

"We are music-makers and dreamers of dreams"



Your Purkal Journal August-September 2025

Navjeevan Batch-8 Assessment

"We get what we deserve and we deserve it through service and sacrifice" - GK Swamy



Navjeevan (NJ) is one of the core programs of PYDS, which provides the opportunity of quality education to children from the remote villages of Uttarakhand. Conceptualised by our founder Mr Swamy, this is an 18 month fully residential program that targets children aged 9-11 from deeply disadvantaged families receiving inadequate village schooling in vernacular medium. The program enhances children's learning to enable them to join mainstream English classes upon its conclusion. It began in 2018 with a batch of boys and girls from remote villages in district Uttarkashi and has gradually spread its wings to take children from districts Almora, Bageshwar, Nainital, Pauri, Pithoragarh, Rudraprayag and Tehri, as well as the Jaunsar region of district Dehradun. Six batches have successfully transitioned to mainstream classes, with the seventh currently in the program.

While the normal Navjeevan batch size is about 15-18 students this year, owing to a space constraint in our hostels, we will be admitting only 10 children in batch 8. Towards this end, our staff teams visited Seem village (Nainital) and Devalsari (Tehri

Garhwal), and conducted on site assessments braving challenging weather and terrain, sometimes trekking where roads were inaccessible to vehicles. With help from local partners, they met interested parents, explained PYDS's mission and vision, administered written tests, and conducted oral and hands-on assessments. The team also visited candidates' homes to evaluate the family's socio-economic conditions.

Of the 48 students evaluated, 10 (6 girls, 4 boys) were selected after comprehensive academic, personality, and background assessments. They visited PYDS with their parents on October 25th for completion of their admission process and orientation. After a day of settling down in the hostel and making new friends, classes will begin on October 27th.



Celebrating Swamy Sir's Birthday

"PYDS belongs to all of us and it is our responsibility. I belong to PYDS but do not own it" - GK Swamy



26th September marked the 89th birthday of the Archegos of PYDS, Mr GK Swamy. With students at home due to recent flash floods, PYDS staff took it upon themselves to maintain the tradition of having a prayer meeting to mark the occasion. As has been our practice, we invited Chinni Ma'am (Swamy Sir's wife) to light the lamp and lead the prayers. A group of staff, many of them former students of Swamy Sir, formed the choir. They sang hymns, followed by a melodious classical *bhajan* by the Vocal Music teacher, appropriate to the occasion. After the ceremony, Chinni Ma'am exchanged warm pleasantries with members of the PYDS family over tea and snacks.

In keeping with the School's motto, 'Life is for Giving', a blood donation camp was organised on campus for our staff as well as neighbourhood parents and residents. A team from Shri Mahant Indiresch Hospital, Dehradun, conducted the collection drive. Parents, staff, and alumni donated forty-eight units of blood, making PYDS proud.

Independence Day Celebrations

"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will"- Mahatma Gandhi



Independence Day (15th August) is one of the most significant dates in modern Indian history. It is celebrated nationwide with pride through flag hoisting and cultural programs. This year, despite continuous rain, Principal Ms Diana Luji hoisted the flag with grace and respect on the Sports Field. It was followed by a short march past by students. Thereafter, everyone enjoyed a celebratory breakfast of halwa-chana.

Since primary students could not attend the flag hoisting on 15th due to rain, their Independence Day program was presented on August 18th. Through their endearing show, they honoured our freedom fighters and countrymen who sacrificed greatly for the freedom we enjoy today. The little students explained the meaning of independence, the significance of the Tricolour, and the message of the National Anthem in alluring tones.

Shivangi from Navjeevan Batch 7, dressed as Sarojini Naidu, spoke in English about pre-independence conditions and subsequent changes. Abhinav from class IV, dressed as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, delivered a spirited speech in Hindi on our duties as citizens. The Primary School choir presented a scintillating rendition of "*chodo kal ki baatein*", accompanied by an orchestra of tabla, pakhawaj, harmonium, conga drums and keyboard.

