

Your Purkal Journal June 2026



"When we cheer with all our might, no obstacle can block our light; together we conquer any challenge in sight"

Remembering Swamy Sir

परोपकाराय जीवनम् (Life is for Giving)



Our beloved founder, Mr Gopal Krishna Swamy, left for his heavenly abode on the 11th June, 2021. We commemorate his passing by having a small, solemn gathering every year. With the school shut for summer vacation, no teaching staff and students could attend.

To make up for this, the students had organised a special assembly before the school closed on the 30th of May. Two Class XII students, Aashi and Himanshu, spoke about their interactions with Swamy Sir from their junior years. Their words left everyone with the same thought: that a life lived for others is a life truly lived. It was a belief Swamy Sir held all his life.

This year, one of our longest serving drivers, Dinesh Bhaiya, lit the diya (earthen lamp) to begin the remembrance. The staff present reminisced about his work and ideals, narrating instances to the recently joined members who have only heard about Mr Swamy.

Mr Swamy left an indelible impression on every life he touched. PYDS Learning Academy stands tall today on the sturdy foundations created by his compassion, hard work and indomitable spirit.

So far, 581 students have passed out from PYDS, of whom 288 have already joined the mainstream workforce. In the lives these students lead today, his vision of giving has taken tangible form. It was a vision he fulfilled with love and compassion. Each of us at PYDS is fortunate to hold a share in that legacy, one that quietly inspires us to take the light of education to more children, in more places.

Radhika Kothari A Young Researcher's Colours

"The connection is natural, not human made" - Radhika Kothari, from her research paper



Amritanshu Art Group, a Delhi based organisation that supports young and traditional artists through workshops, camps and exhibitions, held its National Level Research Based Art Project, *Manha Sodha*, in May. Radhika Kothari of Class XII, who comes from Kyarkuli village, situated off the Dehradun Mussoorie road, represented PYDS with a paper titled "Effects of Nature Extracted Colours on Human Emotions."

Radhika spent 25 days on the project, carrying out all her preparatory activities on campus. She crushed rose petals and dried leaves to make colour, tested it on handmade paper, rough and full of tiny fibres, and on an ivory sheet, smooth and even. On the handmade paper, the colour spread on its own, forming shapes that looked like roots and rivers. On the ivory sheet, it stayed neat and held its edges.

Her arts teacher, Dr Bhanu Dev Sharma, guided her through both the writing as well as the experiments, helping her choose the right keywords and describe her observations in scientific language. Using dry leaves gathered from campus, instead of ready made paint, was what set her work apart from the others.

More than 400 artists and researchers from across the country took part in the project, where Radhika was named the Youngest Achiever. Beginning with a bowl of water, a handful of rose petals, and the days of patient looking carried her to research paper in scientific language.

During the school assembly, she was presented with a certificate, an artist's kit, and a cash prize of ₹2,000, which she later donated to society. Watching her stand before the assembly, certificate in hand, students saw what steady, quiet effort could build: a story that started with nothing more than curiosity and grew into something worth keeping.

Amritanshu Art Group's chairman, Prof Dr Om Prakash Mishra, acknowledged the guidance she received from the Principal, teachers, and especially her art teacher. Her paper will also appear in the group's journal in September 2026.

Recollecting her preparations and participation, Radhika said, *"This national platform taught me that real success requires immense patience and discipline. It completely broadened my perspective and reignited my passion for research."*

A Workshop for Educators

"Excellent teaching isn't about what the teacher does. It's about what the students are enabled to do" - Dylan William



Upon the staff's return from summer vacation, a kickoff workshop was organised for them on the 15th of June in the school auditorium.

Right before the workshop commenced, a mindfulness session was conducted by the school's yoga instructor. It included the practice of yoga asanas and highlighted regular yoga as a key driver of mental, physical, and spiritual wellness.

After this, Mrs Monisha Datta, Director at the Doon Girls' School, Dehradun, who runs training programs for educators as well as leaders, graciously conducted a day-long workshop on i) student centric teaching, ii) classroom planning, and iii) assessment for learning. She asked participants to see themselves as lifelong

learners, observing that because student needs and learning styles are constantly changing, teachers must remain curious yet flexible to keep pace. Through interactive discussions, teachers recalled their most memorable moments as both students and educators. A common thread emerged: real learning happens when students participate, collaborate, and engage, not when they merely receive information.

The day's central theme was the difference between teaching and planning a lesson. True learning focused planning begins with a clear outcome, guides students through activities to build their own understanding, and ends with an assessment that captures evidence of that growth. To help teachers apply this, she introduced a practical "10-70-20" classroom time framework. In this model, the first tenth of the class is used to engage students, the middle 70% is dedicated entirely to student led activities, like peer teaching, Think-Pair-Share, and choice boards, and the final 20% is reserved for student reflection.

