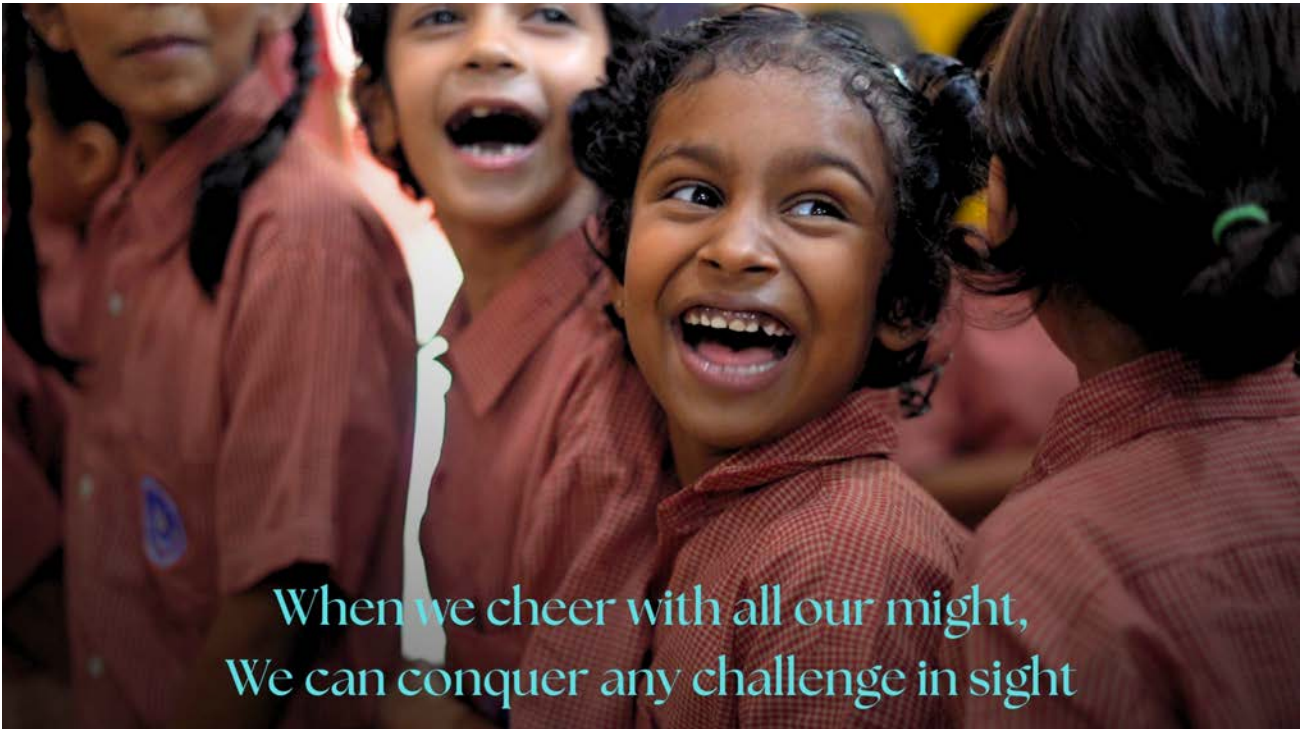


Your Purkal Journal June 2025



When we cheer with all our might,
We can conquer any challenge in sight

Remembering Swamy Sir

"My name should not be made prominent. It is my ideas that I want to
be realized" - Swami Vivekananda



On 11th June 2021, our Founder, Swamy Sir, left for his heavenly abode. Although he is no longer physically with us, we are continuously guided by his vision and principles to care for and educate needy, deserving children. Students and staff gathered in a special assembly to pay their respects to him. Two class XII students hailing from Kalap (a remote village of Uttarakhand) who joined PYDS as the first batch of Navjeevan in 2018, spoke about their memories of him. Devraj Rana the head boy, shared how as a rustic village boy, he felt out of place in PYDS. He was constantly encouraged by Swamy Sir to work hard and show his potential. Neetu Rana said with a deep sense of gratitude, *“I could not have attended a good school without Sir’s help.”*

Together, the whole school bowed in gratitude to Sir. It is because of him that we walk today with our heads held high. His efforts have borne fruit just like he had envisioned. So far, 531 students have completed class XII, of which 272 have already joined the mainstream workforce. The success of these students is the tangible result of his philanthropic vision, which he fulfilled with love and compassion. A firm believer of ‘*Paropkaraya Jeevanam*’ (Life is for Giving), Swamy Sir led by example. All of us at PYDS are the privileged stakeholders in his legacy, a legacy that constantly reminds us to take the light of education further and farther.

