

XPRESSIONS

ACADEMY FOR SEVERE HANDICAPS AND AUTISM

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November was action packed with Children's Day celebrations and the start of children's play time with the families.

Kalaangana - the talents festival was one of the bigger highlights of this month. The children had plenty of fun dancing, singing and painting and they won prizes too!

We also saw the introduction of autism quiet shopping hour in association with Big Bazaar. The children and the families had a quiet and hassle free experience.

The workshops for parents concentrated on managing difficult behaviours and a session on training needs for young adults with autism.

A SPOTLIGHT ON OUR STUDENTS

AT THE EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Supported by Deloitte & United Way, Bengaluru

The early intervention program has helped young Rohan speak and learn faster. Rohan (name changed) is almost 5 years and has mild autism. After being diagnosed, the mother was disheartened and in a lot of confusion about what to do next. Handling his severe temper tantrums and poor sitting tolerance was very difficult. There has been a huge difference in Rohan's behaviour and learning. He didn't speak earlier but has now started using words. He names animals, indicates his needs with gestures and responds to people. Earlier he was on his toes all the time - getting up and running around constantly. Rohan now sits for 10 minutes to complete an activity. He eats independently and the mother is able to understand what he wants. She is feeling more confident about handling Rohan.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Akash (name changed) is a 7 year old diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder. He is energetic and eager to do his activities. Loves to write on the blackboard and can write numbers from 1 to 50 independently. His mother is a teacher at ASHA and is very happy with her son's progress. Akash is also interested in drumming. Show him a drum and he is ready in position to beat it. He was part of the drum circle group at a school competition and the group won a special prize!



THE COMPUTER WHIZ!

Nikhil (name changed) is 15 years old and has autism. He is a tall, lanky teenager, creative and motivated. He has some computer skills, recognizes the printed words and can type the same. He is learning his social activities and loves to go on outings and picnics. He enjoys art and dance. He too won a prize in solo dance at Kalaangana, the talents festival.



A VISIT TO NAV PRABHUTHI TRUST

The senior students visited Nav Prabhuthi Trust - vocational training centre for young adults with autism and developmental disabilities in Basaveshwarnagar on the 13th November. Our students participated in hands on activities like block printing, sewing as part of their lesson and received practical experience. Such exposure visits will help our students transition into a vocational environment or a sheltered workplace.



CHILDREN'S DAY

It's Children's Day! On the 14th, all the students were taken to a park where they had creative art activities in a peaceful, green environment. The students displayed their creativity and then played games to burn off some energy!



IT'S PLAYTIME!

On Children's Day, we inaugurated the Childrens' Play Time with families. This activity will help children and parents explore various educational and learning toys together, giving them time and space to bond together. Children along with the mothers used the equipment and had a great time. The children closely examined different toys and played with them. It was very encouraging to see children interacting with their mothers and their peers. We hope to have fathers join the activity in the following weeks.



KALAANGANA 2019

Kalaangana is an inter school talents festival conducted by Information and Resource Centre, Bangalore. Schools from Karnataka and Chennai participated in the event. The event was held from the 19th to 21st November. The various events included art, yoga, dance, music among others. The children from our school won many prizes! Ashish and Aathmik won the 2nd and 3rd prize in dance and Tushar won a special prize for group drum circle. A special educator from ASHA, Ms. Anitha received the special educator's award. Ms. Sathya received the care taker's award.



PARENT TRAINING WORKSHOP

Supported by United
Healthcare

WORKSHOP ON BEHAVIOUR CHALLENGES

On 5th November, Ms. Anupama, behaviour therapist at ASHA had an informal discussion with parents on behaviour challenges in younger children. She discussed on how behaviour should be considered as an attempt to communicate. The behaviour can be used to indicate needs, emotions or physical pain. Understanding and providing for this need can reduce the child's negative behaviours. Behaviour issues can be addressed by first understanding the background and then planning and implementing strategies consistently.



CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

A second workshop on challenging behavior was conducted by Ms. Anupama on the 28th Nov. She focused on the nature of behavior, the origin of difficult behaviors and how to manage them. The session helped parents immensely as many children display difficult behaviours and parents feel overwhelmed at times.



UNDERSTANDING TRAINING NEEDS FOR ADOLESCENTS

In the afternoon of the same day, Mrs. Jayashree Ramesh, Director, ASHA spoke on 'Understanding Training Needs for Adolescents'. She spoke on the importance of training children in different skill areas and the need to develop functional skills based on the capabilities of the individuals. She elicited from the parents on what skills can be taught at home and how they can start at a very early age. She explained the need to develop technical/vocational skills and soft skills associated if they hope to get their children ready for employment.



AWARENESS

AUTISM QUIET SHOPPING HOUR AT BIG BAZAAR

We are proud to associate with Big Bazaar on its nationwide initiative to introduce autism quiet hour at all its stores across India. Big Bazaar is one of the major retail chains of hypermarkets. The chain launched the initiative in the Rajajinagar and Malleshwaram stores. The features of the autism Quiet Hour are: dimmed lights, reduced trolley movement, additional seating areas, no announcements, dedicated play zone and sensitized staff.

Our role was to sensitize the staff at both stores about autism, its features and how to help families and individuals shop at the store. The sensitization session was conducted on the 8th and 9th November by Mrs. Jayashree Ramesh and the team from ASHA.

The first autism Quiet Hour was conducted on the 12th November 2019 at both the stores from 10 to 11 am. The staff at both stores were supportive and engaged with the children at the play zone and kept it fun and interesting. The parents' feedback was positive regarding the initiative. The check out process in particular was quick and staff engagement was highly appreciated. Quiet Hour shopping experience is now offered every Tuesday, 10 - 11 AM in 35 stores across India. Our students will utilize this opportunity couple of times every month.





CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

On the 29th November, as part of Deloitte CSR program, volunteers from the company organized a children's fun day and conducted art, paint and fun filled games for the children. The project ended with the rhythmic beats of the drum circle performed by our students and the enthusiastic volunteers. We thank the volunteers for their interest and energy.



We thank the Government of Karnataka, Corporates, philanthropic partners, volunteers and friends for supporting our work.



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