



Independence Day

'Freedom is the open window through which pours sunlight of the human spirit and human dignity' - Herbert Hoover

The proudest day of our history, when India gained independence after years of struggle, was celebrated with pomp and circumstance. Our Secretary, Mr. Anoop Seth, hoisted the national flag and everyone sang the National Anthem with honour and pride. The four school houses - *Amaltas*, *Gulmohar*, *Kachnar* and *Dhaak* marched past the flag and Mr. Seth took their salute. A patriotically themed cultural programme of dance, drama, songs, and recitations followed, aptly echoing the spirit of the day.





Storytelling Workshop

'If you want your children to be smart, tell them stories. If you want them to be brilliant, tell them more stories'. - Albert Einstein

Our campus was graced by Dr. Ambika Raj, professor at California State University, Los Angeles on 12th of August. Dr. Raj has extensive experience in using aspects of Story in teaching, learning, identity, equity and multicultural aspects as a pedagogical strategy.

She conducted a three-day workshop on creating stories with sixteen middle-school students. The process involved thinking of a story, storyboarding and filming. Students were guided to create stories by choosing five random pictures from a cluster, connecting them to their own lives and making a story out of them. The task required multiple levels of learning including writing in English, speaking in English with correct pronunciation, formulating a narrative, designing a story, digitizing the story by translating it to a different medium (from the written form), and multiple other learning activities.

Students produced stories using digital images and voice-over, which were screened for classes VI to VIII. Besides boosting technological and cognitive skills, this workshop enhanced self-awareness and self-worth amongst students.

At the conclusion of her workshop, Dr Raj commented *"I am proud to say that from the beginning these students were engaged in every aspect of the process. They showed commitment; teamwork (as they helped each other audio and video record); they showed great initiative and completed their tasks in a timely manner. I feel these students grew by leaps and bounds within the short span of 3 days"*. Our students also thoroughly enjoyed working with her, sharing that *"We loved this workshop because it was about us and our identities"*.



‘The Fearless Baagh’

‘Shoot tigers with a camera, not with a gun’

Ever since India achieved its target of doubling its tiger population ahead of time, the country has received much recognition for its efforts. The tiger, being an apex predator, plays a vital role in ensuring a balance of herbivores and vegetation. Rajaji Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand organised the first ‘travelling’ wildlife exhibition in the country – ‘*The Fearless Baagh*’ – with support of Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

Not one to miss an opportunity, our students of Navjeevan and classes IX to XII visited the exhibition. They were mesmerised by photographs shot by famous photographers and beautiful paintings of tigers. Anjali Dhiman of class XII, an aspiring environmentalist, was visibly moved when she said, *“Tigers are not man-eaters, but we humans have forced them to be so. It is humans who are the threat to the environment and the main reason for nature’s exploitation”*.

There was a talk on spreading awareness about saving tigers and the students were shown a demo on how tigers are tracked and protected from poachers. They were enthralled by the endless hair-raising anecdotes by members of WII. This experience has transformed their fear which was synonymous with the tiger, into enigma and respect.



Fearless Bagh Trip

Let's talk it out!

On the 17th of August, our school participated in an 'Inter School Debate Competition' at Indian Public School. The topic for debate was, '*Globalisation has made our lives more viable*'!

Diksha Chaudhary, Class XII, spoke for the motion, Dhruv Om Sharma, Class XI, spoke against the motion and Aditi Mamgain, Class XII, was the Interjector. They were competing against thirty-nine students from thirteen schools.

Their arguments, sharpened through rehearsals and meticulous preparation of the topic under the guidance of our teachers, won accolades. Diksha Chaudhary and Dhruv Om Sharma, both bagged awards as best speakers *for* and *against* the motion.

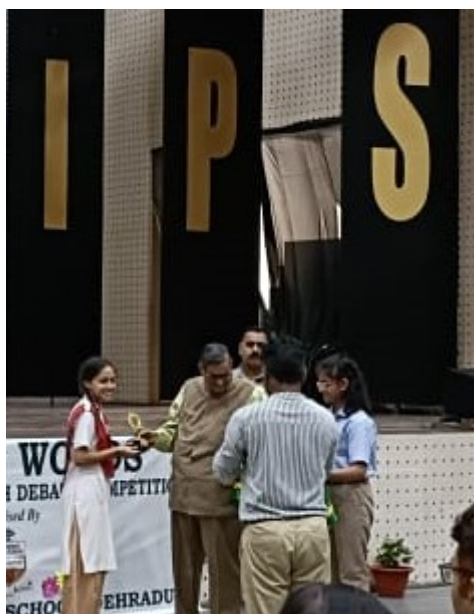
In addition to adding a feather to the school cap, this event also proved to be a great learning experience for our students. It prompted them to research and organise information as well as express themselves with confidence. It was a good opportunity for our team to interact with their peers across schools.



Dhruv Om Sharma
Best Speaker - Against the motion



Diksha Chaudhary
Best Speaker - For the motion



Aditi Mamgain
Interjector



Mr. Nikhil Rawat
English Department - Coordinator

We love to recite!