Lodha Genius Program

“Genius when young is divine” - Benjamin Desareli



The Lodha Genius Programme (LGP), a unique collaboration between the Lodha Foundation and Ashoka University, was launched to nurture bright young minds and to encourage them to give back to society. LGP offers a fully funded, multi-year educational experience for students from class IX to the early stages of their careers. A standout moment was when Ridhima of class IX from our school was selected to join this program. She attended the month-long residential session at Ashoka

University's campus in Haryana, mid May 2025 onwards.

Ridhima opted for the Junior Track program, which covered subjects such as Science and Mathematics, supplemented by a series of thought provoking activities and workshops. Although she struggled initially with some challenging mathematical concepts, extra support from her teachers helped her successfully overcome these hurdles.

Besides academics, Ridhima attended a series of fun and interactive workshops, such as dancing, scriptwriting, role-plays and painting. One of the highlights was a captivating field trip on astrology, where she had the opportunity to create her own telescope and listen to the intriguing sounds of space via a radio telescope. She was also part of a team that worked on a project related to the Sustainable Development Goals, where they created insulated disposable curtains designed to trap dirt.

Ridhima was profoundly inspired by two former LGP participants who are now studying at Oxford University. Their success has motivated her to dream even bigger. Reflecting on her experience, she said, *"I had a wonderful time, learning new things, making friends, trying new foods, playing games, and dancing. My English speaking improved so much, as all my friends spoke only in English, which was a huge challenge for me in the beginning but so rewarding."* Ridhima is thrilled by the experience and eagerly looking forward to attending the next module of the program in 2026.

International Yoga Day

"Yoga is a mirror to look at ourselves from within" - BKS Iyengar



On June 21st, the entire school came together for a special assembly to mark the International Yoga Day. Students shared facts about the ancient practice of yoga, followed by a collective session where the entire school performed yoga *asanas* together.

Simultaneously, the 6th International Yoga Day Competition was underway at the Association for Yoga and Meditation School in Rishikesh. Four of our students who had previously cleared the preliminary round were there to participate in the finals. Som (class VI), Anurag and Ishika (both class IX) competed in the 8–14 age group, while Anchal (class X) represented the 14–21 age group. Each participant was required to perform four mandatory *asanas* along with three advanced *asanas* of their own choice. Our students confidently chose to showcase challenging *asanas* like *Hanumanasana*, *Rajakapotasana*, *Vrischikasana*, and *Tittibhasana*.

It was a proud moment for us when Ishika clinched the gold medal in her category. Notably, she was the sole finalist from our school last year and had then secured the runner up position. The other three students were awarded certificates of appreciation for their outstanding effort.

Participating in a national event outside of Dehradun gave our students a chance to witness the flexibility and skill of peers from across the country. They returned inspired, having picked up new techniques from senior practitioners and a renewed appreciation for the discipline.

Inter House Quiz Competition

“Sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can” - Paul Tournier



Statistics reveal that students who actively take an interest in general knowledge perform significantly better in academics than their peers. General knowledge sharpens cognitive abilities by improving memory, analytical thinking and comprehension. On June 28, the annual Inter-house Quiz Competition was organized for the Primary, Middle and Senior classes. The aim was to promote a healthy competition among students and test their general knowledge and awareness of national, international current affairs.

Students from all four houses participated enthusiastically, and faced questions based on general knowledge, audio, visual and flash card rounds. Excited contestants showcased their acumen and faced the Quiz Master confidently. Correct answers were greeted with ripples of applause and cheers that rang across the campus. The Rapid Fire round was even more exciting, with contestants sitting on

the edge of their seats, ready to hit the buzzer first. The nail-biting competition culminated with Kachnar house as the winner in the Primary category, and Amaltas house as the winner in both the Middle and Senior categories. We wish Gulmohar and Dhak house better luck next time.



Teachers Workshop

“In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn” - Phil Collins.



PYDS aims for the growth and development of its teachers alongside that of its students. As the staff returned from their brief summer vacation, a two day workshop was organised for them on the 16th and 17th of June.

A Mindfulness session was conducted elaborating the regular practice of yoga as the promoter of the wellness of the mind, body and soul. Correct postures for sitting and standing were graphically explained and simple *asanas* were suggested to beat routine fatigue.

It was followed by Principal Ms Diana Luji, initiating a discussion on factors affecting the academic performance of students. She urged teachers to brainstorm and come up with solutions. A few rejuvenating group activities were conducted, which brought sparkle in the room and promoted bonding among participants. Staff members were briefed about the renovation of the school auditorium and updates regarding school administration.

