

Planned Activities & Visits - February 2020

1. Shishu Kalyan - 7th February, 2020

Shishu Kalyan, our first destination this month. It is situated at a walking distance from my home. Took the opportunity of a mid morning walk of over a kilometer and a half to reach there by noon. By then Tapobrata, Nandita, Shibaji and Chandra were already interacting with the tiny tots, and I was able to hear their expressions of joy while approaching the school. They were a bunch of 30 odd LKG and UKG students who had taken their admission in January only. They, as their age had taught them, were all very active either fighting with each other or trying to find fault with each other. Naturally their combined voices were rising to a crescendo, and pandemonium was breaking out. The two teachers were intervening with loud messages of PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR LIPS, and they were immediately responding, only for a little while. I was watching this along with Shibaji, Tapobrata and Chandra, while Nandita was busy peeling potatoes in the kitchen sitting on the floor along with their cook in the kitchen. At the behest of the teachers, some of the children came forward to recite rhymes that they have been taught. One Ayantika Das took fancy on me and came over and clung to this new found Dadu. Chandra became busy with her camera, and

Nandita came over to sit with the children to inspire them to recite more poems. It was a feeling of amusement, of happiness and of satisfaction for me to be in the midst of those angels. After a while my friends left as they had some urgent business to attend, and left me to wait for my captain to arrive after negotiating innumerable traffic hangovers in the city of joy. Spent some more time after Arun arrived and took charge. Shibaji had delivered their monthly grocery as was requested by them. Arun suggested to give them books instead, next time. Since the lunch time of the kids was approaching, we decided to leave. I was trying to compare my mental state while going and while coming back from Shishu Kalyan. Yes, I was having a sense of elation, and fulfilment when I reached home to have my lunch.

2. Anandan School - 14th February, 2020

Anandan was a pet project of our dear Subir. Tuli with her myriad problems takes special pride and efforts to take it forward just as Subir would have done.

For a change I was the first GBS candidate to mark my attendance this morning for our group's meet at Anandan, Hazra Road. It was a special occasion today with Saswati, our friend and their music teacher demonstrating her devotion and care to build up a team of young music enthusiasts. They gave ample proof of their dedication by rendering quite a few songs with able support by Saswati on the Harmonium and self on the newly donated and repaired Tabla. The songs have been carefully videoed and posted already by Arun and others for you all to listen to. Saswati herself wasn't well, with a choked voice from a nasty cold and cough, but her dominant presence inspired her pupils to give

their best . I wanted to check how the Tabla would behave after the repair, and hence could have a feel of things as they say.

We subsequently joined the rest of our group waiting in the main classroom and completed our commitments of donating children's books , cursive writing books, and drawing/ painting books as requested by Anandan. Bhabani and Pradip distributed sweets/candies to the children and also donated a big box of crockeries and kitchen utensils, kudos to them. As always our visit came to an end with every face lit up with satisfied smiles and happiness after hearing few lovely poems from these lovely children. Today's programme was attended by Anita - Arun, Shibaji - Chandra, Shivabrata - Saswati, Pradip - Bhavani, Shubhra, & your's truly.

3. Pushpamoyee School - Picnic

Childhood is a wonderful period in life which lasts in the memories of human beings throughout their lives. But many children do not have a pleasant childhood due to various reasons including poverty, oppression, social exclusion and other environmental factors. This affects the holistic development of children to a larger extent. Childhood is a period to celebrate happiness of life, a time to have fun, and enjoy the bounty of the world. Though these under privileged children from slum seldom get such opportunity to celebrate their childhood. To bridge this gap, Pushpamoyee Management planned this picnic at a wonderful Art Studio known as Chander Haat , where few of their close friends are member.

Chander Haat is a collective space that encourages inter-disciplinary activities, to generate a broad platform for community based art practice. It is a place that inspires freedom without barriers where expectations and expressions are without limits, and the artists mingles and moves freely between the various aspects of different mediums. Interestingly, Chander Haat also engages in popular activities such as Durga Puja festivals, making this an aspect of their practice, the artist make idols, which is relevant to the community at large. It's a place where people come with a dream to become an artist and they reach their goal sharing the strong presence of this beautiful environment.

Pushpamoyee children who are all from various nearby slums are always afraid to express and are full of negative feelings and hence their founder members felt the necessity of little exposure to the outside world which would not only help in increasing bondage amongst the students but would also possibly help in changing their mindset and help in changing their views when exposed to the bounty of nature. It also helps to nurturing the value of friendship and humanness. They are seriously contemplating in organising similar activity every quarter where children are taken to various places of interest and knowledge.

We few who joined from SPHS had a wonderful time with all the children and their Teachers. It was a pleasure seeing the kids enjoying and are able to express themselves freely. We had a game of football , young girls played amongst themselves , had Drawing competition and finally had a chit chat session with all the students together with their Mothers and Teachers. Loved and enjoyed each moment of the time spent with all of them. In the open session Mothers were extremely happy to know and understand the importance of their children attending Schools daily. Best part was that each of the students assured to bring in min 2 of their other friends to join the school and their Mothers too assured to help on this move. Based on the interaction with both children and their Mothers following were planned :

- > Collectively all will try to ensure School has attendance of min 25 student on a daily basis .
- > Each of the kids will jot down min 3 points why it is important to attend School daily and submit to their Teacher on Monday the 2nd March.
- > Will also write and submit on Monday 3 points on how to make the class room more interesting and exciting
- > School will handover a Diary for each students where Teachers can write their comments on the merits of each student for their Mothers to look at it and sign to return back . This would help in increased monitoring at home too.
- > Management to introduce Monthly Meeting with Parents of each student and share the good & ' to improve ' status of each student for understanding and taking a committment from Parents to be more vigilant at home too on their kids studies.
- > Kids & Mothers suggested to make 11.30 am as starting time of the school and close at 3/3.30 pm .This will help in timely

attendance of all the students.

Indeed had a delightful day spending time with all the students , their Mothers , Teachers & Founder Membersthough we met for the 1st time with quite a few of them but never felt that way day very well spent.

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And lastly we must say that the whole event was organised brilliantly....the icing on the cake was the gurgle, the laughter, the chirpiness of the young, bubbly kids which made our day.