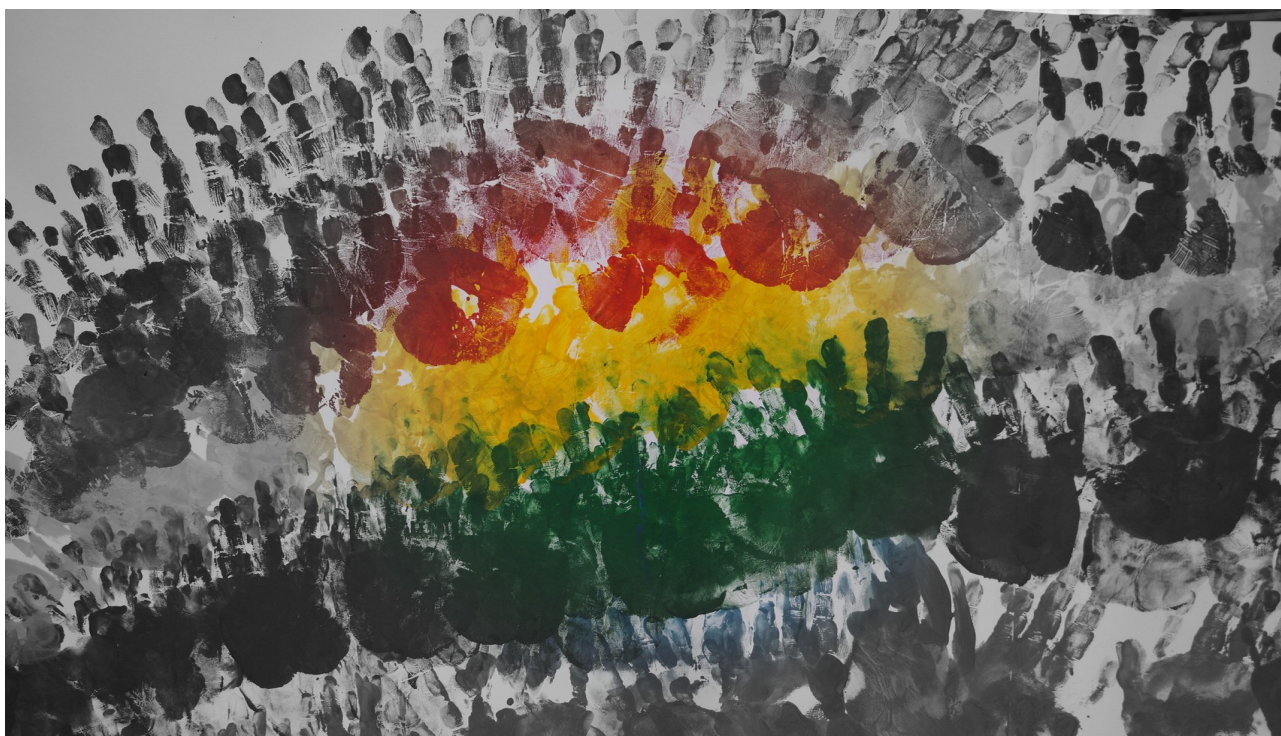




Newsletter 2015



The focus for us this year across our programs has been to take the methodology of working with the arts to places beyond the centre.

The goal for our children at the centre through the week long program Uhuru has been delivered in two formats: One-on-one sessions in the mornings and Group sessions in the afternoons. The one-on-one sessions focus on the very specific requirements of each child. These are in the areas of motor, sensory, cognitive, physical education, daily living skills, social awareness, communication, and academics. On an average, every child receives 5-7 sessions per week. For the group sessions, the children have been divided into 5 groups.

The intent for the groups is as follows:

- Gross, Fine, Oral motor skills, Attention, and Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- Communication – Speech & Language, Group Interaction, Attention, Sports
- Cognition, Academics, Narrative Capabilities, Group Interaction, Attention System.
- Cooking, Gardening, Sports, Physical Education, ADL, Social Awareness, Sex Education, Cognition, Academics, Mindfulness and offering spaces of Inclusive Learning.