During the session, teachers examined the distinction between assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning. They concluded that effective assessment should function as a tool for guidance rather than a mere score, specifically by identifying student strengths and prompting them to articulate their thought process.

The teachers were asked to put these ideas to the test by working in subject groups to design lesson plans around topics like fractions, photosynthesis, democracy, nouns, and climate change. One especially memorable demonstration from this activity showed how the simple act of sharing a pizza could open the door to understanding fractions - a reminder that the most lasting lessons are often ones rooted in everyday life.

Teachers left the workshop with a shared framework to carry into their classrooms, anchored in three questions: *What should students learn today? How will they learn it? How will I know they have learned it?*

The Outdoor Learning Programme

Education does not always need a bus ride; sometimes the greatest discoveries wait just behind a door that children pass every day but have never stepped through.

In June, the Outdoor Learning Programme returned to the school's youngest learners.

Given the extreme heat and fuel shortages postponing off campus travel, the programme was mindfully adapted and conducted on the PYDS campus. The philosophy behind the change was that before stepping into the outside world, children should first become aware of their own surroundings. These young learners began their journey by discovering what their own school has to offer, as two familiar yet unexplored corners of the campus opened up as living classrooms. The kitchen and dining hall that nourish them every single day were explored by Classes I, II and III, while the garden that keeps their everyday world green was taken up for exploration by Classes IV and V.



The PYDS Kitchen & Dining Hall

On June 20th, at 9:30 in the morning, 74 students of Classes I, II and III set out to explore the place that feeds them every single day, yet one they had never stepped inside before. The visit began with a brief session in which teachers explained the objectives, the essential safety protocols, and the importance of cleanliness and good table manners. Ready and eager, the young explorers then walked through the dining hall and into the sections of the kitchen they had only ever wondered about: the main cooking area, the store room and the roti making section.

The warmth of the kitchen came as much from its people as from its stoves. Lalita Ma'am (kitchen supervisor) shared the rhythms of a workday, explaining how a team of eight, working in rotational shifts, begins breakfast preparation as early as 6:00 in the morning. In the storeroom, the children observed how the pulses and spices are systematically organised under bilingual labels (Hindi for the ease of the kitchen helpers, English for management's inventory tracking). They also learnt about the kitchen's storage systems, which included four refrigerators for dairy and fresh vegetables. The students proved to be curious learners, enquiring about the capacity of the weighing machine, the quantity of rice against the number of students in school, how many rotis are produced in a single hour, noting the daily

use of three gas cylinders, and the number of milk packets used each day. Guided by their teachers, students were made aware of the importance of maintaining proper hygiene at every step, observing essential practices like handwashing, using clean utensils, keeping food covered, and serving with care.

The real learning, however, began after the visit, as teachers seamlessly folded every observation into their daily lessons through hands on activities.

For Class I, the kitchen became language and number practice, reading and writing the names of food items and utensils in English and Hindi, framing simple sentences about food and eating habits, and counting what they had seen, while their EVS lesson had them differentiating healthy foods from unhealthy ones.

Class II learned about healthy eating habits and food groups by creating their food pyramids and balanced diet models using cardboard cutouts.

Class III carried the visit into three subjects at once: in EVS, they evaluated the real time hygiene practices such as handwashing, cleaning utensils and covering food; in Mathematics, they worked with weight capacity, roti production numbers, gas cylinder usage and milk packet volumes; and in Language, they expanded their bilingual vocabulary by recording the Hindi and English names of the stored spices, pulses and cereals.

The visit's influence has now extended to the dining hall. The students first offer a prayer of gratitude for their meals, avoid the noisy clatter of cutlery against plates, and politely say "Excuse me" to others at the table upon finishing. Building on these habits, they wash their own dishes more neatly and warmly thank the didis, bhaiyas and aunties who serve them every day.

The kitchen they passed without noticing every day revealed itself as a place of science, mathematics, language and quiet, dedicated care. Through it, in the most familiar corner of their school, the children discovered exactly what the Outdoor Learning Programme promises everywhere: when learning steps beyond the textbook, even an everyday space becomes unforgettable.



The PYDS Garden

At 9:30 AM on June 29th, 51 students from Classes IV and V set out to explore the campus green sanctuary, a familiar space they see but have never closely observed. Equipped with notebooks, pens, and saplings brought for the plantation drive, they began with an orientation where teachers explained the program's objectives and emphasised the importance of respecting plants and keeping the garden clean.

Guided by Madan Bhaiya (the school gardener), the students toured various sections of the garden, learning about flowering plants, saplings, herbs and the different types of soil used for cultivation. Encouraged to touch the soil, feel leaf textures, smell the flowers, and listen to the birds and insects, the children experienced the garden as a rich, sensory classroom.

The highlight of the visit came when every student planted seeds with their own hands. The school's gardener demonstrated the correct method of sowing and explained why water, air, sunlight, warmth and fertile soil are essential, while the students eagerly put forward the questions they had prepared beforehand, on seed germination, watering schedules, suitable soil types and the time plants take to sprout, turning the visit into a lively, interactive exchange where classroom concepts came alive.

