



the newsletter

*issue 8
December 2016*

To be sensitive to the beauty of something is to perceive the totality of it. The mind that is thinking in terms of a part can never perceive the whole. In the whole the part is contained, but the part will never make up the whole, the total.

— Krishnamurti, New Delhi 1960

In this Issue



Campus Tree Log



Frangipani blooms again

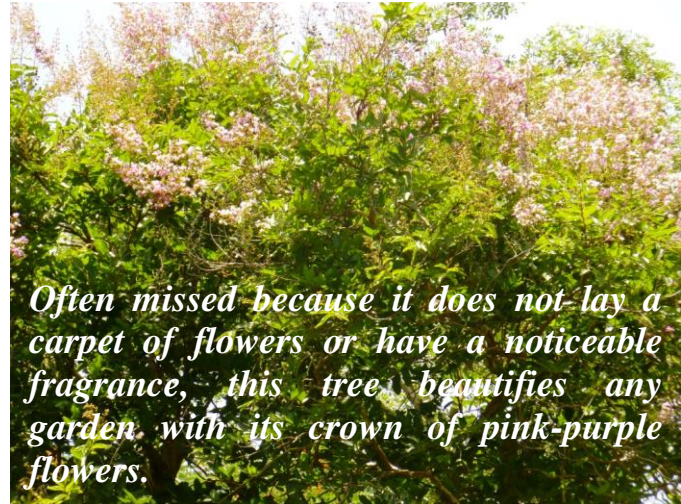


Breaking the Silence



Windmills carry his story

Campus Tree Log Thai Crape Myrtle



Often missed because it does not lay a carpet of flowers or have a noticeable fragrance, this tree beautifies any garden with its crown of pink-purple flowers.

Type: Semi-deciduous

Location on Campus:

One next to the Cannon Ball tree, bordering the lawn opposite the office and another on the way from the library to the dining hall.

Flowering Season:
July-August

Flowers: Pinkish purple that fade to white before they fall

Leaves: hairy when young, the new leaves are pink. The leaves are shed in May and June

Fruit: A pea-sized woody capsule, they crack open when old to release the seeds (usually in March)

Bark: Thin, pale brown and flaky

Age: 25-30 yrs

The tree in school life : The dry woody fruits make for a wonderful collectible. One such bunch decorates the library.



Frangipani Blooms Again

Kindergarten returns to The School!!

"Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future." - Maria Montessori

Snatches of conversation in Frangipani Class

"Do you know my elder brother/sister?" - So much pride in being part of a 'big' school, especially their older siblings' school.

"Akka have you met Sparky Shine Shine?" – as a child shows her dog toy

"Akka this is medicine and can cure anything. Are you sick?"- a child hands out a ball of playing dough

"Cupcakes for sale, cupcakes for sale . . ." – imaginary cupcakes get sold to imaginary customers and ofcourse to sell is to give, without any money transaction!

From the Rest of the School . . .

"I remember, the current class 8 were the last batch of kindergarten"

"Kamala Akka, a KG teacher with us earlier spent the first ten days to help us restart the KG section"

"Presence of the 'kutties' brings out a certain sensitivity in the Junior School children as they learn by watching the akkas interact with the KG children"

"Akka, what if they get between our legs and we trip on them?"

"Akka, they are so tiny, will we trod on them by mistake?"

As the days progressed:

- Older siblings, siblings' friends started paying regular visits to the KG to "make sure they are fine"
- Junior school children "collect playthings and treasures" in pebbles, shells, sticks, flowers for the little ones
- And some akkas and students just wait by to "watch" them

Anyone who walks by the Frangipani class can't help but SMILE!!

Watching the Children

"Watching the children work, discover, play, learn at their own pace, each different from the other with the freedom to do..."

...

"The children look at everything anew, and approach every task as if it were the first time . . ."

Ways of Learning

- Play – sand, jungle gym, building blocks, doll house, paper craft, clay and much more
- Being a part of a group
- Stress on physical activity
- Spoken communication through talking, singing and telling stories
- Theme based learning modules
- Mixed age group – 3.5 -6 years

A Typical Day of four hours in Frangipani

- Settling Time
- Circle time –singing, child initiated conversations, demonstrations of learning materials or Nature Walk
- Assembly – stories, songs, instructions
- Snack time`
- Free outdoor play
- Individual activity – work with hands
- Lunch time
- Free indoor play and exploration
- Unwinding time

Frangipani Blooms Again

Kindergarten returns to The School!!



The word 'art' means to put things in their proper place. - J Krishnamurti

If one wants to live in order and therefore harmony with a sense of great beauty, perhaps also peace, then you must have order. - J Krishnamurti



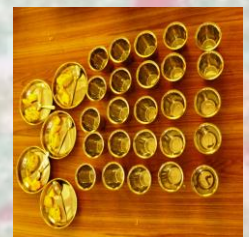
Nature is a part of our life. We grew out of the seed, the earth, and we are part of all that . . .
- J Krishnamurti



Are playing and learning different?



Hear it from the 'Little Ones' . . . "Welcome to our World!!"



Snack Time!!