The team at Snehadhara this year has welcomed facilitators from varied

backgrounds each of who bring in their expertise of working with children. This year too we have had interns from across who have been a part of the real time operations at the organisation.

New beginnings *changes in curriculum*

Sports and Outdoors

Sport and outdoor activities are an integral part of the curriculum at Snehadhara. Games and play, exercise, cycling, running, football skills, all these are an exciting part of regular weekly outdoor activities. This year, as a new initiative, a few children visit Decathlon once a week, for a specific sport -basketball where they are oriented to warm up exercises and the skills essential to the game.

Yoga

In keeping up with the above endeavour, the senior boys get a further chance to engage with the discipline required to stay focussed and extend their abilities through Yoga, enabled through guest faculty once a week where basic stretches and breath work are predominantly used.

Pottery Wheel

The touch of clay awakens our senses, its facilitation with embodiment, sensory play and role play enhances the therapeutic affect of the pliable material and reestablishes our connect with the 'earthiness' of the experience.

The children avail of several opportunities to engage with clay and now a different learning experience has entered the fray where the pottery wheel is being used to provide further stimulus. With the assistance of guest faculty, twice a month the children either build skills on the wheel or just experience the sensation of calm that pervades their being as the wheel turns and

the clay slips, slides and moulds through their fingers.



Oota Thota

Our relationship with food has entered a new arena of skills associated with outdoor spaces. Increasing their confidence in public spaces, a few children visit Goodbreads twice a week where they work in sorting, packaging, sealing and arranging the products. Some of them have started going to a restaurant Beach Hut where they are getting an exposure to work spaces and social inclusion by starting out with setting the tables. Besides this some groups have visited restaurants where the children make an effort to carry out their own orders, calculate and pay bills etc. Some children have also been grocery shopping at Big Bazaar and Hopcoms, identifying and procuring items that are required at the centre for their own group activities of cooking. There has also been a collective effort of cutting vegetables for an overnighter meal cooking activity.

Music

Music continues to be a large focus at the Centre and for some children who benefit through training, guest faculty continue to come in. This year the endeavour has strengthened through a unique process where one of the students talented in classical singing is imparting his skill to

fellow students.



Overnight Experiences

The stayovers on Fridays continue with more focus on daily living skills and outdoor exposures. This year the Piplika children too have joined the other children where they have their own sessions focussed on self sufficiency and enhanced social interactions. There are house visits that stress upon independence and more intimate social engagements with families of students or faculty for all children. There is a shift from adaptation and acceptance of a new environment to being more self reliant with health and hygiene forming an integral part of the process. There has also been a chance for the children to experience overnights at spaces other than Snehadhara.

Visual Art

Visual art plays an important role in the sensory and fine motor stimulation at Snehadhara. Now the stress is on focussed creative activities and collective working not just experiential in nature so there is a larger exposure to art and craft with varied materials like aluminium foil, feathers, coffee beans, textured paper, sequins etc. This is enabled by guest faculty once a week for older children.

Celebrations and Outdoors

Large social gatherings

The children at Snehadhara took large steps towards adaptability and making adjustments as they ventured into unfamiliar surroundings on two major celebratory occasions. The first was in Bangalore itself where they attended a wedding, managed themselves amongst many people, allowing loud music, sitting together to eat, being a part of the celebration with an enviable ease. They also undertook an adventurous trip when a group of 30 took a bus to majestic, walked through an extremely crowded station, boarded the train to Mandya for another wedding. Travelling by train together, staying away from home in another city, being a part of an unknown large gathering, a local visit to a sugar factory, all milestones attempted with aplomb.

