

Awakenings

NEWS IN BRIEF FROM SANKALP THE OPEN SCHOOL

From the Principal's desk

As I look back and cherish our innumerable achievements this academic year, I wish to consolidate the lessons I have learnt from my students. I am indeed awe-inspired by their instant readiness to resolve differences by forgiving and forgetting and to explicitly acknowledge every joyous moment coming their way. I owe my students a big 'Thank you' for helping me etch their positivity and enthusiasm in my personal growth.

Mrs. Prathibha Srinivas

Principal – Sankalp The Open School

AN ARRAY OF EVENTS

School elections 2018-19	14.06.2018
International Yoga day Celebrations	21.06.2018
Alumni meet	14.07.2018
Independence Day Celebrations	15.08.2018
Annual Day	18.08.2018
Teachers day Celebrations	31.08.2018
Onam Celebrations	27.08.2018
Puppet show	08.09.2018
Tuck show	21.09.2018
Ayudha pooja	17.10.2018
Science Exhibition	30.11.2018
Republic day Celebration	26.01.2019
Annual sports day	08.02.2019
Farewell to SS2 students	04.03.2019

Editorial Team

Mrs. Jayashree Kidambi
Mrs. Preethi Mohan
Mrs. Krishna Prabha

THE JOURNEY BEGINS...

Awareness Programs and workshops

To bring about awareness with regard to Learning Disabilities (LD) amongst the general public and the Teaching community.

Principals meet – A specific workshop for Principals was organised to carry out Sankalp's vision of reaching out to Children with Learning Difficulties and also to inform about concessions given by various boards to LD students.

Learning Difficulties (LD) awareness for Auto-drivers: An awareness program on LD was conducted at Sankalp The Open School for Auto-drivers who pick-up and drop Children at Sankalp, listing out measures and changes they could bring while interacting with the students.

Certificate course on Remedial strategies: A 3-month certificate course on remedial strategies was initiated by Sankalp Trust, to create awareness and resources to help children with learning disabilities and Autism. The course commenced in the month of December.

Orientation on LD to College Students: A group of 15 students from School of social work, Mangalore visited Sankalp The Open school for a practical experiential learning on LD. They were oriented with the overall functioning of the school, assessment techniques and various teaching strategies.

EXTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

Sankalp is currently collaborating with Dr. Susan Elias, Associate professor, VIT, Chennai and Dr. Rajagopalan Srinivasan of Mayo Clinic, USA to jointly develop assistive technologies for empowering the parents with early deduction of Dyslexia and just-in-time personalised invention tools for effectively managing the disorder. Sankalp has also trained a number of students in VITeach (a social out-reach club at VIT, Chennai engaged in teaching young students in rural settings) to look for early signs of learning disorders in the underprivileged section of the society.

STEPS – Sankalp The Open School in association with the Department of psychology, Women's Christian College, Chennai initiated a Certificate course on Strategies to Enhance Executive Functions and Personal Effectiveness Step by Step (STEPS). The main objective of this innovative program is targeted towards young adults in maximising their potential by focusing On the self, the Executive functions and on the Multi-sensory strategies.

Enrichment: Guest Lectures@ Sankalp

Junior Group attended a session by Toy foundation and Prayas on Good and Bad touch.

Middle Group was sensitised on Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships by AWARENGO.

Senior Group had a demonstration on Composting by Ms. Bagirathi Kalyan.

Proud moments to Unveil

- Our Director, Ms. Lakshmi Krishnakumar, was awarded The Lifetime Achievement award for her excellent service and work towards education of Children with special needs by The Anaikar group of institutions Trust, Ambur. She was honoured by Veteran Cricketer, Padma Bhushan, Shri. Kapil Dev.

The academic year 2018-19 saw many of our students exhibiting their talents and achieving laurels in various cultural and inter-school competitions. Few of the notable achievements are listed below:

- **Soroptimist Talent Show** - Sankalp The Open School won the overall 3rd prize in Soroptimist Talent Contest for children on 04.08.2018.
- **Rotary sports meet for Chennai** - Rotary club of Chennai Central Elite organised sports meet on 17.11.2018 at SaiRam Engineering College, Tambaram. 40 Children from our school participated in various track events and finished in the first 3 places in most of the events. A total of 28 medals was secured.
- **'Advantage Dyslexia'** - Our Children participated in the various competitions and talent show organised by the Madras Dyslexia Association and won laurels under various categories.
- **Rota Talent Contest**, held by Rotary Club, T.Nagar was held at Kamaraj Arangam on 26.11.2018. 20 Children from Sankalp participated in the Fusion dance and Art competitions. The Fusion dance by our children won the third place.
- **Rangotsava** celebration, a talent contest for art at the National level, saw many of our children competing and winning in cartoon making, colouring and handwriting competitions.
- **Aram Foundation**, NGO, conducted a cultural and Talent competition for children with special needs and our children participated and won prizes in categories like Fireless cooking, Art, Music and Dance.

