



Purkal Bulletin - April 2020

Igniting Learning Beyond Concrete Walls of Classrooms

PYDS adapted swiftly to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our teachers quickly evolved creative ways to connect with their students. Foremost, we first ensured their mental well-being, then turned to the delivery of education via WhatsApp and phone calls. Since the majority of our students do not have access to a computer at their homes, use of online platforms remains very limited.

Our students too adapted to the new ways of learning and are now enthusiastically accomplishing all their assigned tasks and more! Overcoming the barriers of poor connectivity, students like Prachi Chauhan (of Class 12 who lives near Yamunotri) are managing to keep up with their learning and submissions through sheer hard work and dedication.

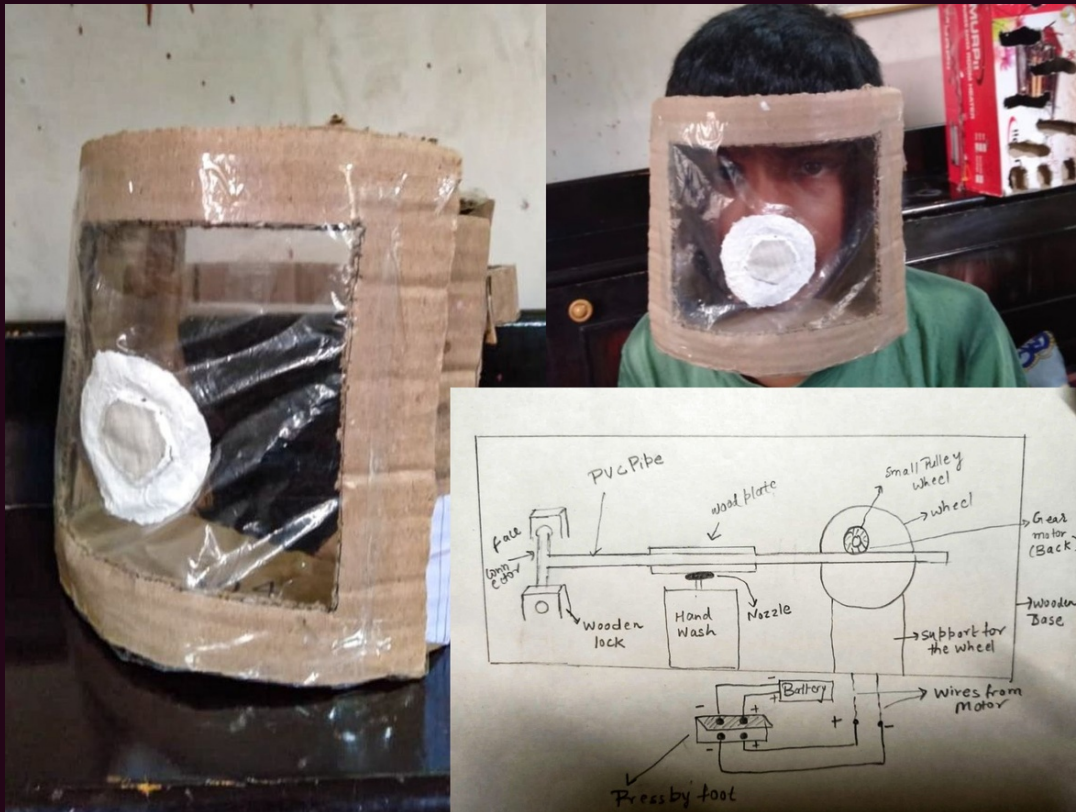
During this lockdown, students are also utilizing their time to develop new skills or explore hidden talents; be it crafting earrings with rice grains, baking or learning calligraphy.

Patrons, we happily bring to you some incredible and creative stories of the lockdown from the little world of Purkal!

Tinkers Take COVID-19 Challenge

This crisis has given an opportunity to our children to learn new skills, develop compassion and resilience while working to build a safer and more caring community. Their submissions give us hope for a Covid-19 free world in the near future.

Protective Face Shield and Foot Operated Hand Sanitizer Dispenser – designed by Dev Verma class 8(A) using PVC pipe.



