



Sanatan Dharam Mandir



Shankara Vidya Kendra



St. Dominic's Church

Vasant Vihar's Places of Worship

Every month aVWVAz presents pictures and an introduction to aspects of Vasant Vihar which you may have seen but have not really noticed!

This month we introduce you to our main places of worship which are located in the precincts of our colony. They cover many religions and are revered and respected by one and all. Many of them have been here since the inception of Vasant Vihar and have become an important part of the lives of our residents.

1. St. Dominic's Church
2. Shankara Vidya Kendra
3. Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar
4. Sanatan Dharam Mandir
5. Shri Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha
6. Shahi Masjid

Shahi Masjid



Sri Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha



This issue:

President's Report
PAGE 02

Youth Ki aVWVAz
PAGE 03

You Asked, We Answered
PAGE 04 AND 05

VV on the Wing
PAGE 06

Orchha: A City of Monuments
PAGE 07

How Green in Our Colony!
PAGE 08 AND 09

The Buzz Around Vasant Vihar
PAGE 10 AND 11

Our Living Gem-
Maharaja Krishna Rasgotra
PAGE 12

Shravani Parva Celebrations
at Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar
PAGE 13

Reaching Out
PAGE 14

Ladies Club Vasant Vihar
PAGE 15

Editor's Note
PAGE 15

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Gurpreet Singh Bindra



August is normally the month when the monsoon is in full flow in Delhi; however, this year the monsoon in August was dismal. September and October more than made up for this with the deluge that took place. The rain was so heavy that what was shaping up to be a large deficit in the annual rainfall, got converted to an annual rainfall within the normal range. It has also rained very heavily up in the hills of Uttarakhand and Himachal, so we do hope that the water situation next summer will be some better.

I wonder if anyone has noticed that unlike the previous years, Vasant Vihar did not get converted into a lake during the recent deluge. **This is because both the Society and VVWA have put great emphasis on Water Harvesting systems and their maintenance.** While this establishes the effectiveness of our systems, we must all realise that a lot of work still needs to be done to install more Rain Water Harvesting Systems. Readers will be happy to note that, we have recently completed work on a 50 lakh ltr. Water Harvesting system in our Munirka park. This is one of the largest in Delhi.

However, we must also be conscious of the fact that the end of the monsoon period is a time when vector borne diseases such as Dengue, Chickengunia etc. are prevalent. It is necessary that everyone takes all preventive measures like removing all stagnant water etc. so that we are protected. Recently, MCD had brought out a detailed advisory which we had circulated. **We would request everyone to please be careful and observe all precautions.**

The highly exorbitant water bills that we are receiving are cause for concern. Your committee had organised a camp so that our issues could be resolved but nothing seems to have moved. Your committee is aware that the matter needs to be escalated, which is what we are going to do. There are penalties in place for all houses having areas above 100 sq. mtrs. who have not installed Water Harvesting System. We would request everyone who has not got this Water Harvesting done in their premises, to please get it done to avoid the high penalties.

Security of our colony and residents is an area where we are laying a lot of emphasis. In order to ensure that our senior citizens are properly covered, we had in consultation with the Police, floated a form for registration. Unfortunately, the response has not been what we had expected. We would once again request everyone to please fill up the form so that we can ensure that the Police begin to take proper action. Other matters of security such as barricading have been put in place and we are working to improve this. We are also following up with the Police regarding installation of the CCTV cameras.

On 29th October, VVWA will hold their Annual General Body Meeting. This would give everyone an opportunity to express what they feel, what they want and what they want improved. We would request everyone to please make it a point to attend the meeting.



Memories are made of this By Bharat Singh



Since my parents decided to move back from Boston in 2006, I've only called one place home: Vasant Vihar. One of the few constants in my journey from four to nineteen. As I listed the points I'd like to write about in this article, I realized that people rarely reflect on home, perhaps because they expect it'll always be there. The place takes a backseat for the individual when the reality is that neither survives without the other.

Now a sophomore in college, I regularly argue with my parents against trips during my vacations. Staying home feels special. Going on walks and playing cricket in the same parks where I learned to ride my first bike, where I spent hours re-climbing slides and testing the height of every swing, calms me. I know that even though I have

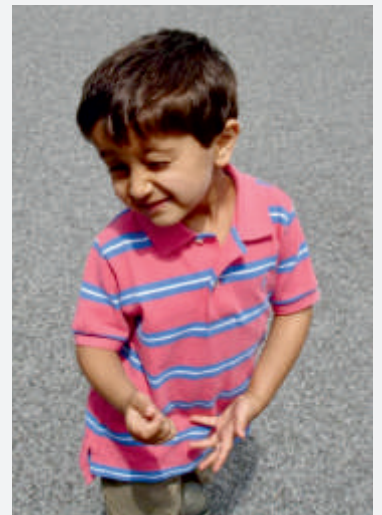
grown up I haven't grown apart from my home.

