Urmila	9:00 am to 3:00 pm			23
10	Primary School Amauli		(1) Shreya	9:00 am to 3:00 pm		20	28
11	Primary School Tikra (Murari Brick Kiln)		(1) Manju	9:00 am to 3:00 pm			20
12	Apna Skool Murari (2 Days)		(1) Nazma	9:00 am to 2:00 pm			10
13	Apna Skool Kalra -2	(1) Hema	10:00 am to 1:00 pm			34	
14	Bhoganipur Apna Skool (Dhananjay Brick Kiln)	(1) Ugrasen	9:00 am to 3:00 pm			66	
15	Apna Skool Indra-2	Bihar	(1) Priyanka	9:00 am to 3:00 pm			45
16	Chiraiya Primary School		(1)Pradeep (Mon., Wed.,Sat.)	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	71	37	37
17	Chiraiya Village (Evening Classes)			3:00 pm to 5:30 pm			
18	Gambhirpur Primary School		(1) Pradeep (Tue., Thur., Fri.)	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	38	34	16
19	Gambhirpur Village (Evening Classes)			3:00 pm to 5:30 pm			
20	Hajipur Middle School (Hajipur and Morarbeegha)		(1) Pradhyumn -10 Nov.	9:00 am to 1:00 pm	59	59	Closed
21	Paura Village (Evening lasses)		(1) Pradhyumn - 10 Nov. (2) Shivam - Dec. Start	1:30 pm to 5:30 pm	65	65	14
22	Telari Primary School		(1) Hema	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	40	40	Closed
23	Khatangi Primary School		(1) Chandani	9:00 am to 3:00 pm	33	33	33
Students Studying in other Schools who are supported by Apna Skool (Mainstream Education )					65	65	65
Total Number of Students					480	557	639



<b>Funding Sources:</b>	
ASHA for Education, Silicon Valley	Mala Foundation, Belgium
R.V. foundation	Pragati Foundation
Association for India's Development (AID), Portland	Owners of a few brick kilns, Kanpur, (in-kind)
Triveni Trust, Prayagraj - Allahabad	Many individual donors

<b>Apna Skool Organizational Structure</b>	
<b>Principal Co-ordinators:</b> Ms. Vijaya Ramachandran and Prof. Shivam Tripathi	
<b>Contact information:</b> <b>Vijaya Ramachandran</b>	<b>Tel: +91 7408900999; Email: vijayav26@gmail.com</b>
Shivam Tripathi	<b>Tel: +91 9005663618; Email: shiva@iitk.ac.in</b>
<b>Sub-Co-ordinators:</b>	Laxmikant Shukla, B.N. Sharma, Sangeeta Verma, Raju Gaur, and Mukesh Kumar
<b>Transport Coordinator:</b> Kripa Shankar Shukla	<b>Nutrition Coordinator:</b> Sanjiv Shukla <b>Health &amp; Hygiene mentor:</b> Sunita Srivastava

### Support our work:

For making your donations, please write a cheque in favour of or transfer the fund into the following bank details and intimate us for providing you with a receipt that will enable you to claim income tax deduction u/s 80G.

<b>Details</b>		
<b>For Foreign Donations</b>		<b>For Indian donations</b>
<b>Account Name</b>	Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti	Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti
<b>Account Number</b>	40267845617	537202010003642
<b>PAN Card Number</b>	AACTJ0902C	AACTJ0902C
<b>Bank Name</b>	State Bank of India, New Delhi Main Branch	Union Bank of India, IIT Kanpur
<b>Branch Bank Code</b>	691	553727
<b>Bank IFSC Code</b>	SBIN0000691	UBIN0553727
<b>SWIFT CODE</b>	SBININBB104	

### Volunteers

- Prayas, a volunteer group, students of IIT Kanpur

### Important Links:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJhOEa4moNA> A short film on Apna Skool ( courtesy Sahara TV)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCIegMqdsX0> Annual Day function and opinion of parents
- Webpage: <https://sites.google.com/site/apnaskools/>
- Blog: <http://apnaskool-kanpur.blogspot.com/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/apnaskool>

Newsletter compiled by  
Apna Skool Team.