Breaking the Silence

Festival of Drama and Dialogue 2016



- Participants – Class 11
- Classes 7 upwards watch and respond
- 10 schools
- 4 venues of presentation
- 5 plays presented each day, followed by a panel discussion

Day 0 – A curtain raiser of class 11 play at the morning assembly
Day 1 & 2 - 5 plays and panel discussion
Day 3 - An expert guest from the field of theatre spoke to the participants about the nuances of theatre
Day 4 - Class 11 of The School staged their play for the school and all parents



**Theatre with a purpose.
Theatre as a means of expression.
Theatre as a means of introspection!**

Each participating school discusses thoughts, issues, incidents that affect them and choose what of those issues they would like to explore through drama. Each school presents an original script, prepares a poster for its play, and makes its own props and costumes. At the end of every day, each play is discussed by a panel consisting of teachers and students of the participating schools.



The participants work with the entire gamut of activities related to theatre -

- Thought, story, characters
- Script costume and make up
- Stage
- Audience interactions, reviews and criticisms

Breaking the Silence

Festival of Drama and Dialogue 2016

As part of their English curriculum, class 8 students write a review of two of the plays stage, across all the facets of theatre during the festival. A look at the festival through their eyes – the posters of the plays and a pick from class 8 reviews.

The venue was surrounded by trees and gave the effect of sitting in a park
The play was staged in the open space next to the banyan tree and the junior school
They used the space given very well. The scene showed different places, as they wished to use it

Rapping/beat boxing and music incorporated very well into the play
The laughter was perfectly timed to emphasise the irony of the situation
They used a metaphorical sequence which had dance, movement and story-telling
The song, “we didn't start the fire”, made me think

All the elements in the play were knit together very well.
I will remember this play for a long time
The play addressed issues of domestic violence, alcohol abuse, women's rights, freedom of speech and racism.



I was able to see about people who are thin being told to eat more
In the end there was a 'mirror' in the box
One thought that unified everything would be that 'society has a whole lot of power over us'
The title of the play, 'Human Chrysalis' indicates that all of us have to go through a period of struggle to achieve something

He acted well and was like a real politician
The actor who played the character of the drunk husband acted excellently
The actor who played 'Guruji' was especially effective and suited the role.
Everyone spoke loudly and clearly
One actress performed a movement which was very nice
The girl who was playing football acted well – she was loud, clear and spoke with expression

The story was fast moving without any flagging
This play was about gender stereotypes
The story revolved around a box and trying to answer the question, "what's inside?"
The major conflict was about how media needlessly makes small things big.

The costumes contributed to understanding who the characters were
Costumes were not appropriate for the characters
Make up was only needed to portray a character with dark skin

The Windmills Carry his Story

Interview

Can you guess some of the people behind these?



They are same people who maintain the campus grounds, give a facelift to the school building and classrooms regularly, turn up in response to alarms – be it of bats entering classrooms or the ‘idli’ ants building their nests in cupboards or a faucet in the kitchen not working. They keep the football grounds and basket ball courts or construct the changing rooms.

Dhansekharan Anna and the maintenance staff!

The Windmills Carry his Story

Interview

I was curious to know what brought **T Dhanasekaran** Anna to The School 9 years back. "Retirement", he says very simply. "But what keeps me here is how well I am treated by everyone at school."

So where was he before he joined the school?

Making and installing windmills, solar stills (water purifiers), designing cycle trailers, developing waste lands and being a part of many more projects with high social impact at the Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre where the projects he has been a part of have won many recognitions and awards. "It was a very rewarding 25 years with them."

My conditioned mind immediately made me ask Anna where and what had he studied? "Class 8, Akka". And then he went on to tell me how much he had learnt through his working life and from whom. Anna's gratitude for all the scientists he has worked with over the years is immense. His eyes brim with love and respect when he talks of them. "I started as a foreman and the faith and guidance of my seniors helped me become part of the design and development teams. Infact, I was able to design and fabricate a cycle trailer all by myself!" (One can see and read about this trailer on the MCRC website).

Anna's turning point in life was when after many odd jobs, he realized he wanted to have a "technical career" and so he did a 'fitter training course'. From there started his sojourn with design and development as every job he took up after that found him in the company of engineers and IIT graduates. For his share, he worked very hard and lapped up every bit of the experience and learning. He values relationships the most, especially with those he has learnt a lot from.

He believes that his strength lay in his drive to learn and his capacity to imagine. He has executed projects on discussions and without designs or drawings. He feels much the same way about how he executes stages, event venues and art installations for the school.

He sums up his learning at work as , "Never say NO. Always try". He believes that age is in the mind and the best way to stay young is to never retire.

Anna along with 5 maintenance staff keeps the school machinery running – checking fencing, nursing dogs abandoned on campus and reaching them to animal welfare organizations, plumbing, electrical, carpentry, masonry, gardening, not to mention all the school events and the art installations. He says the kitchen and toilet infrastructure are always the surprising parts, acting up when most unexpected. The classrooms and kitchen get priority over all other parts of the school.

His high points in school, he says are –

"When children take his help for their science projects.

When Akkas and Annas thank him for good work done.

The pleasure of completion of a task.

The excitement of translating the ideas of Akkas and Annas into tangible outputs."

As he, with some satisfaction tells me about his four sons – one who is in the real estate business, the second into nutraceuticals research (and he laughs at how he is so similar to him in learning practically), the third who is an who has a masters in technology and the fourth who is an engineer - his never being able to study beyond class 8 seems quite insignificant. If anything, his has been a life rich with learning