

Satsang Projects Update

Satsang Swasthya Kendra

Outpatient Department Beneficiaries: Q1 - 2960

First Responders Training 11th Jan, 2019 and 12th Jan, 2019 - This camp was conceptualised and run by Dr. Pathma Naidu, for building awareness and increasing the number of trained first responders in case of medical emergencies. She has been involved in Life Saving Services from the beginning of her career and currently works with Pathways World School. She has a mission to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to everyday emergencies calmly, quickly and effectively.

The participants were from all walks of life - Teachers, Residents of Satsang Campus, Parents of Students, Skill

Development Centre and SWECHA. The topic included identifying emergencies, to reaching out for help, basic life support, to chain of wellbeing. Since this training was so well received it will now be a regular scheduled program through Swasthya Kendra at various locations. A total of 42 participants benefited from this training.

Interactive session on Peadiatric Issues by Dr. Sadhana Mehta on 2nd Mar, 2019. Parents, teachers and healthcare providers are faced with challenges especially with tiny ones.

For the first time, an interactive session was organized to provide a forum where all could air their queries to an expert -

Dr. Sadhana Mehta, pediatrician from New Jersey with 21 years experience. Her areas of interest are rural health education in pediatric food and nutrition and integration of Yoga into schooling.

About 61 participants attended the interactive session on a wide range of topics which ranged from nutrition to sports, learning challenges to very specific health issues.

The participants went back with lot of food for thought and it has changed the perspective of approach to challenges bringing up the tiny ones.

Sr. No.	Particulars of Camp	Expert Invited	No. of Camps	Beneficiaries
1.	Ayurveda Camp	Dr. Chaitanya	6	107
2.	Orthopedic Camp	Dr. Ashwini Kumar	3	75
3.	Dental Camp	Dr. AlphiCardoz	1	51
4.	ENT Camp	Dr. Vikram	1	7
5.	Endocrinology Camp	Dr. Minnal	1	31
6.	Pediatric Camp	Dr. Sadhana Mehta	1	13
7.	Deworming Camp	SSK	1	283



Impact Story

Satsang Vidyalaya & The Peepal Grove School

Kaveri is an alum of The Satsang Vidyalaya, Madanapalle and The Peepal Grove School (PGS), Sadum. Currently finishing a Botany degree at Mount Carmel College, Bangalore, Kaveri's story is one of personal and familial triumph and breaking boundaries of the circumstances of her birth.

The road to Kaveri's house is new. Her parents have recently shifted into a government housing development at the base of one of the many granite hills surrounding Madanapalle. Her father remarks that Kaveri wants to climb the hill whenever she visits from her college in Bangalore. That's when she's not immersed in her books. The only open storage shelves in the tidy one room home are stacked with titles from J.K. Rowling, Enid Blyton, Rick Riordan, Hester Velmans, and Michelle Paver. A dictionary and science texts vie for space with clothes (Kaveri's father, Eswar, is a tailor) and other household items. Outside the house, roosters prance and dogs bark around a small patch where Kaveri's mother grows pumpkins and tomatoes. Petite like her mother and with the same winsome smile, Kaveri also likes gardening.

A student of Botany at Mount Carmel College in Bangalore, Kaveri's tryst with plants began at age four, when her father carried her through paddy fields outside the settlement of Gandhipuram, to a little school that had just opened its doors: The Satsang Vidyalaya, Madanapalle.

In 1999, Eswar admitted his older daughter, Rajitha, who refused to attend without Kaveri. The school took her in and thus began her journey with The Satsang Foundation. Kaveri recalls her time in The Satsang Vidyalaya as one spent in the care of exacting but encouraging teachers who helped her overcome difficulties in academics and build her interests in singing, dancing, drawing, hand embroidery, origami, and gardening. Each and every festival, irrespective of denomination was celebrated and over a decade later, Kaveri remembers this as a unique

aspect of the school.

In Class 5, Kaveri was selected to study at PGS with a full scholarship and financial support that has extended to her college education. PGS turned out to be a crucible. Kaveri recalls her 7 year tenure there as a roller-coaster ride: a new world where she didn't know what to speak, and how to be with a 3-year quarantine period where she had to learn English, adjust to the new surroundings, make friends, and yes, study. Today, her parents say Viraj and Vrinda Naidoo, faculty at the school, were her surrogate parents at PGS. With their and other teachers' unflinching support, Kaveri emerged as an independent thinker, able to take decisions for herself, and most importantly, persevere against the odds. Kaveri's parents reminisce attending Sports Meets and Annual Days, being treated with respect by teachers on their visits, with a sense of wonderment. For



through Kaveri, they too have been exposed to a different way of life. Today, Kaveri says Satsang Vidyalaya and PGS were like shelter homes for her- greeneries where she was cared for like a plant, nurtured.

