

The future is bright when knowledge is key
endless horizons wait for you and me



Your Purkal Journal
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Inter House English Competition

"Knowledge is precious to us, because we shall never have time to complete it" - Rabindranath Tagore



On the 12th of July, the school campus buzzed with excitement as students from all houses came together for the much anticipated Inter House English Competition. Designed to enhance their language skills and build confidence in public speaking, the event unfolded in three categories: Primary, Middle, and Senior.

The Primary section kicked off the day with a delightful 'Show and Tell' contest for classes I and II. Young learners picked everyday objects and spoke about them endearingly, trying their best to speak in grammatically correct English. Next came the 'Spell Bee' for classes III to V and Navjeevan, where the young students identified and pronounced words based on visual cues that tested both their vocabulary and pronunciation.

The spotlight then turned to the Middle schoolers, who impressed the audience with their elocution skills. Teams of six (two each from classes VI to VIII) took the stage to recite carefully memorised works by literary greats like William Shakespeare and John Keats. Before their recitation, they gave brief introductions of the poets and interpretations of the poems.

The Senior category brought thought provoking energy to the event with a series of debates. Teams debated on topics such as: 'Social Media – Pros and Cons,' 'Is Capital Punishment Justified?' 'Should Hindi Be the Official Language?' and 'Should Life Skills Be Part of the School Curriculum?' Each team of three comprised a speaker for the motion, one against, and a refuter who brought the arguments full circle.

The school echoed with cheers and applause as house members rooted for their teams lustily. Beyond the competition, the event proved to be a rich learning experience for all students, sharpening their speaking abilities, improving their pronunciation and broadening their understanding of diverse ideas and perspectives.

POCSO Awareness

"A safe and secure environment for students is the first step to school"



All children have a right to secure education in a safe, protected and conducive environment. Age old challenges of gender inequality, eve teasing and sexual abuse in the school environment call for increased awareness and creating synergy among parents, teachers and schools.

To promote awareness, a POCSO workshop was held for the girl students of classes V to VII and Navjeevan. It was conducted by Ms Aradhya Sinha, a postgraduate student of Delhi University. Another workshop was conducted for the boy students. In both workshops, she spoke about: i) Changes in the body during puberty, ii) Safe and unsafe touch, iii) Action to be taken in case anyone crosses the boundary, physically, verbally or visually. Simple activities were conducted to reinforce safe practices regarding sexual offences against children.

A more detailed workshop was held for all staff members, where their understanding of the POCSO Act 2012 was reinforced. The attendees were asked to be sensitive and identify students who may be facing some issues but were not speaking. They were also guided on the actions to take if any child approached them with a complaint. Myths were busted, and an open discussion on taboos ensued. All present agreed that the school played a vital role in educating and protecting both girls and boys from sexual harassment.

After the workshops, a meeting of the members of the school POCSO committee (comprising four staff members and the Head Boy & Girl) was held in which their responsibilities and duties were elaborated. The process of filing a complaint with the Child Welfare Committee was also discussed in detail.

Celebrating Greenery

"Nature's first green is gold, her hardest hue to hold" - Robert Frost



Harela or 'Day of Green' is celebrated by communities of Uttarakhand to mark the onset of the rainy season and pray for a prosperous harvest. Planting of saplings on

this day is considered auspicious and people go out in large numbers to make the green landscape greener.

The PYDS campus, though small, is blessed with lush green surroundings. This year, on 16th July, to commemorate Harela, students of class VII planted twenty saplings of trees such as the Amaltas, Ashok, Bay Leaf, Camphor, Guava, Lemon, Palash, Pomegranate etc. at spots within the campus. These saplings, with the blessings of goddess Shakti will grow into strong trees to be laden with flowers and fruits. Soon we will witness a kaleidoscope of sable barks, luscious leaves and piebald blooms, rendered with mellifluous calls of the Himalayan birds.

IAYP National Training Workshop

"Youth is the catalyst for innovation, progress and change" - Ban Ki Moon



The International Award for Young People (IAYP) is the world's leading youth achievement award that brings together practical experiences and life skills for young adults to help them grow into committed global citizens.

A two day workshop was organised by IAYP in Delhi on the 17th and 18th July. This training brought together 25 Award Leaders (AL) from 19 schools of the North Region. Our school was represented by Mr Ankit Chamoli. The objective of the workshop was to train AL on ways to implement the programme more effectively so as to provide maximum benefits to students before they leave schools for the larger world.

During the workshop, the aims of the programme and the role of the AL were discussed. The AL were acquainted with the method of maintaining records, assessment criteria and on ways to assist students to strive for the highest (gold) level. The workshop also elaborated on the essentials of activity planning, supervising students and risk management.

It is a privilege for us that IAYP offers subsidized registration fees for PYDS students. Moreover, Mr Kapil Bhalla, the National Director of IAYP, assured Ankit Sir of financial support and assistance for all IAYP programmes, for PYDS students, as and when needed. We are always grateful to IAYP for this.