The finale was an engaging dance-drama celebrating fighters who defended our motherland from invaders. Students appeared on cue, dressed as the great Shivaji, Rani Lakshmibai, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, and Subhas Chandra Bose in a spellbinding performance.



Inter School Hindi Essay & Speech Competition

"It is within the walls of a school that students are prepared for life outside"



Schools play a crucial role in teaching essential skills of expression and communication to young students. At PYDS, we encourage students to participate in various competitions on and off campus so that their expression and oratory skills are honed. On cue, two of our students took part in the National Hindi Speech and Essay Writing Competition held at The Indian Public School on 1st September. 28 schools from across the country participated in this event. Participants were given five topics each for both the speech and essay competitions a day in advance, with the final topic being disclosed an hour before the competition.

Ambika Negi of class XI took part in the speech section and spoke on the topic 'समाज में आपसी रिश्तों की अहमियत'. Her speech was appreciated and she bagged the second position, for which she was awarded a cheque for ₹25,000, a trophy and a certificate. Ambika's achievement marked a hat-trick for our school, as it was the third consecutive year that a student of PYDS has bagged a prize in this competition. Purnima Lakai, participated in the essay category, and wrote on the topic "राष्ट्रीय एकता, सद्भावना बनाए रखने के लिए एक निशान, एक विधान". Though she missed it this time, last year, she had won the 3rd position for her essay.

Their achievements are a tribute to their teachers under whose astute guidance the students prepared and practised. The tutor-pupil teams have done us proud. We look forward to our students continuing the winning streak and bringing more laurels to our School.

Inter-School English Debate Competition

"Don't raise your voice, improve your argument" - Desmond Tutu



Debating is not only about winning trophies. It is also a platform through which students enhance their knowledge and polish their oratory skills. An Inter-School Debate Competition was held at The Doon Girls' School on the 1st of September, in which 11 city schools took part. Our students participated in both categories of the competition - Category A (classes VII and VIII) was represented by Garima Saini and Tanvi Thapli, while the team for Category B (classes IX and X) comprised Swastika Rawat and Gunjan Raturi.

The topics for both categories were disclosed an hour before the competition. Tanvi and Garima spoke confidently on, "The house believes that appointing a woman Principal is not empowerment". It was a proud moment for Team PYDS when they stood second in their category and received praise from the jury for effective articulation and prompt responses during the rebuttal round, which earned them crucial points. Swastika and Gunjan were heard with rapt attention when they spoke on 'Trump's tariff war on India'. They were applauded by the judges for the confidence in their delivery.

Both the teams were happy with their achievements and have resolved to work on their shortcomings and take part in more such competitions.

Semi Annual Examinations

“Assessment is today’s means of modifying tomorrow’s instruction”



The academic progress of students is assessed through various mechanisms of which semi-annual examinations are an important one. These assess students' progress till that point with sufficient time to make amends before the final exams.

The exams were scheduled from 6th to 17th September. Heavy rains just prior had taken away crucial revision days, but students came prepared for their papers. Examinations ran on schedule till Sep 15. Little did we know that our School would be affected by the flash floods that struck on the night of 15th September. Water and debris entered our campus, some landmass was washed away and the electricity and water supply lines were disrupted. Consequently, pending restoration of utilities, cleaning of debris and safety audit of buildings the School was shut immediately. We were able to open only after two weeks. Hence, exams scheduled for the 16th and 17th were conducted on the 29th and 30th of September, when students

returned. They were sad to hear about the damage to the School infrastructure, but eagerly looked forward to the Sports Week that was about to begin in the next couple of days.

Filmmaking Workshop

"Filmmaking is a chance to live many lifetimes"- Robert Altman



Films have the power to engage students on a visual and emotional level, helping them to develop critical thinking and enhance cultural understanding. On 7th August, 16 students of the Photography and Video Editing and the Reel to Real club attended an inspiring Film Circle conducted by filmmaker and writer Ajay Govind at Doon Library, Dehradun. In the session that dealt with the nuances of filmmaking and editing, Mr Govind broke down the ABCs of filmmaking – from shots and scenes to frames, and screened a raw 20-minute cut of an unreleased film to illustrate key techniques.