In spite of switching schools after 5th grade, my core memories are grounded in D-block, where among the ordinary houses lies the magical Shri Ram School. Inside its iconic khaki buildings, I made my best friends, many of whom I am still close to, and started discovering who I was. Today, when I visit school and walk slowly through the hallways, I get goose bumps seeing the Sagar house uniform and hearing the 2:30 bell. Peeking into old classrooms and running into old faces comforts me as I know I've come from a place of love and strength.

Through the years, I've spent time in different parts of Vasant Vihar, all equally memorable. From growing to love my Math tutor and mentor Rohit Deish who taught me and my brother to dream and dedicate ourselves to everything, to challenging overconfident, middle-aged men at Badminton during misty winter evenings, I've loved every moment.

Thanks to my father's old Sony Handyman, I can peek into such moments from the past. Old pictures of Holi on the streets behind Tagore School with my grandparents, early morning football practices on the Shri Ram field, cricket coaching at MSVV, and countless birthdays with driveway football to name a few. My obsession with toys lead me to Shevicks where I eagerly browsed the tall shelves for any new arrivals, befriending all who worked there. The roads I once sped down on my bicycle are now the ones where learn gear changes and the role of a clutch. My monthly haircuts at Oxford Cut were spent trying to mimic the hairstyles Virat Kohli and Cristiano Ronaldo, short on the sides with a little extra on top. It's this innocence that I cherish to this day, knowing I can connect with that young, curious boy navigating life.

In a larger sense, I am grateful that I've been given a home in such a place. Our house in Vasant Vihar fell into our grandparents' hands by luck. But I believe that things happen for a reason and sometimes you make your own luck. The stories my father tells me of his youth growing up in Calcutta inspire me hold on to my childhood with the same fondness he has for his. Who knows where I'll be by the time I'm his age but a part of me will always live here.



YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED

by Maj. Gen. (Retd) S. P. Murgai



Mr. Raja Chopra
E Block Representative

In continuation to our series on “You Asked, We Answered”, we met the block representatives of E and F blocks for their response to our questions.

This is what they said:



Mr. Ajay Ahuja
E Block Representative

RESPONSE – E BLOCK REPRESENTATIVES

Q1. What role are you playing as a block representative of your Block?

Primarily, we block reps, are a bridge /conduit between VVWA and the residents of our block for communication and implementation of VVWA policies, plans and activities. We are available for one-to-one communication with the E block residents for sorting out common issues in the block.

Q2. Have you divided the workload between the two of you?

Yes. We work in harmony and divide the load as per the situation.

Q3. What Value addition, if any, have you made for better living conditions in the block?

Besides other commonly known problems like waste segregation, Dhalao's management etc., we have many very senior Citizens, and their young grand children in our block with very little security for them. With collective and collaborative efforts of EBRWA and the residents, an outer circle security ring has been set up limited to our block. Even now the security is not watertight and needs further strengthening.

The second biggest challenge we are involved in is the school car traffic. We, along with EBRWA, have got the school authorities to employ traffic marshals and senior students to regulate the traffic between 12.30 pm to 2 pm. These measures have improved the traffic flow during rush hours.

Q4. Have you made any plan of action what you plan to do, during the financial year 2022-23?

Last financial year we got nothing despite the collection being nearly INR 2 Lakhs from our block. Now talking of “financial year 2022-23”, only if we know what funds will be allocated to E block, we would be in a better position to draw out a feasible plan of action.

Q5. Are there any difficulties you are facing in the performance of your duties as a block Rep?

Surely! Lack of communication of date and time of implantation of a job by Govt. agencies, results in the job not being done to our satisfaction, Group Chats have motor mouth residents, who just want to participate on WhatsApp and not on ground, leave us with spending more time on giving explanations on chats. With lack of funds, we cannot implement small jobs like speed breakers in the inner lanes, dust bins, road signage etc.

Q6. Presently very low percentage of residents are members of VVWA. What efforts have you made to enroll more members in your Block?