It is fun to go out of school with classmates and showcase one's talent. Students of classes III, IV and V participated in an inter-school recitation competition on the 22nd of August in Doon Girls School. Aradhya Bhardwaj of Class III bagged the second prize for her poem, '*A Dream of School Supplies*' and Arushi Raunchella of Class V walked away with the third prize for reciting '*School Life*'. In the group category, five students each from Class III, IV and V represented our school. Overall PYDS stood second amongst the fifteen participating schools. The team was appreciated by everyone and we look forward to the next competition.



Aradhya Bhardwaj
Second Prize



Arushi Raunchella
Third Prize

Celebrating the Bond

Rakshabandhan, the Indian festival that binds brothers and sisters by a sacred thread, was celebrated by students of classes IV to VIII with an inter-class *Rakhi-making* competition. Seizing the event as an opportunity to showcase their creativity, students made '*Rakhis*'. All entries were beautiful and twenty rakhis from each class were selected for exhibition. The entire school visited the display and the creations of the following children were judged outstanding.

Jatin - Navjeevan, Pihu - IV, Chandani - V, Himani - VIA, Rohan Rajak -VIB, Rudraksh Thakur - VIIA, Neha Parmani - VIIB, Karan Kumar - VIIIA, Pratibha - VIIIB.



The Road to be taken

Choosing a career path is not an easy exercise! In line with our efforts to support our students to the utmost of our ability, the 2022 batch of class XII students was called for a final counselling session. Our Secretary, Mr. Anoop Seth, spoke to them about the challenges of life after school and reiterated the support offered by PYDS in securing University admissions and scholarships for deserving students under its On-to-Life program. Students were also counselled about appropriate courses that matched their profiles. Together with Mr. Arvind Sharma, our student counsellor, concerns of aspiring students were addressed and they were assured of all possible help in the next stage of their lives.



Upgrading Knowledge

“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think!” - Albert Einstein

Ms. Rangoli Dhingra, Academic Counsellor Outreach - Ashoka University, visited our school for an interaction with students of Classes X, XI and XII. She began with a presentation video to give a feel of campus life at Ashoka, followed with an introduction to ‘liberal education’ which allows students to study subject combinations of their choice.

Students learnt about various courses offered by the University along with major and minor subject options. They also learnt about exchange programs and the ‘Ashoka Scholars Program’, which allows students to opt for an additional fourth year.



Teaching the teens

Menstruation continues to be a taboo in India and young girls bear the brunt of its consequences. They grow up in environments where talking about periods or having one is considered shameful. Education on menstrual hygiene, use of pads and their disposal is generally overlooked.

Ms. Gunjan Joshi of Om Health care, held a workshop to dispel these notions with our girls from classes V to VII. They were familiarised with the changes a female body undergoes at adolescence, and educated about the symptoms of the first period and the menstrual cycle. The proper use of pads and their disposal was demonstrated. It was elaborated that menstruation is a natural phenomenon and not a matter of shame.



TED talk at Welham Boys

Our students were delighted to attend the fourth edition of 'TEDx Youth@ WBS' at Welham Boys' School on 10th September 2022.

Five eminent speakers graced the event

Mr. Rajat Mathur, of Morgan Stanley, shared his experience of his very first day at work that taught him the importance of time.

Mr. Dev Pratap, co-founder and CEO of 'Voice of Slums', whose commendable work for slum children has won him laurels like the Karmaveer Chakra Award and Sawera Award spoke about his childhood struggles and subsequent achievements.

Ms. Aishwarya Bhati, Additional Solicitor General of India and the youngest woman to be designated as a senior advocate in the history of the Supreme Court of India, spoke about women's rights and recent legal developments in this area.

Mr. Abhijay Negi, founder of 'Making a Difference by Being the Difference' (MAD), propounded that a 'good life is the biggest enemy of great life'; and

spoke about his efforts to preserve nature and ecology in the vicinity of Dehradun.

Mr. Jeroninio Almeida, author, inspirational storyteller and orator, outlined the difference between studies and learning.



It's a Cycle

The concept of 'work' has changed substantially over time and dynamic organizations now face many new challenges. A rejuvenation workshop was organized by Citrix for senior IT professionals at Jaypee, Mussoorie to address some of these challenges. In one of the activities designed to help relax the mind and the body, the team was asked to assemble bicycles by hand using the parts provided. The participants decided to donate these cycles to deserving children and PYDS was invited to receive them for eight of its students from classes VI to VIII. Our Secretary, Mr. Anoop Seth, along with two teachers and the students, visited this event and addressed the audience about the mission and progress of our school. The students were welcomed with love by all the participants and treated to goodies before the cycles were gifted to them. The next day, Mrs. Arati Nagaraj (PYDS Principal) and Siddharth Rawat (Head Boy) visited the homes of these students to meet and compliment them and deliver the bicycles. Parents beamed with pride and the students were clearly overjoyed with their bicycles.