Students took a keen interest in absorbing invaluable information and asked questions to enhance their knowledge. Mr Govind was pleased to answer their sharp questions and appreciated their passion for filmmaking. When students from the Reel to Real club shared their project ideas with Mr Govind, he praised their concepts and said that, "Clarity of thought leads to better output, so invest more time in brainstorming and refining your ideas". Students found the workshop to be of immense value as multiple concepts were explained and reinforced through visual examples. Appreciating the keenness portrayed by them, Mr Govind invited students to attend a follow-up session.

National Space Day

"If you have a dream, don't bother wondering if you can make it but focus on how to make it happen"- Sylvie Espinasse



On 23rd August 2023, India etched its name in history by becoming the fourth nation to land on the Moon and the very first to touch down in its mysterious southern polar region. This remarkable achievement is now celebrated every year as National Space Day. The theme for this year was “Aryabhatta to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities”, which perfectly captured India’s journey from its rich past to its ambitious future in space.

To mark the occasion, a team of 10 students and four teachers from Unison World School (UWS) conducted an exciting workshop on our campus. It was attended by 19 of our class IX residential students. Through an engaging PowerPoint presentation, the UWS team traced India’s space odyssey from the establishment of the Indian National Committee for Space Research in 1962 to the proud moment of Chandrayaan-3’s soft landing at the Moon’s south pole. They spoke about the three Chandrayaan missions, their triumphs and setbacks, and the brilliant Indian scientists who played key roles in shaping the Nation’s space dreams. The quiz that followed added a spark of curiosity; while every student knew Dr APJ Abdul Kalam as the “Missile Man of India,” few knew that Dr Tessy Thomas is celebrated as India’s ‘Missile Woman.’ The session also offered a glimpse into the future of Indian space exploration, with updates on the upcoming Gaganyaan Mission, Aditya-L1, a planned space station and even deep-space ventures.

The most thrilling part came at the end, when teams of students named themselves as 'Astro-Newton', 'Little Steps Towards Space' and 'Sparkling Space'. Using everyday materials like plastic bottles, clay, paper, and string, they built and launched their own mini rockets, which were powered by the fizzing reaction of baking soda and vinegar. It was a session of learning, laughter and inspiration, one that reminded us all that the sky is not the limit, but just the beginning!

U18 State Basketball Championship

“It is better to participate and fail than fail to participate” - Debasish Mridha



It was a proud moment for us when two of our students, Anshika and Vikas Rana of class XII, were selected to play the State level basketball Championship to be held in Haridwar between 22nd and 24th August. The event saw the participation of 12 teams each of girls and boys.

Anshika played for the Dehradun Girls' team, which defeated Team Pauri to qualify for the finals. In the final match, they defeated Team Nainital 39-19 and were crowned champions. Anshika received a trophy and a certificate as a member of the winning team. This championship had two firsts for her - i) Playing outside Dehradun and ii) Playing at the State level. The fact that she got the opportunity to play five matches: two pools, the quarter final, semi-final and the final, has boosted her passion for the sport. This victory is a feather in her cap and will add value to her CV as after completing class XII, she aspires to pursue B.P.Ed from Gwalior University.

Vikas, who is the Sports Captain of our school, played for Team Mussoorie. His team won both pool matches and reached the quarter finals, in which they lost to Team Tehri 11-9. Though disappointed, he said, “One always learns by playing with newer teams away from the home ground”. As a passionate basketball player, he wants to continue the sport as a hobby after completing school.

Auditorium Upgrade



The PYDS Auditorium, constructed in 2008, has served as a vibrant venue for performances, presentations, workshops, meetings, and celebrations. So far, it has functioned as a simple hall with black cement flooring, bare walls and an open end. Addressing challenges like sound from events disrupting nearby classes and passage traffic disturbing audiences during programs, were long overdue.