On the second day, Mr Anjan Chaudhary, Dean of Academics of The Doon School, Dehradun, graciously conducted a day-long session for our teachers. In an engaging session, he discussed three broad topics: i) Building Curiosity and Teamwork, ii) Importance of Language and iii) Assessments and Routine Thinking. Emphasising the noble profession, he remarked, "Teaching is a craft, which is not mastered

easily". He asked teachers to be aware of the challenges lurking in the classroom and think of creative ways to fix them. He further discussed topics such as the Role of Praise, Deep Listening, etc. Teaching tools such as - Visible Thinking, Connect Extend Challenge, the 3-2-1 Bridge were recommended by him along with the use of AI and other assessment tools. Above all, he emphasised the importance of providing constructive feedback, cautioning teachers to provide critique without being cynical.

During a feedback session, teachers confirmed that they had found the two days to be of significant benefit. They felt heard and seen when they voiced their hurdles. Noticeably, many teachers were facing similar issues; sitting together and addressing them one by one, brought feasible suggestions to the fore. The concluding inference was that teaching methods need to evolve in tandem with prevalent pedagogies and changing social scenarios.

First Unit Tests

"The secret of your future is hidden in your daily routine" - Mike Murdock



With a view to catching student's learning deficiencies early, Unit Tests were reintroduced after a gap of a few years. They were conducted between 20th and 25th June for all classes except the Xth and XIIth. The mood on campus shifted during the tests as students walked with books in hand, enquiring about each other's preparation. They appeared for the tests in their classrooms in the morning, followed by regular sessions. To familiarise students, all question papers were set and printed in the format of the upcoming half yearly examinations.

On 28th June, a Parents' Teachers Meeting (PTM) was organised for all classes, including classes X & XII. It was the first PTM of the 2025-26 session, and teachers were pleased to record interaction with 98% parents. Most of them attended the meeting on campus. However, those who could not come spoke to teachers on the phone or came within the next few days. Underperforming senior students were cautioned before their parents to improve their performance and attitude, to avoid being added to the exit list. It was a clear message to parents also to monitor the activities of their children during non-school hours.

The teachers were happy with the outcome and said that preparing and appearing for the tests helped students improve their learning techniques, confidence levels, study discipline, time management and writing skills.

Workshop on Social Media

“Social media addiction is like a double-edged sword, it can bring both positive and negative effect” - Sherry Turkle



Author and futurist Brian Solis has rightly said that, “*Social media is more about sociology and psychology than technology.*” Increased social media use has been associated with higher preponderance of mental health issues, decreased academic performance, lack of exercise, and decreased well-being.

