Snehadhara Foundation Newsletter 2014

Arra I

Arts across Learning Environments

The large focus this year has been on working with the children in group settings across various learning environments. This year we are streamlining processes with regards to documentation so that our practices are more evidence-based ensuring effective learning. This will enhance the content of the program as well as help look at milestones objectively. This has been further supported by the two action research projects conducted at the organization this year.

Based on the year- end report that defined the performance/ability level of the child in areas of communication, cognition, socio-emotional, physical, gross and fine motor and activities of daily living skills the mode and frequency of the sessions were planned. For the group of 35 children at the centre, the team comprises of 20 adults including ABT practioners, facilitators, psychologists and support staff. We wish to maintain the student-facilitator ratio at 2:1.

A large part of our forecast for the next six months is to continue taking this methodology to other spaces and have the children accompany us in this venture.

The domain focus for the entire group has been on their attention system, group dynamics, peer interactions, articulation and expression.

This year saw a change in the teaching methodology, classroom management, and evaluation of the sessions using Arts Based Therapy.



Changes in curriculum

Sports and Outdoors

The year has brought in new excitement at the centre with renewed focus on sports and physical activities. Activities like cycling, badminton, football, running are all a part of the curriculum, adding to the rigor and enthusiasm among the children. Taking this lead, outdoors and sports have become regular feature in our weekly schedules.

Gardening, Carpentry and Pottery

The gardening sessions comprised of de-weeding, planting herbs, watering and setting up a fertile bed at our terrace space. The pottery sessions, and the inauguration of our pottery studio 'Maati' has added new energy to this effort to connect back to earth in its primal form. Carpentry is now a regular feature in our weekly schedules. The senior batch of children are now learning to fix clamps, work with the screw and cut wood.

Outdoors and sports have become regular feature in our weekly schedules

Oota Thota

The Oota Thota program was officially launched this year for our children on a weekly basis. Through the yearlong intervention the children are exposed to the techniques of cooking and presenting, while keeping the focus on their therapeutic goals. Cooking has also become an interesting way to learn language and math.









Training in Music and Movement

Music continues to be our focus with children for increasing vocalization and addressing social, cognitive, language, and emotional needs of children. Guest faculties are brought in to work with specific children who take to music well. The idea is to look at developing skills in this art form.

Overnighters

The focus this year has moved from making children comfortable at the centre to getting them take on tasks in helping and supporting others. We plan to have stays at spaces outside of the centre this year. On any Friday, there are a range of activities for the children from outdoors, to story sessions, to making the meal, to oneon-one sessions in music to academic sessions.





Visual Art

Apart from our regular visual art sessions, a new energy was added with the Pencil Jammers taking a few sessions with our senior batch. <u>Pencil Jam</u> is an academy for visual art. They teach drawing, conduct sketching sessions and provide online resources for aspiring artists and visual thinkers. Their first product Pencil Play has been be piloted at the center with a select group of children. Pencil Play is an arts-Integrated learning platform to foster cognitive and socialemotional skills in children.





Celebrations and Outdoors

Bowling

From breaking the usual pattern they follow, to managing themselves with new people who came along, to waiting for their turn, the children clearly surprised us. It was an evening of classroom learning at a bowling alley, an evening of play, corn and chocolate icecream.

Navdarshanam Overnighter

This year the summer school outdoor overnighter was held at <u>Navdarshanam</u>. For many of the children this was a milestone in itself, for it was the first time that they were spending a night outside their homes, or without their parents.

Community Project- The Ugly Indians

Increasing their social consciousness as citizens of the city, the children took up social projects of cleaning neighbourhood parks and lakes. This one month drive ended with the cleaning up and painting of a wall near the centre where children and parents. This wall painting conducted was in association with JP Nagar rising(an initiative of the Ugly Indians).

Independence Day Celebration

Children from the centre took to march on the roads this independence day, spreading the message of freedom. Doesn't freedom mean being free from your own biases?

Teachers Day Celebration

The children put up a surprise performance of dance and singing for their facilitator team. As a run up to this special event they decorated the classrooms and made personalized notes for their facilitators. It was indeed a heart-warming experience for facilitators to see children make small but significant shifts through this process.

Social Visits

The festive season brought in invitation for the children to make social visits. Krishnajanmashtami at facilitator Rashmi's house, Ganesh Chaturthi at Meenakshi Residency Flat complex, all became reasons for our children to extend themselves into social settings while singing, dancing, of course eating and having a good time.

Restaurant Visit

The senior group of 11 went to a closely by restaurant for their evening snack. This was a milestone in itself.

These outdoors have exposed our children to more social settings and environments and to get out of their comfort zones. It has also challenged the environment and its people to shed their biases and look at higher levels of inclusion.













<image>

Outreach- Expanding our Universe

Summer School- Nurturing togetherness

The summer school 'Atota Lakmose' this year was a six week program that saw a heterogeneous group of children- the children at the center, their siblings and friends- experience art in its various forms. The children together enjoyed sessions in visual art, storytelling, puppetry, baking, gardening, pottery, dance and movements, and theatre. The various learnings from the summer school culminated with an hour long performance at 'Paradigm Shift Café'.