Mall visits

Part of the 'ease with outdoor' endeavour was also stepping into unfamiliar, crowded spaces, self management through these unknown experiences and emerging triumphant having enriched themselves through the spectrum of sound and colour and light. We often have heard from parents that they dread visiting the malls with the children. In our experiment with this, the children visited two malls Bangalore Central and Big Bazaar where they rode the escalators and lifts, traversed with great discipline, down aisles bursting with products which were both enticing and alluring, accosted giant TV screens and munched some mall snacks on a fun filled trip.

Aaroahi

A major milestone for three of our children was the visit to Aaroahi where independent living and participation in the community

was another learning of sorts for us. At AaroHi, they believe, 'A Child decides what, how, when, with whom & how well he/she want to learn. We do not follow any philosophy, we follow the child.' We saw this in action for three days and it was fascinating to see how the space evolves. And our children once again adapted and adjusted and even contributed to the community spending 2 nights away from familiarity and patterns they were accustomed to. An immense learning for all of us.



Social visits

In the last few months we have found new families in several community celebrations and house visits that we have been a part of. Whether it was the Upanayanam of a classmate or the memorable visit to the Ranganathan or Jajoo family, the warmth, love and acceptance the children experienced was a proof of that. Vasant Uncle and Lalita Aunty, Aaji and Aajoba took such good care of them, played games, planned activities, got them to do yoga.....Also it was a milestone for the children to take three buses, wait at bus stops and reach their place. The Ganapati Puja too made them engage with a caring community that took good care of them as they sat through the entire puja, participated in the bhajans and aarti and dug into the delicious repast in the incessant rain.

Teachers day

The Snehadhara family of teachers and support staff received a plethora of messages conveying gratitude and love from the parent community and all others associated with the centre. An enormous cake was shared by all adults and children alike followed by a photo presentation featuring each member as they engage with the children.



Outreach

expanding our universe

Summer school

From gardening, to sessions on body awareness, games, making paper flowers and poster colours to making fryums and listening to a soul rendering performance...Summer school was fun and learning unplugged. One of the focus this summer school was on cooking to hone motor skills. As part of daily living skills the senior boys of the centre got trained to shave by themselves. It was a riot of fun and frolic that revealed and celebrated the skills and abilities of all the members of Snehadhara.

Rang Rangeela

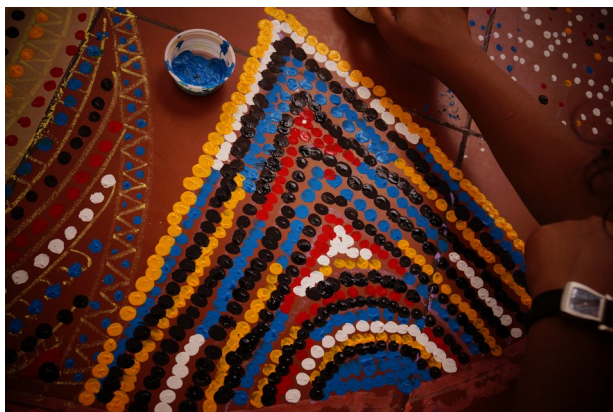
The summer school was followed by a colourful mela as a closure to the term showcasing the creativity explored during

this period. From inviting the neighbors, to getting the counters ready, to preparing towards the tuck shop...the space came alive to welcome one and all. Each room at the centre had a theme from music, food, photography to art and craft and games, and the contributions of each one was huge, it only goes to say..together we can. Coming together is indeed a beginning. What a lovely day it was!

Piplika

Piplika was approached with a new perspective this year with separate sessions for all parents every alternate month and Friday sessions thrice a month for the children including two overnights.

For the children: The children sessions have focussed more on independence and social interaction. They have gone bowling, been a part of outdoor celebrations and house visits, visited malls, bookstores and engaged with art forms and mind maps and health and hygiene sessions towards this goal.