As Ankit Sir said, *"The workshop was a deeply enriching and inspiring experience for me. It not only strengthened my understanding of the Award Programme's philosophy and framework but also equipped me with practical tools to implement it meaningfully within the PYDS context."*

Plantation Drive

"Trees are the heart of ecosystems and cultures worldwide"



19 of our students, along with three from other schools participated in a tree plantation drive on the 20th of July. It was organised by Punaha Aranya, a voluntary organisation, in collaboration with the Uttarakhand Forest Department, in the Thano Range of Rajaji National Park, just outside Dehradun. Before starting, all participants were given gloves to protect their hands and were briefed about safety measures to be taken during the activity. They first collected the litter around the site

in plastic bags and handed them to Waste Warriors for recycling. They then planted saplings of flowering and indigenous trees of Uttarakhand, supplied by the Forest Department.

Later, the students were made aware of the importance of conserving nature through discussions and story telling. They also learnt the craft of painting pebbles and printing by using blocks carved out of potatoes, expressing their sentiments towards the Earth, nature and climate change through their artwork. The best pieces were given prizes, this included six of our students.

Thereafter, the children got a chance to informally interact with Mr Ravishankar, Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Environment, as he chanced to visit Forest Rest House, while the students were engaged in their activities. He praised them for their disciplined conduct and taking an interest in environmental conservation. Before concluding the event, everyone enjoyed mouthwatering snacks that were served in clean, hygienic conditions. Students enjoyed the day-out thoroughly and sang happy songs on their way back.

Sarod and Sarangi Duet

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything" - Plato



Music has the unique power of evoking deep emotions, stir forgotten memories and give expression to feelings that words often fail to capture. At our school, music is not just an extracurricular activity, it is an integral part of our curriculum. All students up to class X attend weekly music sessions, where they practise both vocal music and a variety of instruments, such as the Tabla, Flute, Pakhawaj, Guitar, and Keyboard. For some students, these sessions ignite a deep passion, which is visible in the way they sing and practise on instruments.

This passion recently found a new spark when nine of our music loving students had the privilege of attending a recital titled 'Sarod and Sarangi Duet with Tabla' at The Doon School, Dehradun. The performance featured three young artists from the prestigious ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata: Koustav Roy on the Sarod, Amaan Hussain on the Sarangi and Mayukh Mukherjee on the Tabla.

The recital began with an introduction to the instruments and the *ragas* to be performed. What followed was an enthralling *jugalbandi* - a duet where two soloists perform as equals, often playfully challenging and responding to one another. The duet between the Sarod and Sarangi wove together mesmerising melodies, aptly complemented by the rhythms of the Tabla.

Our students were captivated by the performance and motivated by the skill of the young artists. More than just a concert - it was for them a glimpse into what a future in music could look like.

Lucky Gaur, one of our Navjeevan children from the remote village of Pata, where no such exposure is available, watched the recital intently, soaking in the nuances of the performance. A devoted Tabla student, he was bursting with questions which he later discussed in depth with the accompanying music teacher. Since the recital, Lucky and the other students have returned to their music practise with a renewed sense of purpose. Experiences like these remind us that music is more than just an art - it's a calling, a language of the soul and a bridge to something greater.

Visit to Wadia Institute

"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known" - Carl Sagan



On July 29th, six students of the Infinity Club embarked on an educational trip to the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun. As part of their ongoing project to design an earthquake alarm system, the students were eager to gain hands-on insights into the science behind earthquakes and witness real-world applications of the concepts they had only read about.

At the institute, they had the opportunity to interact with a scientist who explained the various causes of earthquakes. They learned how seismic activity is monitored and the process of data collection and interpretation using a seismograph. To test the sensitivity of the instrument, the students jumped near it, watching with fascination as the readings responded to their movements. They even compared these results with a seismograph app on the mobile phone and discovered that the application was 80% accurate.

They then explored the institute's geological museum, which featured an array of geological maps, charts, rock samples, fossils, and interactive models. Educational films on the geology of the Himalayas and other regions added to their knowledge. One exhibit that especially caught their attention was a model of an extinct giraffe species, ingeniously crafted from recycled materials. This reinforced in them the importance of environmental conservation and the innovative use of waste materials.

This visit was hugely informative and inspiring for our students. They returned with a deeper appreciation for Earth sciences and a better insight on how to work on their earthquake alarm project.

Volunteers @ PYDS



Working with students can be a rewarding experience as it provides an opportunity to intermingle with young, energetic children bubbling with curiosity and vivacity. As the two XIth graders, Sara and Charles from Dallas, USA, stepped into the PYDS campus on the 14th of July, they looked forward to two weeks of teaching and spending quality time with students. They were accompanied by their mothers, Ashwini and Elizabeth. This was Sara's second visit to our campus. Last year, she had worked with the Navjeevan 6 batch on their English and Math abilities, together with teaching chess to the resident students.