It does not surprise me that the membership subscription for VVWA has fallen nearly by 45% this year as compared to last, and I do not blame the residents for not paying up the subscription since the only extra work done last year was trimming of trees from the subscription collected. Residents are wanting to know what percentage of funds their block is going to get from the funds collected from their block for utilization in the block for implementing house block signage, speed breakers, Convex Mirrors etc.

Q7. People take up social work to serve the community. What is your motivation and level of satisfaction you have achieved in you mission?

By opting for being a Block Reps, by this very act, we are doing social work for the community. It is indeed giving us great deal of satisfaction, doing something for our own community.

YOU ASKED

contd...



Ms. Gunita Singh
F Block Representative

In continuation to our series on “You Asked, We Answered”, we met the block representatives of E and F blocks for their response to our questions.

This is what they said:



Ms. Ira Joshi
F Block Representative

RESPONSE – F BLOCK REPRESENTATIVES

Q1. What role are you playing as block representative of your block?

As block representative our role is twofold - long term issues to be resolved or taken up with concerned government authorities. The short-term issues are basically firefighting on urgent matters. Most of the time the issues need to be taken up with the government authorities. Where we are not able to resolve the issues ourselves, we report the matter to VVWA for their indulgence and follow up. We listen to all and render help as much as we can.

Q2. Have you divided between two of you your workload with respect to your areas of responsibility as block representatives?

We work together as a team complimenting each other. However, where necessary, we discuss and divide the work on case-to-case basis.

Q3. What value additions, if any, have you made for better living conditions in your block?

We have constituted 'VVWA F block solutions group'. The residents can now communicate and exchange ideas for resolution of common problems. The block residents get an opportunity for two-way communication and participation in resolution of common issues.

The problem of frequent failure of streetlights has been resolved with the cooperation of the concerned government authorities.

Q4. Have you made any plan of action about what you plan to do during the current financial year 2022-23?

The plan is under formulation and is taking time for its finalisation as some of the long pending issues are still being debated for a consensus among residents. However, the plans do exist for pruning of trees, installation of speed breakers and convex mirrors for tackling the safety concerns.

We are also looking at helping Munirka Marg as much as we can as they always feel left out.

Q5. Are there any difficulties you are facing in the performance of your Duties as block representative?

No one wants to volunteer. We feel it's the responsibility of every resident of our block to come forward and join us in resolving the genuine problems. Together we can achieve much more.

Most of the issues can only be resolved with active support of government agencies like police for security concerns and other concerned departments for the issues that arise, can be seen as a constraint.

Q6. Presently very low percentage of residents are members of VVWA. What efforts have you made to enroll more members in your block?

I feel the way to handle this is to show results and keep requesting residents for response, which is being done.

koshish jari hai. Hopefully many more will come forward and take up the membership.

Q7. People take up social work to serve the community. What is your motivation and the level of satisfaction you have achieved in your mission?

It is a mixed bag.

In our next issue, we will be concluding the series, “You Asked, We Answered” with our chat with the VVWA management.

VV ON THE WING

By Anita Mani



Purple Sunbird

Vasant Vihar is home to many diplomats and visitors from other countries, but did you know that we also host visitors of the feathered kind? The colony's trees and gardens host migratory birds in the cooler months of the year, some of whom have travelled from far-away locations in Central Asia. We also host Himalayan visitors in those months, while the summer sees domestic travellers from other parts of India. These visiting birds however make up just a small fraction of the very substantial birdlife we see around the colony.

Let's take a tour!

If you are an early riser step into your balcony or compound to hear our neighbourhood's dawn chorus in full throttle. Flighty bulbuls will be making themselves heard from perches, interspersed with the staccato call of the **Common Mynah**. A **Common Tailorbird** may chirp in – an astonishingly loud call for such a small bird. Look for the metallic gleam the nectar feeding **Purple Sunbird** as it vocalizes between sips. In summer the “kutrook-kutrook-kutrook” sound of the **Brown-headed Barbet** is the ominous portend of another hot day. But they are all outshone by that gorgeous songster, the **Magpie Robin** who outfitted in his black and white tuxedo, sends forth his music into the soft morning. Warning: he can be a bit of an early riser and once sang below my kitchen window at 4.30 am one entire summer!