Parent Interactions: The parent sessions flagged off with gathering as a group and sharing what was in store for us at the foundation this year. From introducing the new parents, to updates, to the team taking the stage in style to introduce themselves, it was indeed getting to know what we are as a group for the year. The main creation for the

day was the 'expressive movement' session facilitated by Priyanka Pai. The next session was a Saturday morning sharing and creating stories. A small story unfolded as we took ourselves to an imaginary land. Something exciting happened here and the entire group enacted this as a group drama. The third parent session was on Mandalas. Mandalas are used for meditation purposes allowing the individual meditating to become one with the universe.

Government school interventions

This year our work with government schools has flagged off with Riddhi Foundation's initiative at the Hulimavu government school. The proposed programme focuses on using multi art forms and technology to enrich learning within classrooms for children of Class 7 at the Hulimavu Government High School. The objectives have been to draw the content for the program from English and Science textbooks of Class VII and deliver them using multi-art forms which include music, dance, stories, visual arts, theatre and drama, puppetry and role plays. The focus is to look at creative interventions within classroom settings to enhance their all round development and to enable teachers to look at mainstream content artistically.

Enable

Snehadhara's outreach program looks at taking the methodology of Arts Based Therapy to various groups of persons with disabilities. One of our collaborations this year is with Enable India. The collective objective is to partner up using the strengths of each organization and maximize the benefit for the persons with disabilities in the area of economic independence with dignity. With this objective, we worked with the ASD group Wave 2 at EnAble India. The pilot project was designed keeping in mind the possibility of using ABT to address areas of

development that include speech, sensory integration, motor skills, cognition and social dynamics. In doing so, the attempt is to implement, execute and measure qualitative outcomes of these various processes. Keeping in mind the post placement needs of the participants, the Buddy system approach was attempted in order to accelerate learning between identified pairs of buddies, thereby, creating a platform for peer to peer and socio cognitive learning.

Trainings



Inner work Team training

To a team that lives it by the moment, it is always humbling to walk the path together and partake of a journey where we meet 'ourselves'. The new term in June was preceded by a two day long intense workshop titled 'Acting as Me' facilitated by @Madhu Shukla and Aruna of Navgati. It not only brought each one of us closer to our own 'being' but also to each other in the team.

Wednesday team sessions

We continue the effort of connecting with ourselves and with the team through our in house sessions on Wednesdays that are supported by each facilitator one by one. We bring the richness of our personal flavours, beliefs, talents, abilities and share them in a

space that provides individual and collective strengths to our endeavours. The sessions have made us aware of ourselves through the exploration of our physical, mental, spiritual sides through activities that range from yoga, mudras, meditative practices, poetry circles, visual and sensory artistic expressions to playful games and fun filled frolic.

GCSS workshop

The Global Congress of Spiritual Scientists (GCSS) is a unique platform created to bring together several New Age Spiritual Masters and Scientists of the world to share their spiritual perspectives, research works and experiences. Four facilitators from Snehadhara attended a workshop at Pyramid valley on Art Healing, Art Joy, Art Liberation By Cynthia Gonzalez who has led art therapy workshops and training for the last 30 years internationally

It was an opportunity to play spontaneously with color, texture and form while observing the progressive emergence of one's deepest truth and nature.

Arivu Disha

Arivu Disha is two pronged program to improve learning outcomes & career prospects of school children in Karnataka. Along with being a part of the content design team, we also worked with the facilitators who will be taking the program to various government schools. The training created an opportunity to look at the content design experientially. We questioned, we sought answers, we took down points, we taught each other, we sang, we danced; we went into classrooms and now we are working with the children add the facilitators who were trained.

HLC

In a time when humans are trying to numerically quantify all the things children

know, we must remember that there is more to life than intellect. Children's success in academic and social life depends on a numbers of factors. It is widely held that there are at least 7 dimensions of human greatness required to develop wholly: integrity, intuition, interaction, initiative, inquiry, imagination and identity. This being the premise our engagement with HLC is through the 7i initiative. In it, children will be engaged intellectually too, but also emotionally, socially, morally and soulfully.

