

Your Purkal Journal

January 2026

***“Nothing can dim the light which shines from within” -
Maya Angelou***



The Back To Roots Program

***“A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people” -
Mahatma Gandhi***



A Journey Into Tradition

The Back To Roots Programme was envisioned to reconnect students with the cultural heritage of Uttarakhand. During the 2025–2026 academic year, Class VII spent several months studying the Jaunsar Bawar region, its history, geography, customs and traditions. But the classroom was only a starting point.

On 20 November, fifty-two students and ten teachers travelled to the region for three days. Passing through a local marketplace, they spotted women in Dhantu headscarves and men in Diguwais caps with the same details they had read about in school, now standing before them.

Their journey took them through Lakhamandal, Purola, Naitwal and Hanol. At the Lakhamandal temple, they examined ancient carvings, visited a small museum, and saw the graphite Shivling that gleams like a mirror when touched by water. They entered the cave, said to have sheltered the Pandavas. History, for once, felt real.

That evening in Purola, a local artist sang mountain songs. The students responded by performing the Jaunsari dance they had learnt at school. The next day brought them to an authentic Pahadi meal in Mori and to Naitwal's Karna temple, where storytellers shared legends passed down through generations.

The deepest moment came in Hanol. At the Mahasu Devta temple, students learnt about the Lota Pani ritual, a tradition in which disputing parties drink blessed water to prove their innocence. Conversations with villagers were honest: pride in their culture, but also concern about what tourism and modernisation might take away.



Sharing the Journey

Back at school, the students presented their learning to guests at a campus event. A march past led by Dhol and Damau drums opened the evening. An exhibition followed, with handcrafted temple models, musical instruments, regional foods and traditional attire all researched and assembled by the students themselves.

In the auditorium, a folk dance opened the performances. A tabla and pakhawaj recital followed. A fusion dance explored how tradition and modernity can exist together. A short documentary, made by the students, captured their village visits, interviews and rituals.

The harvest song "*Lebhuji jala le chuda*" filled the hall. Students wearing traditional attire explained the meaning behind each garment and pattern. When they spoke about what they had experienced, it was clear the trip had left a mark. Culture was no longer a chapter in a textbook. It was something they had touched, heard and spoken about with the people who live it.

The Back To Roots Programme showed that heritage is kept alive through practice and experiences, not study alone. These students returned not just with knowledge, but with a sense of responsibility for the stories, the customs and the communities they had met along the way.



Republic Day

"The constitution is the sole source and guaranty of national freedom" -

Calvin Coolidge



On 26 January 1950, India adopted its Constitution. Since then, the Republic Day has been a moment for citizens to reflect on that founding vision. Our students gathered to honour this occasion.

As rain was forecast for 26 January, the Primary and Navjeevan Classes 7 and 8 celebrated on 22 January. Two young children guided the Society Secretary and the School Principal to the sports field and placed badges on them. The four houses then marched across the grounds, followed by a dumbbell display that showed the effort they had put into practice.

A tribute to leaders such as Dr B R Ambedkar opened the performances. Abhinav of Class V recited "यह मेरा संविधान है" with clear conviction. A short play on the Right to Equality followed. The choir sang "चलो अपने भारत को सोने की चिड़िया बनाते हैं," and Classes IV and V performed a patriotic dance to "प्राणों से भी प्यारा हिंदुस्तान हमारा."

On Republic Day morning, which passed without rain, middle and senior students assembled as our Principal, Ms Diana Luji Kehmai, unfurled the tricolour. Led by the Head Boy and Head Girl, the four houses marched with discipline and performed a mass drill.

Laxmi of Class VI B spoke about using local products, while Arti of Class VII reminded the gathering that rights protect us and responsibilities shape us. Music, dance, and drama throughout the day connected the ideals of our Preamble to recent relief efforts in Dharali, Uttarkashi.

In her closing remarks, Principal ma'am said the spirit of the Constitution lives through the choices and character of its citizens. Laddoos were then handed out to everyone, bringing a sweet close to the morning. The day ends with laddoos, but what remains is more lasting, a growing sense that they have a place in this country, and a role in shaping it.

Teachers' Workshop

"I touch the future. I teach" – Christa McAuliffe



The new term began with renewed purpose as teachers gathered on the 7th of January, 2026 for a workshop conducted to enhance their professional skills. The school's new year begins not with the ringing of the bell, but with the teachers sitting together as learners themselves.