After an assessment of required improvements, several modifications were undertaken. To improve backstage operations and safety, an exit was constructed, allowing performers direct access without crossing the audience area while simultaneously serving as a fire exit. A segregation wall was erected between the auditorium and the passage to eliminate disturbances from student movement during events. To enhance the sound quality, the false ceiling was replaced with sound-absorbing materials, walls were layered with acoustic panels and a 10 mm thick polypropylene flooring was installed. To support this upgrade the audio system was enhanced with six 300-watt speakers and one 1000-watt woofer to deliver superior sound reproduction. Beyond acoustics, the facility's comfort was addressed

by mounting turbo ventilators on the roof for improved air circulation. While concealed ceiling lights were integrated to provide uniform illumination and eliminate glare, multicolored lighting was installed to enable dynamic color washes and special effects during performances.

The upgraded auditorium now offers a substantially improved experience for both audiences and performers, with enhanced acoustics, professional lighting, effective ventilation, and streamlined operational functionality that addresses all previous limitations.

We are proud of ...
Mehandi Kumari PYDS batch 2023



Mehandi lives with her parents and two younger brothers in Jakhan, Dehradun. Her father works as a driver of a private vehicle, while her mother is a homemaker. Mehandi joined PYDS in 2013 in class I.

She takes us through the windings of her career as follows:

“Life has been an incredible journey so far with ups, downs, twists and turns. But all through it, I have grown, learned and evolved into the person I am today. I am proud of my resilience, determination and ability to find joy and beauty in everyday moments.

My journey at PYDS started in 2013, when I was given admission in class I. The

landmark moment came when I was in class II and my teacher persuaded me to participate in an elocution contest. I practised well and stood first, winning a beautiful Barbie geometry box. My confidence skyrocketed, and there has been no looking back since then. After my class X board exams, I was in a hurry to start earning, as I wanted to support my family financially. The career counsellors at school understood my concern and helped me to apply for SAATHIYA, The Skilling Academy in Bengaluru, which offers training in the field of Hotel Management. My application was accepted along with five of my school mates.

It was extremely difficult to convince my parents to send me to Bangalore; they let me go after a lot of convincing. At SAATHIYA, we had classes from morning to evening. All of us from PYDS faced challenges regarding language and food, but we stuck together and completed two months of vocational education. I had to return to Dehradun for my On Job Training, as my family did not allow me to go to any other city. I trained at Fairfield by Marriott, during which I handled concierge, guest relations and operations. On completion of my training, I was not hired, as there was no vacancy. I spent the next three months helping my mother with household chores.

I appeared for many interviews at various hotels in Dehradun and was selected by Hyatt Regency Dehradun Resort and Spa in December 2023 as a Guest Service Officer. In this role, I was posted at the front desk and was entrusted with handling guest relations and operations. While working there, I got a chance to enrol on an in-house six months training program. I enjoy my work and am trying to learn more by participating in various activities - one that I enjoyed very much was the group dance during the Diwali party. When Family Day was organised at my workplace, I took my parents and brother around the property, showing them where and how I work. They were happy to see that I had a dignified, respectable job.

My target presently is to be a Team Leader, and I am preparing myself for it. In my free time, I assist my seniors, which expands my knowledge and skills. My long-term goal, however, is to reach the post of a Hotel Associate Manager. Progressing to better roles will be a big challenge for me as my parents do not allow me to do night duties or work out of Dehradun. I have also enrolled for class XII examination through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

Having experienced financial constraints since childhood, I started saving from my first salary onwards. I do not spend much on myself as I want to ease the burden from my Father's shoulders. I like to provide for the little things that my mother and

brothers want. I took my brothers out shopping on their birthday and whenever I feel my mother wants something, I try to get it for her."

Donate to spread smiles!

As clear, mellow winter mornings welcome the golden sunlight, we thank our friends and patrons for standing by us through difficult times.

Take care till we meet again 🌻



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