Protective Face Shield by Simran Joshi and Manas Kukreti from class 8(B) using waste materials

[Click here to watch](#)

Small Hands, Stitching High Hopes

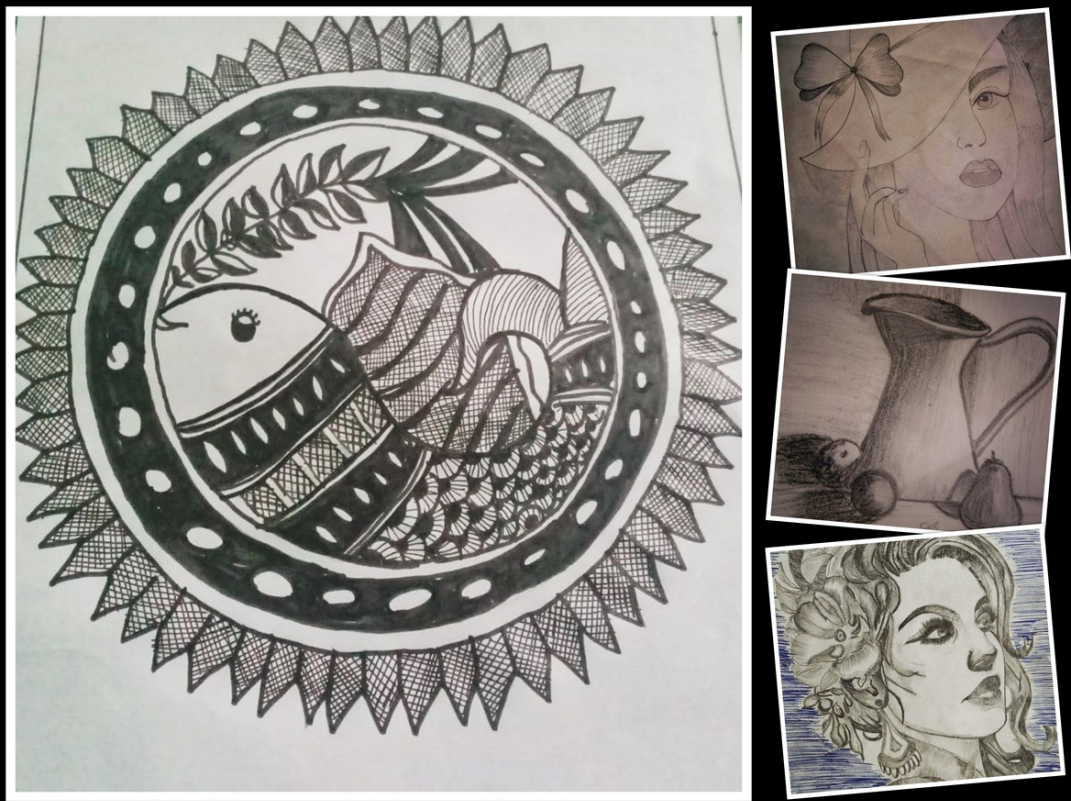


Radhika Baluni, a student of class 9, made cloth face masks. She has given out these face masks to her family members and neighbours to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Her voluntary service has been appreciated by the International Award for Young People (IAYP) in their weekly newsletter.

[Click here to watch Radhika Baluni's Face Mask Video](#)

Developing Observational Skills Through Art

Through observational drawing, our students are developing skills to understand shapes, patterns, perspective, colours, shadows, contours and how all of the details interact.