The Principal spoke about recurring concerns regarding student discipline and academic performance. She stressed the importance of timely and proactive communication with parents, especially when behavioural issues first emerge, so that concerns can be addressed collaboratively and effectively. The school's yoga teacher then led a short meditation and warm-up, which created a calm and positive tone for the day.

The workshop was facilitated by Mr Chandan Ghughtyal, Head of Mathematics at The Doon School, who is an extremely well regarded and experienced teacher. He began with an engaging number game that immediately captured everyone's attention, then reminded the group that teachers are nation-builders who work at the very foundation of society. The teachers were then invited to reflect on the question, *"What is a teacher for me?"* Drawing from their responses, Mr Ghughtyal distilled the essence into a powerful idea: a teacher inspires students to dream and grows alongside them in the process.

Mr Ghughtyal encouraged teachers to share their knowledge freely and stay open to learning from anyone. The importance of paying attention to students' emotional and psychological needs, not just their academic progress. Platforms like Mentimeter and Kahoot were introduced to show how technology can be brought into the classroom in useful ways. He also reminded the group that perspective shapes how we understand things and that many questions have more than one correct answer.

Building curiosity through open-ended questions, thinking beyond borders, and designing lessons that work for students at different levels were all ideas woven through the day. The session closed with a reflective activity where participants wrote positive qualities on one another's backs, ending with smiles as everyone read the affirming words.

The workshop counted towards five of the fifty training hours now required under the National Education Policy. What it offered beyond that was harder to measure: a reminder that good teaching is not a fixed skill but a living practice. The students in those classrooms are shaped, quietly and continuously, by how seriously the teacher in front of them takes their own growth.

Dharohar 2.0

"If I could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint" – Edward Hopper



On the clear, wintry morning of the 29th of January, our dance and art teams travelled to DPSG School Dehradun for Dharohar 2.0, where eleven schools gathered to celebrate youthful creativity.

In the Beyond the Brush category, Muskan and Karan of Class XI created a fusion of Nagar and Dravidian temple style, woven together with the lines of Kathak and

Bharatanatyam. Their preparation was careful and thorough, from planning the composition to practising with acrylics. Karan's use of hatching and cross-hatching gave the work a depth and texture that earned him the second position. The Headmaster of DPSG praised the linework and invited the Class XI art students and their teacher to conduct a demonstration at their forthcoming exhibition.

At a parallel event, twelve girls from Class VII performed the Jaunsari folk dance. Dressed in traditional attire, they moved in quiet harmony to "*Kandhi ma dharali Radha*", a song that carries the spirit of Radha, the mountain maiden. They finished third, but the response that stayed with them came from the school's support staff, who held their hands and said, "*Your dance was so soothing.*" The accompanying teachers were also praised for the students' discipline and conduct throughout the day. They performed and left an impression that no certificate could quite capture.

Basketball Matches

"Champions keep playing until they get it right" - Billie Jean King



Trial matches for Khel Mahakumbh 2025 were held at the Parade Ground. Competing for the U14 Mukhya Mantri Championship Trophy, eleven boys and two girls from our school took part. From the larger group of hopefuls, five boys and one girl were selected for a ten-day training camp.

During the camp, players underwent rigorous conditioning and were introduced to refined techniques, court strategies and disciplined footwork. Coaches patiently clarified rules, ensuring that each participant gained a surer command of the game.

By the end of the training, Suraj and Ritik had earned places in Team Dehradun for the district-level matches held from the 27th to the 29th of January. In the final, Team Dehradun finished as runners-up, yielding to Team Haridwar with a score of 24–45. Our boys returned with medals, certificates, a complete sports kit, and a cash prize of ₹1000 each.

Our two sports teachers played responsible roles at the event. Jai Ram Sharma Sir served as an event manager, while Subhash Sir was appointed referee and coach for Team Dehradun.

Reflecting on the experience, Subhash Sir said, *"We learnt much from senior coaches. Patience is vital, for players often repeat mistakes, and a coach must remain ever watchful. What heartens me most is that Suraj and Ritik are now passing on their learning to their peers, who have returned to practice with renewed enthusiasm."*

Students attended a camp, grew through it, and came back not to keep it to themselves but to share it. Learning, when it takes root, tends to spread.