Copper Smith Barbet

While these birds are found in most of our gardens, the colony's wilder parks host the migrants that fly in season after season. As the monsoon showers break through the dust curtain of our desert fringed city, the **Pied Cuckoo** arrives, looking sharp in B & W. Looks can deceive for she, in the long tradition of cuckoos, is looking for the nest of an unsuspecting babbler to drop an egg or two. Insects raised by the rain are fodder for **Blue-tailed** and **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** who can be spotted in the Aravali Biodiversity Park that also hosts the **Pied Cuckoo**. Once the weather cools, winter visitors like the **Lesser Whitethroat**, a nondescript warbler and the **Black Redstart** with his fluttering red-orange tail grace the biodiversity park. Winter skies should also be searched for the **Oriental Honey Buzzard** (a bird of prey with a pigeon shaped head which is a resident but more easily spotted in winter riding thermals on the wing) and the **Booted Eagle** (spotted by the white shoulder patches that resemble headlights).

The various trails of the biodiversity park, as well as its extension near the Shri Ram school are good birding spots. The Tughlaq garden, before it was restored attracted some uncommon winter warblers. Now the higher footfall means that you are more likely to run into bold bulbuls and mynahs.



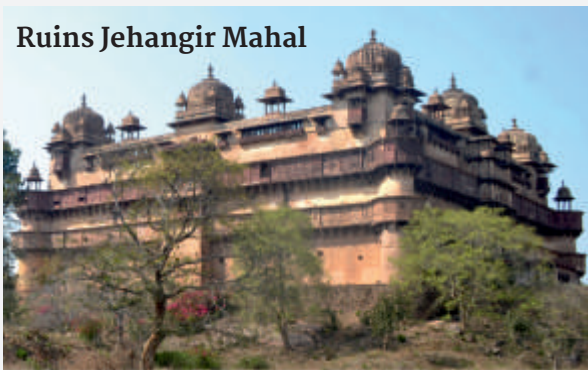
Magpie Robin

If you are a nightbird and the prospect of early morning birdwatching makes you shudder, fear not. As dusk falls, hear for the 'chirurr-chirurr-chirurr' of the **Spotted Owlet** or if you are luckier, you may see the ghostly wings of the **Barn Owl** glide past.

Over the past 15 years, we have seen almost a 100 species in and around the colony and biodiversity park. And that's about the only 'ton' I am going to hit in my life!!

ORCHHA: A CITY OF MONUMENTS

By Ms. Lalita Phadkar



Ruins Jehangir Mahal

In the 16th and 17th centuries, in the teeth of the Great Mughals, the Bundela kingdom rose in the region we today call MP. Born as a ruling dynasty through a massacre in the 13th century in the Chandela era fortress of Garh Kunder, the Bundela Rajputs created their amazing capital of Orchha from 1531 AD onwards.

Orchha is a medieval walled town anchored by a jal durg - a water fortress created by the Betwa river and its arm, the Adhwar. Within this citadel are storied palaces like the Raja Mahal and Jehangir Mahal, and a Heritage Park where the ruins of the houses of the nobility at court can be seen through the undulating landscape.

Bundela mural art is a high point of sophisticated indigenous art. The palaces of the jal durg abound with beautiful paintings, room after room, the earlier ones pure Bundela school, later paintings showing some Mughal influence.

Outside the citadel the town of Orchha is a treasure house of monuments: beautiful temples, cenotaphs (chattris) by the Betwa and old havelis with lakhauri bricks and palki roofs.

When you add to this the magnificent Tungaranya forest and nature reserve just across the Betwa, the possibility of white water rafting, and the potential held out by a distinctive Bundeli culture with its own forms of cuisine, dance, and theatre it seems obvious that Orchha should be one of India's premier tourist destinations.

It is shocking therefore that in the peak year of 2017-18, the average winter monthly footfall of foreign tourists was only 6000. The Taj Mahal, just 3 hours from Orchha by road, in contrast was visited by 3.3 lakh foreign tourists per month.

I am part of The Arts Society of India (TASI) a NGO focused on conserving Heritage. We feel that as Heritage becomes economically relevant, people will look after it.

This means increasing tourism to Heritage sites and cities. This will only happen if the places are properly conserved and maintained. As tourists increase, state and large business revenues will of course increase, and so will employment and business opportunities for locals. This should then make the locals care for their Heritage as well.

Today tourists are often treated to stark displays of monuments with either no explanations or with plaques which focus only on specialist architectural details or dry historical facts. We believe tourists want to connect authentically with the lives lived in the places they visit, not be bombarded with abstruse architectural jargon and listing of historical dates.

TASI therefore focuses through research, oral documentation and archival material on the 'Story' in the word History, attempting to weave historical and folk narratives into the display of monuments and temples. This research also helps us persuade the guardians of Heritage to restore it authentically.