The learning continued well beyond the garden, as every subject drew its own learning from the experience. In Mathematics, the students measured the heights of their growing plants daily with rulers, recorded the readings in tables, compared and calculated growth in standard units, and estimated the area and perimeter of sections of the garden, with Class V representing weekly growth through bar graphs.

Science reinforced their understanding of plant parts, seed germination and the conditions for healthy growth as they observed roots, stems, leaves, flowers and developing seedlings and compared the different soil types, and each student carried the lesson home through a week long germination project, caring for a seed

and documenting its progress.

In Social Science, the same soils opened up a study of agriculture, as the children identified which crops grow best in which soil and prepared project work with labelled soil samples matched to the regions where they are commonly found.

The experience found thoughtful expression in English through sensory vocabulary, descriptive paragraphs, reflective writing and self composed poems, and in Hindi through original poems on "बगीचे की सैर", illustrated with the plants and flowers the children had observed.

Finally, in the computer laboratory, the students were introduced to the basics of Microsoft Excel, entering plant names and height measurements into spreadsheets and discovering how digital tools can record and manage real life observations.

The positive impact so created has been as visible in attitude as in academics. The students now care responsibly for the plants they sowed, watering them regularly during fruit break and following their growth with patience and enthusiasm, and they have begun to see the school garden not merely as a beautiful space on campus, but as a living classroom where mathematics, science, languages, social science and technology naturally come together. The garden became a place where curiosity blossomed, learning turned experiential, and meaningful education revealed itself in the world growing all around them.

Through these hands on experiences at PYDS, the students gained academic knowledge through subject integration and, just as importantly, key moral values, respect for the food they eat and the greenery that surrounds them.

International Yoga Day

"Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self"

- The Bhagavad Gita



On June 21st, four of our students travelled to Rishikesh for the seventh International Yoga Championship, organised by the Association for Yoga and Meditation School. Som Semwal (VII B), Kavita (IX A), Lalit Verma (XII C) and Anchal (XI A), who had previously cleared the preliminary round, were there to participate in the finals.

Since the event was on a Sunday, transport had been arranged the day prior to ensure the team could leave early in the morning and arrive on time.

Each student performed four compulsory asanas, chosen from Padahastasana (hand to foot pose), Dhanurasana (bow pose), Ardha Matsyendrasana (half spinal twist), Sarvangasana (shoulder stand) and Parivrtta Trikonasana (revolving triangle pose), followed by three advanced asanas of their choice.

Kavita, usually shy in her class, surprised her yoga teacher with her natural form during practice and earned her place on the team. Competing for the first time, she held the Hanumanasana (splits pose) with full leg extension, matching students who train at yoga academies throughout the year. All four students received certificates of appreciation and returned with new techniques and a quiet confidence that will stay with them well beyond the mat.

We are proud of Prachi Lekhwar

"It doesn't matter where you come from. If you work hard and stay

consistent, you can achieve everything"



Prachi Lekhwar, a 2022-23 alumna, comes from a family of five who live in Thatyur, a small village in Tehri Garhwal. Her father is a cook, and her mother is a homemaker. Supported by PYDS through its On To Life (OTL) programme, she secured a 100% scholarship to pursue a B.Sc. in Hospitality and Hotel Administration at the reputable Shoolini University in Himachal. After an internship at Hilton Goa Resort and specialisation training at Jaypee Residency Manor, Mussoorie, she graduated in June 2026. Post completion, she is employed as a Front Office Associate at DoubleTree by Hilton at Bengaluru Airport, a hotel designed for business travellers and transit passengers.

Reflecting on her journey, Prachi shares:

"When I joined PYDS in Class V, I was very shy and didn't know a single word of English. The teachers taught me English and helped me become more confident. The greatest lesson I learned is that consistency and hard work always shine. The achievement I am most proud of is being selected as Head Girl; it taught me responsibility, teamwork, and selflessness. Hostel life made me flexible and confident, and I can adjust anywhere now."

PYDS had already taught me independence and discipline; moving to college was easy. During my internship at Hilton Goa Resort, I developed an interest in the Front Office, and my three month specialisation at Jaypee Residency Manor taught me guest relations and front desk work. Hospitality is all about making people feel welcomed and cared for; every day I get to create happy memories for guests."

In five years, I see myself as a Duty Manager, and I want to help needy people the same way PYDS helped me throughout my education. To my juniors: focus on both academics and activities, be confident, and take the first step; fear goes away once you begin. Everything I have learned and whatever I become in the future, all because of PYDS. It is my school as well as my home, and I am very grateful for its constant support."

Donate to spread smiles!



"With clouds resting softly on the green hills above, we wish you gentle showers of joy, hope, and love. Until we gather again, stay well!"

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