- **Javate** - A talent contest for Children with special needs (Autism), was conducted by Lady Andal school, Chennai. Our children participated in this event and won prizes..
- **DACAL** - Our students won several prizes in drawing and Art from Waste competition conducted by Anjuman group of schools, Chennai.
- **Spardha** - Many of our students participated in the talent competition for math, language and arts. It was great to see many of them winning laurels through cash prizes.

To Travel is to evolve...

Field trips and excursions are the best experiential learning and the most memorable part of one's school days. To provide our children with such a lovely and enriching experience, the children were taken for a field trip to The Guindy National park, Tholkappiar ecological Park, Adyar and The Aringar Anna zoological park, Vandalur. The senior children also enjoyed an outbound trip to Mysore for 3 days and 3 nights. The Children visited The Mysore silk factory and had an opportunity to get a first-hand account on silk manufacturing and production. Children then returned to Chennai by flight. For some of our children, this being their maiden journey via flight, it would remain engraved in their memories forever.

- Jaya Indrajit

The middle group and the senior group were taken on an educational trip for a science exhibition to the Ramakrishna Mission school, T.Nagar, Chennai. The children were able to relate and have a three-dimensional view of what they learnt in theory.

School Stay - As a part of the Home Science project, 23 children from our NIOS group participated in this project. The Children stayed over-night in the school premises and under the guidance of their teachers, performed activities like cooking, cleaning and maintenance. The children actively participated in this project.

Gratitude and Thanks-giving:

Christmas this year was celebrated at Meenakshi matriculation school, Anna Nagar west on 21.12.2018 along with the inmates of TANSOWA. Our children and teachers showed their love and affection to the home-less and needy by providing bed sheets, school bags and also food items like rice, dal and tamarind. Our children learnt the spirit of sharing and giving in its true essence. Our children also performed for the audience.

Empowering the youth of Sankalp: Activity-based Skill Development.

At Sankalp The Open School, we will be introducing Weaving, Cloth Bag Making, Paper Bag Making, Vegetable Processing and Compost Making as part of 'Activity-based Skill Development Program', for the next academic year. Students enrolled for the Secondary and Senior Secondary grades (above 14 years) will be the direct beneficiaries. All the enlisted activities have great scope for further development and skill enrichment like eye-hand coordination, focus and concentration, measurement, sense of design, recognizing patterns, creativity, planning, organizing skills, importance of a process for achieving a goal, etc. Through these activities, students in our care will get the opportunity to obtain readiness to take up vocational training after school, as a viable option. This program will immensely benefit all categories of students; a) who can pursue higher education and b) for children who may not be able to pursue academics for higher studies. We would like to appreciate the contribution of Anaikar group, for procuring the power-loom for this project and the BARISH group for donating three sewing machines for the cause of skill-enrichment.

- Geetha Jayaraman

ONE QUESTION AND SEVERAL VOICES: A JOY OF KINDLING THE PAST

The interaction of knowledge and skills with experience is the key to learning. When we have an enjoyable social interaction, community and laughter, it has a healing effect on the mind and body. On this note, our senior students were provided with a healthy platform to interact, debate, interview and know each other in a better way. This column brings out the inner voice of our students, how each student responds to the same set of questions.

Our outgoing students Darshini, Pervez

Pranjal – Interviewer

- *What brought you to Sankalp?*
Darshini & Pervez – We came from learning center
- *What you like about Sankalp?*
Darshini & Pervez – (In chorus) we like the teachers.
Darshini - I like baking and confectionery and Jaya ma'am.
- *What do you like about Jaya Ma'am?*
Pervez - She teaches very well.

SESSION WITH OUR OUTGOING STUDENT BHARADWAJ

Interviewers: Vijaychandran, Tushar

- *What brought you to Sankalp? When did you join Sankalp?*
I had difficulties with writing. Hence my previous school principal from Sherwood hall suggested. I joined in June 2010.
- *What you like about Sankalp when you first joined?*
- All the teachers as they helped me with my writing skills.
- *What changes has Sankalp brought in you?*
It has helped me improve my writing skills; control my anger and a change in my attitude.

- *What is your most memorable moment in school?*

My memorable moment was, when I was made the Captain for Social Service.