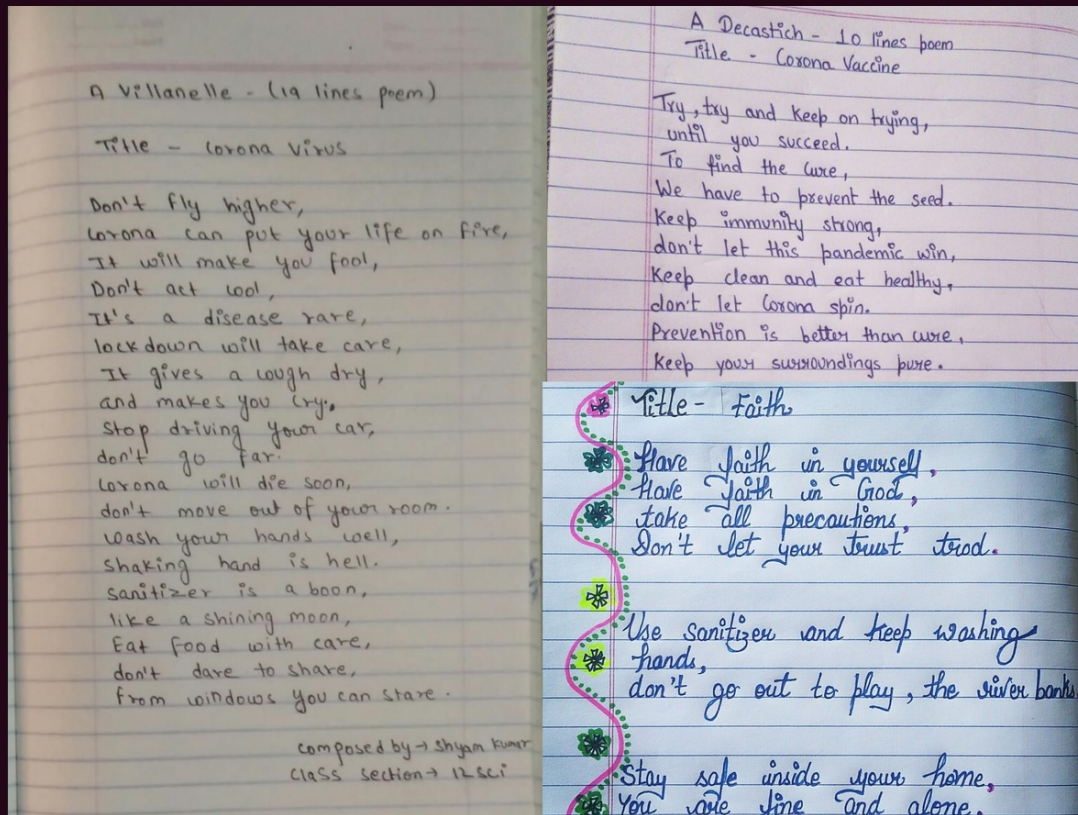
Not Letting Health Suffer

Being deskbound can adversely impact both physical health as well as emotional well-being. To mitigate these, our children have been encouraged to undertake various activities while at home. Here is a glimpse of a full body workout done by Vipul Tyagi.

[Click here to watch Vipul Tyagi's Full Body Circuit Training](#)

An Art Form of Written Words

All they needed was a pen and paper. These young poets penned their thoughts and emotions in the form of visual groupings of lines known as Stanza Breaks. All these verses came straight from the heart of our young poets.



Learning in the Backyard

'Despite favourable climatic conditions, a farmer's crop failed to give a good yield', Watch our little farmers finding possible reasons in the soil!

A Digital Performance Worth a Praise!

On 23rd April, our very own Tabla performer, Saurabh Sharma participated in **YAYAVAR's On-line Literary Festival**. His recital was played during the opening ceremony of the fest.

[Click here to watch Saurabh Sharma's Tabla performance](#)

Click Here to Read 'A Reflection on my 7 year journey at PYDS' by Ms. Sarandha Kukreja, one of our senior teachers



2020-21 Admission Update

Our Policy entails fresh admissions into classes 1 and 6 every year. Of these 2/3rd must necessarily be girls. We conduct on site tests which are open to all and free of charge. These are followed by a rigorous first hand survey of their families and homes to establish their socio economic status. In keeping with our charter, admissions are provided only to the most needy among them.

It is a tribute to the efforts of our entire staff that PYDS is recognised in its communities for the quality of its care and all round education. Consequently, this year too, we received an enthusiastic response to our admission process. 138 children wrote the test for 25 seats in class 1. Response for Class 6 was even more overwhelming with 159 students appearing for only 13 seats. We are happy to report that these admissions are now complete with students from as far away as Kyarkuli, a small village off the road to Mussoorie. We are looking to welcome our new children as soon as we reopen.

Until the Next Exciting Update

We are leaving you with an article on Navjeevan Program written by Ms Anjali Bhargava, a reputable journalist. It was published in the Business Standard newspaper on 19 April 2020.

