

Virtual Visit to Little Stars, June 20, 2022

Visit by Kevin Thomas, Harshil Ganesh Murthy, Neha Shirolkar

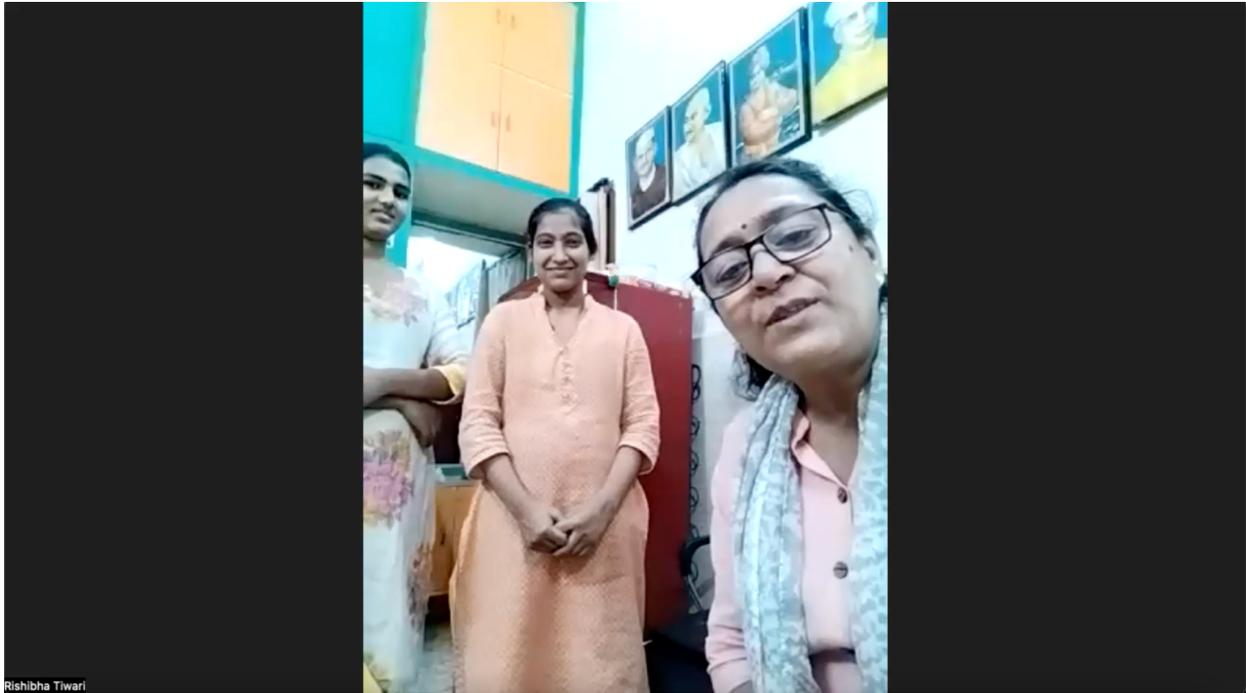
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In our site visit, we talked to Rishiba Tiwari from Little Stars School, a school that works with underprivileged children in the area. The school was first established in 1996, where it only had 15 students who came in for only one hour a day. Coming from impoverished families, their parents often wanted their children to join the workforce to make money for the family. However, Rishiba was able to convince the parents to send their children for just one hour a day, and eventually was able to expand upon hours and students. Today, they have almost 900 students who learn for 6 hours a day, all the way up to grade 12. Starting off, the project interviewed the parents of the students they were working with to get a better understanding of the students' backgrounds, with most students coming from underprivileged homes. Many of these families found it hard to put money towards education, since with their little salary and no insurance, health issues often took up most of their money. In Little Stars School, classes are often split up by education level rather than age, since many students are just starting their education when they reach the school, rather than at an appropriate age. By doing so, they are able to adequately prepare for adult life, whether it is going to university or getting a job. In terms of class size itself, most classes range from 30-40 kids. Of the almost 900 students and staff, almost everyone lives within walking distance of the school, so no requirement for transportation. Some of the girls who do not have a family stay in the school itself. Some of the recent additions are a new building, a playground and a computer lab.

While COVID did make it hard on schools to continue teaching, Little Stars was still able to effectively teach their students. 50% of their students had access to smartphones, so they were able to continue online learning for those students. For the rest of them, the teachers would create worksheets and parents were able to pick up the readings and worksheets from the school and students could work on it at home. Some of the students who had internet access would group up with students who didn't have access to learn together on video calls.

We also got the opportunity to meet some of the teachers as well as some of the students. The teachers mentioned that all of the students were doing very well, with some students even skipping grades. The students were also very excited about school and learning, with big dreams ahead after they finish their education.

Little Stars School wants to use ASHA funding to hire more teachers in the math and science department, as well as increase the salaries of their current teachers. With the addition of the computer lab, they also need a technology teacher to help teach the students on how to use technology and apply it to their future careers.



Rishiba Tiwari