Today, Kaveri is fascinated by ideas of time travel and the existence of a parallel universe, and dreams of meeting an alternate version of herself, an analogue, curious as to how her analogue's life had

turned out. Finishing up her bachelor's degree, Kaveri aspires to study further if she can afford to and is actively applying for both, scholarships and jobs. She particularly enjoys microbiology as microbes are unseen comrades, as she calls them, in life.

There have been several unseen comrades in Kaveri's life: her courageous parents who took a leap of faith in admitting her to a new school

amidst paddy fields and who continue to break norms within their community by dreaming of an independent and self-sufficient life for their daughter; teachers who gave Kaveri the space to understand herself and grow; Mr & Mrs Rajasekharan who supported Kaveri, unknown for over 10 years.

And the unseen hand that guides us all, if we allow it to.

*As this article goes to press, we received news of **Kaveri** being awarded the **Prestigious Gandhi Fellowship** from The Piramal Foundation. As a Gandhi Fellow, Kaveri will be involved in initiatives to transform the Education ecosystem in government primary schools.*

Satsang Skill Development Centre (SSDC)

Madanapalle

There are thousands of students who complete their intermediate/PUC/Jr College from one of the institutions in Madanapalle every year. Most of them are driven to pursue a degree in Science, Commerce or Engineering. However, the quality of most institutions is poor, resultantly they graduate without having any enhancement to their skills.

On the other hand employers search for students who have basic skills and are trainable on the job.

According to a recent article in BBC, the most job market-ready skills of a graduate are "Creativity, curiosity and empathy". LinkedIn's research on the most sought-after job skills by employers for 2019 found that the three most-wanted "soft skills" were

creativity, persuasion and collaboration. SSDC has taken on the challenge of developing these skills in youth (18 to 25 years) from the most under-privileged sections of society, school dropouts and college dropouts - absolutely free of cost. What is more, SSDC offers them assured placement at the end of the course, in the location of their choice.

The first batch of 14 students completed their course in February, 2019. They have all been placed successfully in retail, finance, banking and agricultural companies - in Bangalore, Chennai and Madanapalle.

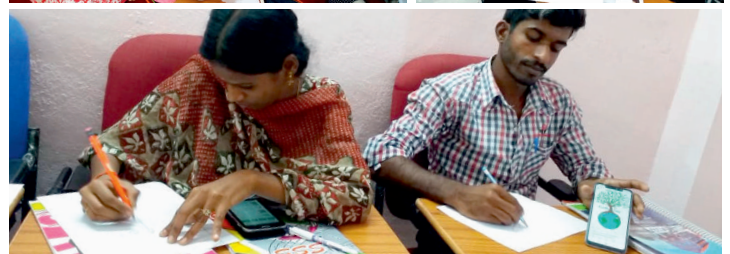
When asked what is the value of a skill development course to a disadvantaged youth, this is what Prof James Heckman (A Nobel Laureate in Economics) had to say: Disadvantaged youth are usually

neglected for most of their childhood. Providing them a mentor can really help. For them it would be the first time someone really cared for them and believed in them.

The 2nd batch of 20 has commenced their classes on the 12th of April.

While we teach them spoken English, basics of Computers and Tally, our main focus is in developing Life Skills or attitudes which will enable them to learn & grow on the job and have a long term view of their life and goals. Many volunteers have come forward to mentor these deserving students and many have helped us by finding them placements in reputed companies.

Of course without sponsorship for these youth, it would not be possible for us to run the centre free of cost.



The Satsang Vidyalayas

Madanapalle - Siriguntalavaripalle - Lathira

FREE EDUCATION • NUTRITIOUS MID DAY MEALS • HEALTHCARE

The Satsang Vidyalaya was established by Sri M 20 years ago in Madanapalle.

The umbrella of schools now also includes The Satsang Rural Vidyalaya in Siriguntalavaripalle, Andhra Pradesh and The Chanda Satsang Vidyalaya in Lathira village, Uttar Pradesh. Our schools educate close to 300 students from ages 6 to 15 years.

The SV's wrapped up the past academic year in March and April. Joyful learning

remains a mainstay and here is a snapshot of activities:

- **Sri M visited The Chanda Satsang Vidyalaya in Uttar Pradesh in March.** His impromptu drawing lessons were a joy for students and teachers.
- **Science Fairs were held at The Satsang Vidyalaya, Madanapalle and The Satsang Rural Vidyalaya:** Exhibits, sensor-based devices, and

chemical reactions made for explosive fun.

- **Field excursions to Gurramkonda** fort and temples in Vayalpadu for art and history, and Bysanivaripalle (smokeless village) to learn about clean energy made for hand-ons learning at The Satsang Rural Vidyalaya.
- **Festivals of Holi and Ugadi** were celebrated with gusto.



Contact

If you wish to contribute your time, energy, contacts, financial or other resources, to any of the Projects, we look forward to hearing from you.

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