- *How did you perform your role as a captain?*

I checked the uniform of all students and took care of juniors.

- *What is your message to all your juniors?*

Always listen to your teachers.

- *Do you have anything to say to your teachers?*

I just say "Thank you all".

SESSION WITH OUR OUTGOING STUDENT SIDDARTH SETHIYA

Interviewers : Anish, Harinath, Moti

- *What brought you to Sankalp? When did you join Sankalp?*
I joined in 2008. I came from Agarwal Vidyalaya. I had problems with reading and speech.
- *What you liked about Sankalp when you first joined?*
I liked all the teachers because they addressed to my problems effectively.
- *Are any of your old classmates here with you now?*
No, but I am in touch with my friend Krishna.
- *What changes has Sankalp brought in you?*
I help others when they need me.
- *What is your most memorable moment in school?*
I enjoyed being the sports captain and participating in sports day. It gave me pride when I took oath.
- *What is your message to all your juniors?*
When there is a problem find out the real cause, solve it immediately. Don't carry it to next day.
- *Do you have anything to say to your teachers?*
I just say "Thank you all".

INTERACTIVE MOMENTS BETWEEN SS1 AND NIOS IA, IB

INTERVIEWERS VS. SS1:

Harinath Vs. Vibin, Sujit Vs. Siddharth. R,

Tushar Vs. Anish, Harinath Vs. Vijaychandran,

- *What brought you to Sankalp? When did you join Sankalp?*

Vibin : This is my first year. Subjects are simple, easier and there are choices.

Siddharth R : This is my first year. Vijay Referred.

Anish : I first joined in 2010 and after a year break joined back in 2012. I had issues with writing. The previous school teacher suggested Sankalp.

Vijay : This is my first year. Math was a challenging subject for me. During my struggle, my grade 8 class teacher suggested that I take up remedial class. I was tutored by Indhu Ma'am and she referred me to Sankalp.

- *What you liked about Sankalp when you first joined?*

Vibin : Teachers are more friendly compared to my previous school.

Siddharth R : Teachers come down to our level and explain the subjects.

Anish : It felt like I had enough time to socialize and interact with my friends.

Vijay : I like the teachers and the way they teach.

- *Are any of your old classmates here with you now?*

Anish : Only Jarod

- *Are you in touch with any of your old classmates?*

Anish : A boy named Adi stays in my grandmothers flat. When I visit her, I make sure to meet him.

- *What changes has Sankalp brought in you?*

Anish : I have learnt and gained many good qualities. Most importantly, I could conquer over my anger.

- *What has been the most memorable event in school so far?*

Vibin / Siddharth .R : Sports day

Anish : My most memorable event was the school stay. I enjoyed this year over the past because all my friends were present.

Vijay : Outbound trip to Mysore.

- What message would you like to give to all your juniors?

Anish : Never hurt or tease anyone weaker than you.

Vijay : Don't bully anyone.

- Is there anything that you would like to convey to your teachers?

Anish : They are all just awesome.

Vijay : you all have always been kind and nice. Please stay the same always and never change.

- What are your future plans?

Anish : I would like to be a DJ.

Vibin / Siddarth / Vijay : Yet to decide.

A TALK WITH THE SCHOOL PUPIL LEADER "JAROD" –

Topic: MY LEADERSHIP MOMENTS

Interviewer: Jayashree Kidambi
(Special educator)

- What you think is the quality of a good leader?

Jarod : A good leader should be responsible, punctual, set an example to others by completing the job on time and keen on the work he does.

- Did you dream of becoming a leader?

Yes, I always dreamt of becoming a leader, especially SPL.

- Why did you dream of becoming a leader?

It is challenging and I like challenges.

- Give me a few instances where you had to face your peers?

On sports day I had to control the entire school during drill and March past. I was a bit nervous initially but slowly I picked up and got things under control.

- Did you meet all the challenges?

I could meet with some but a few were difficult.

- Are you happy with the way you dealt with these challenges? Did you give your best?

Yes, I am happy and have done my best.

- How did you feel while campaigning for elections?

I felt very nice. I also helped many juniors by taking their problems to the concerned teachers, during this time.

- What was the best moment during your leadership tenure?

On sports day when I was called for everything and when students listened to me, I felt nice.

- What has been the most memorable moment in school so far?

My most memorable moment was during grade 5. All my friends were in the same class. Even if the teachers changed our places, we used to always remain together because of the small size of our classroom.

Yet another instance was, last year our classroom door would open only from outside. It used to get stuck and we had to wait for other students to push the door.

- While leading the entire school on sports day as you held the Sankalp flag, how did you feel?