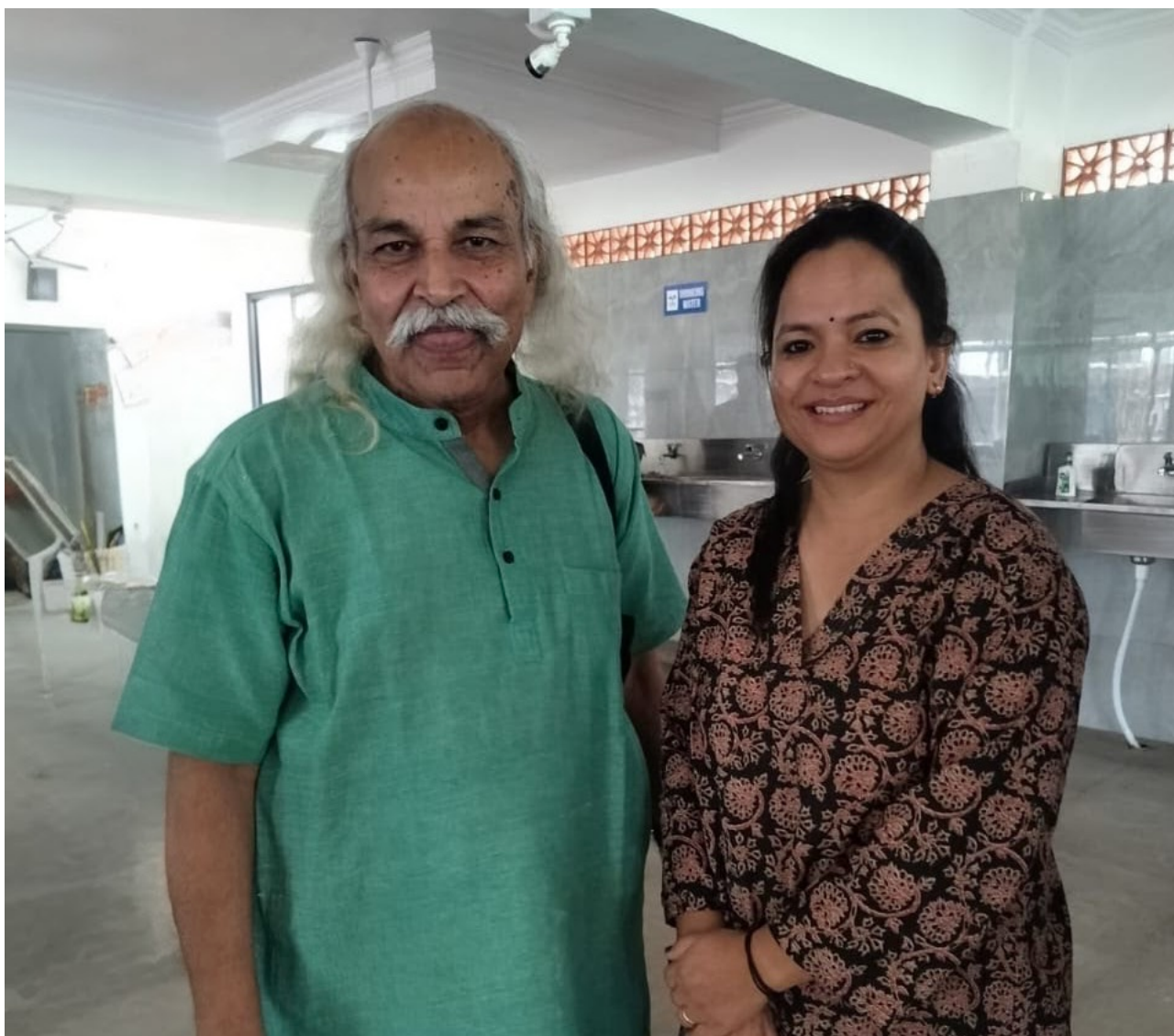
A workshop was conducted for the class VIII students by Ms Aradhya Sinha, who is presently interning with us. She intrigued students by asking them about the first thing that crossed their mind when they heard the word ‘social media’? After hearing their response, she prodded them to think about the impact and problems that precipitate due to the use of social media platforms and plausible solutions.

The class was divided into groups and asked to draw a Social Media Tree - showing roots as the cause, branches as impact, leaves as problems and fruits as solutions. Students discussed vehemently and put their collated ideas on chart paper as creatively as they could. Finally, all groups explained their perspectives to the whole class. One group presented a role play about a girl who was negatively affected by social media, but turned around when she was shown that it could be used to study, learn skills, enhance creativity and for sharing ideas with people across the globe. At a time when society is invaded by myriad social media platforms, the workshop's message was for the young adolescents. It enabled them to comprehend the perils of social media, showed them ways to stay safe and use it to promote education and business. Ms Aradhya spoke explicitly about the dangers lurking behind the screen and cautioned students to never share personal information indiscriminately on the internet. She advised them to approach trusted adults if they got into any kind of trouble, rather than exposing themselves to strangers on the net.

Recent Trends in Physical Sciences

“Science and everyday life cannot and should not be separated” -

Rosalind Franklin



PYDS was invited by DBS Global University, Dehradun, to attend a faculty development programme titled 'Recent Trends in Physical Sciences'. Led by Padma Shri Prof Harish Chandra Verma, it was attended by a large number of school teachers of Uttarakhand, including the senior Physics teacher of our school. The program focused on i) the importance of experiential learning and ii) the confluence of tradition with innovation in Physical Sciences. Prof Verma also elaborated on the importance of developing and designing affordable and effective tools to enrich learning among students.

The subsequent session was on Generative AI and Prompt Engineering. It gave participants hands-on experience on various AI tools such as ChatGPT, Deepseek, D-iD, Whimsical, Notebook LM, Huristica and Khanmego. The session was enriched further by Dr Piyush Dua's informative talk on the Future of Computing Era, in which he shared insights into upcoming trends like Quantum Computing and Memristors. Before wrapping up, the VC of DBS Global University familiarised attendees with the

educational and scholarship programs run by the institute and the achievements of their students.