Journey from Waste to Worth

"What we nurture today shapes tomorrow"



FemPower LATAM, is a social organisation working to empower rural women and youth through education and regenerative practices. In November, supported by the Planetary Health Alliance, they introduced hostel students of Classes VII and IX to regenerative composting. The programme was voluntarily undertaken by Ms. Shivaa Rawat, FemPower India representative and session coordinator. Four Class XI mentors - Ashutosh, Vansh Gupta, Kanishka, and Niruta guided the younger students.

Over a series of Sunday sessions, students collected dry leaves and kitchen scraps from the dining hall, sorted waste, dried used tea leaves, and layered them into compost containers. They turned the mixture each week, learning that temperature controls how quickly compost matures, that citrus peels can disrupt the pH balance, and that even biodegradable waste can cause harm if not managed properly. On 25th December, students used the compost they had made to plant four medicinal herbs, which was a first hands-on experience for them.

The programme ran at no cost to the school. It became a meaningful support that enriched the lives of our students in ways a classroom alone cannot. What stayed with them most was not the composting itself, but what it quietly taught them: that nothing need go to waste, that patience yields abundance, and that even the

smallest effort, tended with care, can nourish something lasting. Watching our students taking ownership of this project, approaching the soil with the same earnestness they bring to their books, was a reminder of why holistic education matters.

We are proud of ... Anshu Yadav (PYDS batch 2024)

"A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor" - FD Roosevelt



Anshu's family lives in Mussoorie, where his father is a cottage caretaker and his mother does stitching work from home. He has two younger sisters, one with impaired hearing.

Anshu joined PYDS in 2017 and struggled initially with the non-traditional learning style, but still did well academically. He's now a graduate of The Great Eastern Institute of Maritime Studies and recently came back to share his story with IX-XII Science students. He encouraged them to work hard, adapt courageously and chase their dreams.

"I joined PYDS in Class VI, initially commuting from Mussoorie until I was allowed to stay in the hostel as a special case in Class XI."

I focused on academics, captivated by Science thanks to my teacher. I spent every free moment in the library, reading scientific discoveries. Highlights include: 2017, I built a tree-bark filter for factory wastewater (National Science Exhibition, selected for Delhi); 2018, I created a stethoscope from discarded materials; and 2019, I constructed a drip-irrigation system to conserve water.

I studied hard for Class X boards, scoring 89% in Science and aiming higher for XII. I also grabbed opportunities: presenting at Doon School's TIGER exhibition, where I listened to Mr Kiran Seth's inspiring talk. He being the founder of SPIC MACAY who had cycled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, sparked a desire to see the world, and as I was Assistant Director for the primary section's Annual Day play, this helped me grow beyond academics.

I stayed disciplined despite many activities, driven to improve my family's finances and support my sister's hearing treatment. I decided to join the Merchant Navy to support my family and explore the world. With teachers' guidance, I cleared IMU-CET (rank 3136) and was selected by The Great Eastern Institute of Maritime Studies (Jan 2025).

I walked into GEIMS and saw a quote on the wall that hit me - "He who commands the sea has command of everything." It filled me with pride, knowing I'd support my family and chase big dreams. At GEIMS, I boosted my discipline, time-management, and teamwork skills while keeping up with studies. I prioritised learning swimming, and on senior captains' advice, picked up guitar, joined the college band, and worked on improving my English.

I was selected to represent GEIMS in an inter-college competition, involving seamanship, firefighting, bridge simulation, quizzes, and Just-a-Minute. I was appointed team leader for nautical events, commanding a vessel in the simulator and leading rigging tasks. I also participated in Quiz and JAM, contributed to the college magazine, and sang in competitions. Two days before the finale, I was asked to lead a musical mash-up which I accepted, reminding myself that resilience grows through challenge. We secured 1st in Nautical and 2nd in Engineering. The experience itself was priceless, and our band's closing ceremony performance got a great response.

Through these varied experiences, I picked up skills to perform under pressure, adapt fast, and communicate clearly. Leadership is about enabling others to succeed. GEIMS drove home that a life at sea demands knowledge, teamwork, discipline, and balanced judgement. With these invaluable lessons, I'm all set to sail into the future, excited for the adventures that await – and the day I finally take to the seas."

Donate to spread smiles!



Our patrons are like the rainbow, flushing the sky with colours of love and cheer. We rejoice in the shade of your good wishes.
Take good care of yourselves, till we meet again.

Purkal Youth Development Society
Purkal Village
PO: Bhagwantpur
Dehradun, 248009
INDIA

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Purkal Youth Development Society · Purkal Village · PO: Bhagwantpur · Dehradun, 248009 · India