Yes, it felt great. I felt as if my entire

life in Sankalp ran through in front of my eyes and a sense of responsibility has sunk into me.

- Do you have anything to convey to your teachers or anything for us to take back from you as a student?

Nothing in particular but, it's just a suggestion. Just five minutes before the end of every period, each student should be given a chance to give a quick recap of what was being taught in the class. This should happen on a rotation basis so that everyone gets a chance.

- Can you share a few memorable moments with your teachers?

They make us understand everything in detail. For example, they explain word by word and give examples for us to think independently.

- What is the message for your future leaders? Any message that is motivating.

"Do your work with responsibility, do it with care and love, do it because you want to help others and not because someone asked you to do."

PARENTS ARE THE BEST ADVOCATE OF THEIR CHILD: MIND VOICE OF SANKALP PARENTS

Parent's contribution towards school and child

Parents are the first teachers and teachers are the second parents. I, being a mother of two kids have slowly learnt the importance of parental relationship with the child and the school over the years.

The relationship between the school and parents is a mutually complementary one. Teaching begins at home and home is the source of the most important components of the school. Parents are responsible for the grades of their children because they enrich the lives of their children by means of imparting values and knowledge and contributing to the development of an intelligent child. Family encourages the child and increases the motivation to learn and excel and is responsible for providing a healthy environment.

Parent and schools each bring unique strengths to the education of children. They are a team. They each have strengths, weaknesses - neither of us can do the job alone. Respect must be the basis of such relationship. The healthy relationship shared by the parents and the school is of vital importance during the schooling of the child.

Such above relationship that I as a parent have shared with this school is one to be cherished. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the school for providing a platform to all the parents for maintaining a healthy and amicable relationship, thus tremendously contributing to the growth and development of our children. Last but not the least, the parent community of our school must be appreciated for their constant support and motivation.

- Mrs. Annapurani
(Mother of Shailender - NIOS 2A)

FATHER'S ROLE IN CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

The role of a father is to contribute to the growth and development of a child. A father's role is to make sure that his child does not lack any of the necessities of life. The father's role is important because it has a profound influence on the social, emotional and intellectual development of a child. Fathers have an opportunity to relive the father-child relationship and parent their own children in a way that contributes positively to the child's growth and development.

A father's participation in child's life is more significant because, often they try to model their father. When the child grows up under his shadow it makes life easier and more structured. It gives the son, knowledge of what it is really like to be a man and daughters blossom with the positive attitude of the father. It teaches them how to deal with challenges in this mundane world.

When there is active participation of both parents, it makes the child's life and development healthier and happier. I believe that it's not just the mother but fathers' responsibility also towards the success of a child.

- Mr. Ramkumar
Father of Kushal - NIOS 2B

IN LEARNING YOU WILL TEACH, IN TEACHING YOU WILL LEARN: THE VOICE OF OUR TRAINEES

- "Education is not the filling of the pail, but the lighting of a fire. -W.B. Yeats"

Sankalp exactly does that, as the name itself defines its purpose. Sankalp-Dedication to fill your child's bucket with knowledge required to light the fire within.

My experience with Sankalp is only 2 years. But the association with them will be remembered forever. Pulling out my daughter Jyotsnaa from a mainstream school in Dubai and putting her in Sankalp was a challenging move for us. We were quite apprehensive about her coping up with the new environment. But Sankalp made her feel comfortable and accepted her as she is. This has

immensely built her self-confidence as she was given a fair ground to perform without any peer pressures. Academics too was not pressurized and she is able to perform well.

Sankalp gave a huge platform for Jyotsnaa to showcase her talents in different competitions like stage play, fireless cooking, drawing, oratory etc. (For me writing the word "etc" itself proves how Sankalp has given the much-needed self-esteem to my daughter which the mainstream failed to give).

The trust I had on Sankalp increased manifold after the Mysore trip. It not only tapped the strengths of Jyotsnaa to handle herself alone but also added a thought that "our children are in safe hands indeed".

Taking up the Sankalp's Certificate Course in Remedial Teaching for Children with Learning Disorders and Autism has not only unlocked my potentials but also changed my perspective on LD. This learning is an asset as it is structured well to help children with LD.

As Yeats said, Sankalp is not only filling Jyotsnaa's bucket but it is dedicatedly filling mine too.

- Ashalatha Parthasarathy
Mom of Jyotsna - 8A

FROM TRAINEE TO A TEACHER

"Sankalp" - a journey too short yet most enlightening, that is what each one of us from the 2019 batch Remedial teachers training would say.

Yes, we have been the most privileged batch to be a part of both Sankalp The open school and Sankalp The Learning Centre. We are probably the first ones to be sculpted and moulded by the best hands from both centers.