Anti Rusting Treatment

“We are the silent sentinels, we will keep you safe under our broad wings”



The buildings on the PYDS campus have corrugated tin roofs, which have braved the vagaries of weather, protecting students and equipment under their wings for more than two decades. These hardy stalwarts have silently witnessed multiple students who came in as tiny tots and left the campus as strong, confident class XII passouts. After all these years, they continue to stand proud and strong, but have begun to show signs of ageing with tiny gaps in joints that let in rain water. Something had to be done to stop water from dripping in the many classrooms. Replacing the sheets would be quite expensive and would require a lot of effort and time. After some brainstorming, considering the strength of the sheets, a pragmatic

decision was made to coat them with waterproof materials. This would be done by way of a multi-step anti rusting process to be carried out in two phases.

In the first phase, the entire roof of the Western Block was waterproofed in May, while the Eastern Block roof was similarly treated during summer vacations, in June. With this done, the leakages from the roof have been fixed and the tin roofs have received a new lease of life. Further, with a heavy monsoon now upon us, this initiative is already showing its value by providing us with “drip free” study and work spaces.

We are proud of ...
Manish Shah, PYDS batch 2021



Manish, his elder sister, Anita, and younger sister, Parvati were taken under the aegis of Purkal Youth Development Society in 2014. Their mother had succumbed to asthma in 2012 and their father left them to fend for themselves. When the siblings were sent to Swamy Sir by the District Magistrate of Uttarkashi, Sir agreed to take full responsibility of the children without batting an eyelid. As there was no

accommodation facility on campus at that time, he arranged for their stay with trusted families in Purkal village. All expenses of the children were borne by PYDS. Manish was sent to live with the family of a PYDS alumnus. His host family remembers him as a jolly boy who willingly helped with household chores.

Manish describes the vicissitudes of his life as ...

"I was seven years old when my mother passed away. Father never looked after us and my sisters went to live with relatives as they did not feel comfortable with him around. I used to be by myself all day long, mostly loitering on streets. My elder sister used to come and cook for me during the day, while my father was away from home.

I was nine years old when I came to PYDS with my sisters. At that time, all I knew about English was the alphabet. Swamy Sir put me on a remedial program, where I was taught the basics of Hindi, English, Math and Science. I worked hard and was promoted to class IV within a year. I made friends in school and loved working at the Tinkering Lab. I was very fond of art and sports too and participated regularly in competitions and tournaments. As a member of the Saturday Sports club, I played Volleyball, Badminton and Basketball. I also represented the school at a district level Basketball tournament. Since I was passionate about drawing and painting, I spent a lot of time in the Art room. When I visited PYDS in March 2025, I was very happy to see one of my paintings displayed in the Art Room. I can never forget the fun I had with my friends during class trips to Chandigarh, Kumaon and Delhi.

After completing class X from the CBSE board, I wanted to pursue a career in the Hospitality Industry. PYDS helped me to get admission at the Amazon Institute of Hospitality, Dehradun, for a one year diploma course in hotel management. The institute gave me a fee waiver of Rs 15,000. The rest of my fees and all of my other expenses were borne by PYDS. At the institute, we had theory and practical classes on the four main departments of the Hospitality Industry - Housekeeping, Service, Front Office and Food & Beverages (F&B). The course was demanding, but I enjoyed it and learned a lot.

After completing my diploma, I went for industrial training at Pride Plaza in Ahmedabad. Earlier, I wanted to work in the service department but found it too challenging, so I shifted to Food & Beverages. Working in the kitchen was not easy at all, but it taught me new skills every day. I learned to cook various cuisines such

as Continental, Italian, Chinese, Mexican, Lebanese and Indian under different chefs. I also began communicating with guests, taking orders and asking them about their preferences. After serving them, I would go and ask them for feedback. Doing this honed my communication skills and developed me personally.

So far, I have worked as a cook at many places such as Ramee International, Surat; Royal Retreat, Udaipur; ITC Fortune, Haridwar and Red Fox, Dehradun. My stint with different brands over various cities expanded my spectrum of experience. I learned that every brand has its unique SOP. My listening skills improved as I began to listen intently to understand the preferences of customers and serve them accordingly. While in Surat as the senior most person in charge of the kitchen, I managed everything from sourcing raw materials to serving food to customers. It was challenging at first but I applied my learnings and executed my responsibilities as a team leader.

Presently, I am working at Club Mahindra, Coorg, as a Commis II. Going forward, I see myself as a Chef de Partie (a supervisory position in a hotel kitchen) in a European country. My sisters are the only family I have. I love them very much and I will do everything in my capacity for their happiness.”

Donate to spread smiles!

The sight of hills garlanded by clouds soothe the eye. We welcome the rains and ask for showers of blessings. Take care friends, till we meet again!



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