500 miles from home, Happy Reading!

500 miles from home

The Navjeevan project is a unique attempt to offer free and quality education to children with no access to it, writes **Anjali Bhargava**

*Lord I'm one, Lord I'm two,
Lord I'm three, Lord I'm four
Lord I'm five hundred miles away
from home*

The scene would have gladdened the heart of American folksinger and songwriter Hedy West had she been present there at the Purkal Youth Development Society (PYDS) school in Uttarakhand's Purkal village on a cold November morning in 2019.

A small group of children — aged nine to 12 years — sang "500 miles" at the top of their voice before an audience that watched transfixed. Nothing could be more heartfelt or closer to the truth. This group of singers had left behind their parents and families a year ago in their remote Kumaon villages to find quality education as part of a unique project — Navjeevan — taken up by the school. In many cases, the children were literally 500 miles away from home, if not more.

In 2018, G K Swamy, founder of PYDS — considered by many locals as the best school in Dehradun — decided to spread his net wider to offer free and quality education to children who had no access to schools or had a very scrappy option at home in the state's hilly terrain. The school's team set out in search for parents —

who would part with their young ones to join PYDS — all over the remote mountains. The child had to have spirit, the hunger and the strength to leave his or her parents and live in an alien boarding environment. In almost all the cases, the children had never ventured beyond their own or at best the next village.

Swamy was fully cognisant of the fact that he was asking for a lot. In a country where child labour and trafficking are common problems, he was asking parents to part with their children and send them away to Dehradun, akin to an alien country for many parents who like their children had not wandered further than the next village. Convincing the parents that their intentions were noble could only be achieved by organising a visit to the campus. If they saw it for themselves, their fears would be allayed.

Following the visit and completing all other formalities, 21 students were inducted in the first batch. The PYDS team hired five full-time staffers for these children. A remedial curriculum for the group that allowed them to cover topics in math, English and the sciences speedily was introduced.

Although most of the children were light years behind their age in terms of learning, almost 14 students are ready for their grade level within a year and will be integrated



with the regular CBSE Class 5 or Class 6 batch in the school. Like with any group, the Navjeevan one too has its stars. In these cases, the PYDS team working closely with these children has been "blown away" by their ability to reach where they have considering where they began, strengthening their belief that grit and hunger can fill any hole. A few students are ready to enter a class below their age and a couple need to repeat another year in the Navjeevan class that is remedial and helps them bridge their learning gaps. A new batch will be brought in for the coming academic year.

The staff dedicated to the group has been trained to keep a sharp eye

for students who may fail to adjust as Swamy and others are of the view that the emotional state of the child comes over and above his or her academic prowess. Even as they advance in their studies, the Navjeevan team keeps a keen eye on the children who are thriving and those who appear to be wilting.

What's even more heartening is that during the holidays — and currently during the Covid-19 crisis — the Navjeevan children proudly demonstrate their learning and achievements by teaching their younger siblings and other children in the community, a testimony to how far they have come in just one year.

When this writer visited the Navjeevan group, their rosy red cheeks gave them away even before they were introduced and started to chatter. Within eight months of being in close proximity, the group had forged bonds with each other beyond normal, with one or the other perking up to answer questions addressed to others within the group. Each child could read the other's mind, knew the other's background and history and even the intensity with which their mates were missing home and family. For now, this is the only family they know and the only one they need as they work towards a new life and a rosier future.

In the present times of difficulty, we too have had to take steps to stringently manage our finances. These include cutting back salaries for our employees and adopting austerity measures for the year ahead. However, this situation is neither healthy nor sustainable, especially if we have to maintain the high quality of care and education we promise to our children, and assure to you - our Patrons and Donors. We, therefore, request your continued generosity in support of our efforts at a time of difficulty for all of us. Every gesture of help counts.

In turn, we assure you that all of us at Purkal remain fully committed to fulfilling our Mission.

PLEASE DONATE

We appreciate your feedback and suggestions. Stay safe and healthy!



©2020 Purkal Youth Development Society | Purkal Village, P.O: Bhagwantpur, Dehradun - 248009

Web Version

Preferences

Forward

Unsubscribe