Prevention is better than cure

Vaccinating our students and staff against COVID-19 has been a critical component of our healthcare plan. We are thankful to the neighboring Bhagwantpur Primary Health Centre who promptly responded to our request and conducted a follow up vaccination camp in our school on 3rd September. The two-member team functioned very efficiently - 38 students were administered the 2nd dose while 47 members of staff received booster shots.



“Thank you for opening our wings

and teaching us to fly”

Teacher's Day was celebrated with pomp and style in a special session with students emulating (and dressing like) our wonderful teachers. Throughout the day, students substituted for their teachers, enabling them to enjoy various activities on campus organized in their honour. All classes had affectionately prepared programs to express gratitude for their *gurus*.

The day progressed nicely with teachers attending an entertainment program where they were treated to games like 'passing the parcel', 'musical chairs', and 'statue'. Lunch, of course, was special and the gaiety in the dining hall set the mood for full-fledged celebrations. Hashtags rained for teachers in the afternoon as they proudly walked the aisle with their student avatars. The day concluded with teachers and students letting their hair down for a memorable jam session.



Poster, poster on the wall...

The students of class XI organised themselves into teams and presented creative posters highlighting the challenges faced by teens. They chose trending topics of concern, researched them, prepared posters, and scripted their concerns. The groups named themselves appropriately and each member of the group presented a brief talk to explain their topic to the visitors.

The themes were well chosen and included the Dark Web, Suicide Prevention, Teenage traumas, Saving Environment, Drug Abuse, Sex Education, Drawbacks of 5G, Education is not business, and Rape victims. Teachers took a keen interest in all exhibits and applauded students for their efforts.

This was a really effective display of Experiential Learning as it educated students on various topics of concern and honed their creativity, writing and oratory skills.



Alumni Story

MONIKA SEMWAL B.Com (Hons) batch 2019

Monika's family moved to Dehradun from Rishikesh when they had to sell their house due to her father's addiction to alcohol. Presently her father works as a labourer and her mother as a domestic help. Her parents, three siblings and grandmother live in a single room corrugated tin enclosure that serves as their kitchen too. The combined income of her family is approximately Rs. 10,000 per month.

Monika Semwal graduated from Class XII with commerce from PYDS and joined Shoolini University to pursue B. Com (Hons.). She was always a good student and an excellent sportsperson - winning silver medals in Kho-Kho and Handball along with securing third position in the school marathon.



MONIKA SEMWAL - WIPRO (Customer Service Executive) - Gurugram, Haryana

In Monika's words...

"I joined PYDS Learning Academy in Class V and was a very shy girl to begin with, but now I have no hesitation in conversing or as a public speaker. I aspire to be an IAS Officer. Being the eldest child in the family I have responsibilities and am eager to do well and make my family proud."

While in school, I got opportunities to participate in Harmony Debate competition, Harmony Youth Leader and the Model United Nations Conference at The Doon School. I also attended an adventure course at the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi.

I joined Shoolini University in 2019 with security and incidental support from PYDS to pursue B. Com (Hons). Here I participated in various activities and clubs like: NSS (National Service Scheme), Lit Witz Club, SFY, You We Can. I also participated in declamation competitions and volunteered for social service activities. Though I participated in various activities, I balanced my studies and maintained a CGPA of 8+.

At the end of my second year I interned with White Hat Jr in the User Engagement Department for 3 months. I learnt to approach people in a professional manner and this gave me confidence. After that I joined other internships and every internship taught me the ways of the world and how to cope with it.

I started a club named Shoolini Voice Masters, with one of my friends, to boost confidence among students who had a fear of public speaking. I was the charter Vice President of the club till the end of my course. During

campus placements, I got placed with Jaro Education, an edtech platform, but applied for other jobs and finally joined Wipro, Gurgaon as customer support executive.

I thank Shoolini University and Raj Khosla Sir for giving me an opportunity to be a part of a world class university where I got a chance to explore myself and a spectrum of opportunities. These have shaped me into a confident girl, ready to face the real world".

Request for support

As a part of our program, we provide our students with quality education, including life skills and value systems through a combination of co-curricular activities. The pandemic held us back for the last two years, but this year we have revived these with full gusto.

Out of town student excursions have been an important and much awaited component. Accordingly, three group excursions are planned for New Delhi, one each for classes VI, VII and VIII, involving a total of 145 students and 15 staff members. The first group has already begun their trip on the 27th of September, while the next two trips are planned for November and December. These journeys will be the first trip outside of Dehradun for many of our children.

The estimated cost for the two remaining trips is approximately Rs. 400,000 (\$5,000) which covers the complete cost of travel, food, accommodation and entrance to monuments. We humbly request you to support us in this endeavour in part or fully. All contributions will be sincerely appreciated and tax-exemption under section 80G will be available.



Support Our Project

We thank you for taking the time to be a part of our journey. We will be back soon with the next edition with new stories. Do encourage us with your suggestions and ideas. Stay Awesome!



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