Christ University & IIPR

We need many more practitioners who use non-conventional methods in working in the social sector, to understand how children learn and to understand help people with disabilities learn better. We are training graduate and post graduate students in colleges to learn through the arts, and become creators of empathetic learning spaces. This year we conceptualized and facilitated two certificate courses in partnership with Headstreams at Christ University (Psychology Department) and at Indian Institute of Psychology and Research titled 'Psycho-Social well-being using multi-arts and play'. The objective of the course was to understand the value of play in human life and become proficient in using it in various settings, to comprehend the theory and practice of various forms of art and how these help learning. It gave us another opportunity to train and build a team of practitioners who wish to look at learning and achieving outcomes artistically.

Events



Kere Habba

The children at Snehadhara did their bit to 'Celebrate the abundance in nature with music, art, food, education and fun' at the Madiwala Kere Habba in April this year. They went to the lake and picked up all the plastic that lay around from bottles, to tetra packs, to covers in preparation of the Habba. What a lovely morning it was ! We cycled to the lake as a team to be welcomed by our summer school children. A session of sketching by the Pencil Jammers was followed by gearing up for the evening. The banners were up, the lake was in its abundance, the birds welcomed us , the rays of the sun were having a dialogue with the sun, the lush green speak of tones and hues. Indeed colours of nature... We brought the habba to life with our session of storytelling and dance in the evening.

BBMP election

Ahan's (a child at our centre) aunt Maitreyi Nadapana contested the BBMP elections for HSR layout Corporator. We wished to be a part of Ahan's world and one of the things we thought we must do is have his friends extend support for clean politics. For our children it was an interesting experience to meet the many people , do the door to door campaign with us , shout out slogans, manage themselves in a large social space, be mindful of the traffic, push their stamina

and walk it with us. Yes, we indeed can create the society we want to live in. It is about making a choice.

5K run

Freedom to us has always been breaking free of our biases, our prejudices and celebrating our differences. Freedom to us has meant creating a society in which we nurture each other and take steps together. This Independence day the special children of Snehadhara were a part of the 5K run Bannerghatta Run organised by Snap Fitness and Decathlon.

The idea of participating in this was to work on the stamina of our children to adapt to change, be amidst people and help them and us to step out of the comfort zone. The kids surprised us as always.



Story telling

One of the objectives of the foundation is to integrate the arts for creative learning processes and take the methodology of the Arts to various learning environments. As a part of Teacher's Day celebration and International Literacy Day we signed up with Pratham One day Story campaign to take a story to different places and reach out to at least 1000 children and adults.

We began this journey with visiting the apartment communities of some of our children and took the story to government

schools, old age homes, orphanages, organisations working with children at high risk. The boy in the story was christened 'munna', 'ronaldo', 'salman khan', 'bheem'. The story travelled to many places, went through its own journey. Each group brought out their best and added to the narrative.



Impact and Media

At the National Conference on Models of Best Practices in Empowerment of Persons with disabilities, Kottayam, Kerala

Gitanjali Sarangan, presented her research paper titled 'Arts Based Therapy for enabling peer to peer social interaction between neurotypical children and those with special needs', by National Institute for empowerment of persons with multiple disabilities NIEPMD, Chennai) in collaboration with Rehabilitation Council of India (New Delhi), Inter University Centre for Disability Studies (IUCDS) and School of Behavioral Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University.

Bangalore and Mumbai Mirror that talks about Snehadhara.

Titled ' Learning through song and dance', Snehadhara uses unconventional methods to educate and encourage social inclusion

among special children and adults.
Titled 'School for thought' Mumbai Mirror reads, A Bangalore NGO on success with experimental learning for differently-abled kids.

<http://www.mumbaimirror.com/.../Scho.../articleshow/47749810.cms>

*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!*

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