Pipilika- Keeping our curiosity alive

Taking the learnings of the last year ahead, Pipilika, our Saturday program for parents, caregivers and children focuses on inner work and self-enquiry for the adults who are participants of the program. The sessions have involved group sharing, creative writing, laban movement, play and weaving. The children of this program have explored working with clay, cooking, theatre, origami, wall painting and a game of cricket so far. These children have also been a part of the overnighters once every six weeks.













Art in Education – Making learning experiential

Over the past two years, Snehadhara Foundation has extended its reach beyond the centre by engaging with urban schools, organizations working with children, and learning centres through sessions in storytelling, drama and theatre, voice, movement and visual arts.

This year also marked the start of our 'Art in Education' program. This long term program intends to work with children and educators to look at providing an insight into the subtle aspects of learning and being as they experience learning through the arts.

Objectives of the Program:

- Integrate arts into teaching methodologies and classroom settings by opening alternative approaches in delivering academic content.
- Support the implementation of RTE (Right to Education Act) in schools by looking at higher levels of social inclusiveness within schools while working with children with disabilities and learning challenges.
- Build and support educators who remain interested in learning with the children and building holistic and inclusive learning spaces that are beyond the text books.

Puttenhalli Government School

As a part of this program we are working with the Puttenhalli school while working on redesigning science textbook content artistically. The aim is also to address gaps in the language and social domain .This project has been supported by the <u>India Foundation for the Arts</u>.

Brindavan Education Trust

We are in a yearlong engagement with 40 senior school students of the Brindavan Educational Trust. We work with this group twice a week with focus on the various social aspects of child development like- Breaking inhibitions, improving creative expressions, celebrating differences, enhancing communication etc.











Trainings Taking the methodology ahead

HLC- Learning without limits

As a part of our Outreach Program 'Arts in Education', we were at HLC International Chennai, a school that clearly is ' Learning without Limits'. We facilitated sessions where their middle schoolers engaged with the arts, participating in dances, creating scripts , challenging themselves at games and creating music together. The 'Elina' division of the school works with children with disabilities. We conducted a teacher workshop for the team of Elina and also worked with the children using techniques and tools of Art forms.

Bubbles- Weaving a new journey

We conducted a weaving workshop for some of the teachers and parents of Bubbles Autism Centre titled 'Basic weaving techniques'. It was a day long workshop at the centre where the participants were introduced to ring/plate weaving, frame loom weaving, straw and cardboard weaving. This was also attended by facilitators at Snehadhara. Along with weaving, it was an enriching experience for both teams to learn and understand the working styles with children at the two spaces.









Events

One of the larger goals for the year has been to take our methodology to various learning environments. Our events beyond the center has aimed at this sentiment of expanding the universe for our children.

Sherwood High-The language of art

Towards this, our first event this year was at Sherwood High, an educational institution in Bannerghatta road. Facilitators from Snehadhara conducted interactive sessions with storytelling, drumming and voice and movement for about 200 children

Dance at Dusk- Breaking barriers through dance

The beginning of the year also saw the Foundation reaching out to conduct a community event around a neighborhood lake. This pre-monsoon community dance event brought together people around the community, adults and children to celebrate the abundance of nature and what it gives t each one of us. Over 50 people danced together, sometimes connecting with complete strangers, in the spirit of revival and new hopes.

Drum Jams- Drumming breaks boundaries

Drum Jams are a good way to follow our internal rhythm and connect as a community through music. Drum Jams at Rang De and a community space like Meenakshi Residency conducted by our team, brought people of all age groups and communities together to a single rhythm.

Monsoon Tales- Telling stories through colour

'Painting our Monsoon Tales' was a visual story and song session brought together the children and adults from the neighbouring community, the children from the Putenahalli Government School and the children from Snehadhara Foundation. It was an evening of colours, stories, music and rhythm supported by the India Foundation for the Arts.

Puttenhalli Government School Story Telling

Stories live when told. A story telling event at the Puttenhalli brought alive 'Sringeri Srinivas' from Pratham's popular story, The Annual Haircut to about 90 children in the school. The lead up to the event saw a voice session with the children of the school as the children from the center prepared the props for the event.

Oracle Event- Stepping out of comfort zones

Snehadhara Facilitator conducted a session with about 100 staff members at Oracle at Marathahalli. Art forms like dance and movement, storytelling and singing were used through this session













Impact

TED Talk

Gitanjali Sarangan, Executive Director, Snehadhara Foundation, spoke at TEDx BITS Hyderabad on 21st September. The talk was titled 'heART OF THE MATTER' and focused on Arts Based Therapy and the need to cocreate inclusive environment for children with special needs.

IFA Artist's Grant 2014: Taking Art in Education Ahead

India Foundation for the Arts has awarded Gitanjali Sarangan, Executive Director, Snehadhara Foundation the Artist's Grant for the 'Art in Education Program' for this academic year. She is one among two artists to be awarded the grant this year.

Media coverage

Differently abled, but are role models - Deccan Chronicle, 14th August 2014

Moving Stories from an Educator - The New Indian Express, 04 September 2014

Art Courses for Children with Special Needs - The New Indian Express, 11 September 2014



All our programs have been possible through the generous support of our donors and friends, who have and continue to walk this journey with us. Thank you!