MUN Simulation

Sara and Charles introduced the topic of International Relations to the class XI Humanities students, with a focus on the current situation in the Middle East. They familiarised students with the procedures of the Model United Nations (MUN) and taught them how to prepare speeches in support of the countries they were representing. To reinforce the lessons, the duo organised a MUN simulation in which 23 students participated, each representing one country. Students presented and debated the stance of their country on the ongoing Iran-Israel war. International Relations being new to our students, it was well explained by both Sara and Charles, who also told them about the career options in this field.

Chess Tournament

Sara, is an accomplished international Chess player, holds the title of Women Candidate Master and has won numerous international awards. During her visit last year, she introduced the game of Chess to our residential students. This time, Sara and Charles furthered the initiative, taking the number of enrolled students from 24 last year to 54. After tutoring them for a week, they organised a three-day tournament, in which 27 pairs played seven rounds, each with a different opponent. The tournament was well conducted, and it gave our students a real-time experience of playing while following rules & regulations. Students did well and are looking forward to playing in more tournaments.

Peer Counseling Classes

Both volunteers conducted peer counselling classes for four students of class IV, who were facing behavioural issues due to serious familial problems. They assessed each student individually with the help of their teachers and formulated a plan for them. The students were counseled in a friendly, amicable manner every afternoon for an hour. Teachers have since noticed improvement in these students' behaviour. We are considering ways in which these, or similar sessions can be continued.

Math Session

Sara and Charles also held a session on Math for the Navjeevan 7 students, in which they conducted fun activities based on fractions. Students participated with enthusiasm and were proud to be able to solve all problems presented to them.

All through the visit, the two XIIth graders from the United States worked as a team, guiding, teaching and mingling with the PYDS students. Their visit was appreciated by our students as they identified with them, and were happy to learn about the educational practices and lifestyle of peers from halfway around the globe.

Ashwini and Elizabeth also spent quality time on campus interacting with the teachers, alumni, and Sports coaches. They participated in remedial classes and extended support during the Chess tournament. The goodies brought by them were enjoyed by the entire school. PYDS appreciates contributions made by Sara, Charles, Ashwini and Elizabeth and looks forward to seeing them again.

Meet Ms Ashwini Timblo Gupta

It was a pleasure to have Sara's mother Ms Ashwini Timblo Gupta, Founder of Pathfinders Preschool, Mumbai on our campus for almost two weeks. A person who wears many hats, she is especially passionate about the holistic development of children through education. During her visit to our school with her daughter, Sara, she spent time observing and interacting with students and and members of the

staff. Her cheerful presence on campus was appreciated by everyone. She describes her experience at PYDS Academy as:

"How can high quality education be made accessible to every child, regardless of their circumstances (economic, financial, geographic) and ascribed identities (gender, community)?

*To understand how a school can deliver on this most challenging of objectives, our then 16-year-old daughter, Sara, and I visited PYDS in June 2024 because we had heard a great deal about its mission to provide a high-quality *holistic* education to underprivileged and deserving children in Uttarakhand. Our family was introduced to PYDS through Nikhil Naredi and has been a regular donor.*

Sara was given the opportunity to work with the Navjeevan 6 class on their English and Math abilities, and to teach chess after-school to children residing at PYDS. Meanwhile, I observed the children, teachers, and administrative staff while also assisting Sara as needed. The quality of education, dedication of the teachers, and the manner in which children performed and conducted themselves - both during classes and outside - filled our hearts with optimism and joy.

To be able to witness their hunger for learning, their passion for chess (even after a long day at school), their desire to excel - was a deeply rewarding and humbling experience.

We returned this year with Sara's friend, Charles, and his mother, Elizabeth, from Dallas, TX. They taught chess to all grades, from 5th to 12th, and the number of participants increased from 24 to 54, proof positive of the children's growing interest in the program. Sara added an international relations class and facilitated a Model UN competition as well. Unless you have the opportunity to participate, you can't gain confidence, and Sara and I were determined to provide these opportunities for the children.

We also spent time interacting with the Navjeevan teachers, alumni, and Activities and Sports coaches, and witnessed the performance impact survey that was being administered to the children. In addition, we participated in remedial classes and enjoyed delicious, thoughtfully planned meals each afternoon, that take thorough care of the children's nutritional requirements.

As an educator, I am inspired by the opportunities that have been created for the children of Uttarakhand by Purkal, the individualized attention they receive, and the genuine concern PYDS has for their higher education and careers after they graduate from this wonderful school."



Donate to spread smiles!

As the Sun plays hide and seek with the rain clouds, we rejoice in the myriad shades of green leaves and the loud clear calls of the peacock. We look forward to hearing from you. Till then adieu, take care 😊



Our mailing address is:
Purkal Youth Development Society
Purkal Village
PO: Bhagwantpur
Dehradun, 248009
INDIA