Like a child who enters the school for the first time I remember the apprehensive look on each one of our faces as to why we are here? What are we to do? Where is all this leading us to? But with the very first session we started a step by step transformation from an ordinary everyday person to a big thinker, a better human.

The sessions on perception gave us a totally different perception about life, the children and our rights and wrongs. Sankalp mentors held our hands while the unlearning and the relearning happened. As we come to the closure, the process of learning continues, we take with us a great deal of freshly gained knowledge and intention to make life more positive and world more beautiful for everyone around and for us.

- Sudha Gururaj
Trainee

IMPRESSIONS OF THE HEART...

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Leela Tawker, The Founder and Director of Excel Phonics and Grammar, believed in this and has still been exploring the world of education to the core.

She dedicated her life towards her passion of teaching children in the way they enjoy. When she started her life as a teacher in Daniel Matriculation, she never thought she will be any different from others. But, as she puts it, "The urge to make a difference should come from within". She used the child's strength i.e. movement, to teach her lessons. She will always be thankful for the encouragement and support she got from the management. That is her take on teachers and management, "If the teacher really has a vision for her students then the management will provide support and materials for the same".

"Little Lamb School" was where she was introduced to phonics and its importance when English was not the student's mother tongue.

She is an admirer of Sankalp School, as a school that has used these methods in the best possible manner. She still feels sad about not being able to help one particular neurologically diverse child and therefore feels that Sankalp, is doing a phenomenal job by touching lives of such many children on an everyday basis.

Compiled by
-Preethi Mohan

THE NURTURING EDUCATION: A DIALOGUE WITH...

Sabareesh

Krishnamoorthy –

Waldorf educator
and Waldorf parent,
Hyderabad



*Waldorf Education was
founded by Rudolf*

Steiner as a way to bring nurturing and holistic education to the children. Steiner saw education as health giving and looked at the importance of addressing the growing needs (Physical, Emotional, Intellectual and Spiritual) of children through education and treat education as far more important than just passing information from books to students. Waldorf education brings diverse experiences to the growing child thereby creating love for lifelong learning. This is done by the use of creative methods in teaching e.g. use of music, movement, play, drama, reading, writing, craft work etc.

*What does education mean according to you
as a Waldorf educator and a parent?*

According to me, education must go beyond the aspects of bringing content and teaching principles. As human beings and societies evolve, education must also evolve to meet the changing needs of the classroom and the world. As a parent

and an educator, I certainly see that Waldorf education meets these needs. By bringing age appropriate content to the children in ways that kindle their curiosity, it develops a deep sense of love and respect for learning and humanity. Creative thinking and free thinking is encouraged in a big way.

*What should be the approach while working
with children with special needs?*

I feel that, children with special needs are amazingly beautiful. Every child's situation is unique. As a teacher, one must strive to deeply understand the child's strengths and challenges and areas needing improvement. Every child's situation is different and teacher needs to address those needs while still operating in a larger classroom. Use of movement, stories, colors, music etc is essential and the classes must help the children to create an interest.

*Why do you think holistic education
promotes both intellectual and emotional
development of a child?*

A growing child is constantly seeing a world with rapidly evolving senses. The child's understanding of the world is constantly changing and in this aspect, very different from an adult's view of the world. Hence, I think a holistic approach is a must so that the child remains open to the possibility that understanding can and will change and that it is fine. In this

context, we see that Waldorf schools promote the use of incomplete objects in the early years. As much as possible, we need to keep the mind and heart open for the kids so that they can form their opinions of the world. This leads to a well-rounded emotional and intellectual development and serves the objective of developing lifelong seekers.

*How does diet play a role in the growth and
development of children with special needs?
Is there a special diet that they have to
follow?*

Diet is exceptionally important for a growing child. A healthy diet should be well balanced one. I think especially, when we work with children with special needs, it is essential that the parent and the teacher work closely with the child's doctor to understand the diet for the child. Many children with special needs have specific allergies and it is vital that these allergies are well understood and addressed. Apart from the allergies, it is highly recommended that the children live a lifestyle that is liver friendly. This means - to eat at the right time intervals (8 am, 12:30 pm, 6 pm), eating the right food (preservative and chemical free, no white sugar, no white flour).

– Jayashree Kidambi
Interviewer

MEMORIES THAT WILL BE ENGRAVED IN OUR HEARTS FOR EVER:



THANKS GIVING WITH GRATITUDE



Mrs. LAKSHMI KRISHNA KUMAR'S TEAM
CELEBRATES HER AWARD