Painting Laxmi Temple

This is what we are trying to do in Orchha. Orchha is beautiful but it is crumbling in many areas out of simple developmental pressures allied with apathy. Tourist infrastructure is sub optimal. Tourists wander through Heritage with no way of linking the riches they are seeing into a coherent narrative.

With the MP Tourist Board we are currently neck deep in tracing the fascinating story of the Bundela dynasty and through restoration, conservation, and narrative-building. We hope at some stage in the future to bring to the world stage a part of India which deserves to be internationally as famous as Angkor Vat, Chiang Mai or Dubrovnik.



Laxmi Mandir

HOW GREEN IS OUR COLONY!

Every month we try to show you a facet of Vasant Vihar that you may have seen but not noticed! This month we are focusing on our parks. We have so many beautiful places where we can go for a walk or just sit and enjoy the greenery and the people who gather here. We thank our very talented photographer Shivraj Pershad for constantly delighting us with a new look at old scenes. If you have any special pictures of Vasant Vihar do share them with us. If published, we promise to give you credit for it !!



HOW GREEN

contd...



E Block and Dog Park



F Block Park

THE BUZZ AROUND VASANT VIHAR

October Edition

As the festive season draws near, we put aside the tough years we have spent recently and turn our minds towards celebrating together and praying for happier times ahead.

Independence Day:

The National Flag was hoisted at the Vasant Vihar Club by Gen. Prasad, President of the Club, on Independence Day, following the tradition of many years. As always many people attended the function and joined in the ceremony. We salute our flag as always, and pray for prosperity and happiness for all our citizens.



Janamashtami:

In recent years the Society has held excellent dance and music programs to celebrate Janamashtami at the Kalyan Kendra. Many people join to listen to the discourses and the bhajan. This year was no exception. There was a musical presentation by Praketa Luthra and her group from Atam Mandir, in Shanti Niketan. Once again the prayer pandal was decorated beautifully, the vibes and atmosphere were full of religious fervour and joy. Kudos to the Society Team for the excellent arrangements.

Barricading on the main streets at night:

In a major move towards making our colony safer for the resident's, the four main entrances to Vasant Vihar are being barricaded from 11 pm till 5 am. This are Poorvi Marg, Paschimi Marg, Vasant Marg, Munirka Marg and the C1 entrance. In the month of September only the Poorvi Marg will be manned and opened for cars and two-wheelers. Next month this entrance will be closed and the next street will be opened and manned by the Delhi Traffic Police. It is a great step towards controlling and noting down the entry and exit of cars at night.



DC Ankita Chakravarti's visit to the Kalyan Kendra:

Our DC Ms. Ankita came with her team to discuss the issues that Vasant Vihar faces. She has always impressed us with her knowledge of the problems and the solutions which are possible and can be implemented. We spoke about the encroachments and the cow menace. The issue of the JJ Clusters around our colony was also discussed.

THE BUZZ

contd...

Laurels for Vasant Vihar Residents:

We are very proud of our two residents won prestigious awards in different categories!

Laurels for VV - Shirin Sabharwal wins the Jury Choice Award for the best Home Chef (non-veg) at the Big F Awards held in Gurugram. The jury consisted of stalwarts from the hospitality industry! She started her Dine Divine Brand in 2016 and has since then made a name for herself as an amazing Chef specialising in Continental Cuisine.



Arshya Gaur – wins the Hindustan Times “30 under 30” award in the Literature section.

This is an award whereby HT honours the best talents under 30 in various categories. Arshya, daughter of Sachin and Parul Gaur has already published a book of poems. She has just recently joined Stanford University for her undergraduate studies.

Vasant Vihar in the news.

We found ourselves being featured in the news!

In a well known Blog about Delhi, Delhiwale, there was a lovely article on the over 50 embassies in Vasant Vihar. The article highlighted the fact that even on a small street in C Block there were 6 embassies. We always knew we were privileged and loved our colony, but it was good to read about it in the papers. Have you walked around your streets and counted how many expats and embassies there are around you? Just shows that we are not the only ones who think this is a great place to live in!



OUR LIVING GEM - MAHARAJA KRISHNA RASGOTRA

By Maj Gen (Retd) S P Murgai, AVSM



Gems never lose their shine. At 98, Maharaja Krishna Rasgotra, is as active and alert as he has always been. At 92, he chose to write his memoirs -**A Life in Diplomacy**, peppered with anecdotes from the early days of independent India and its diplomatic corps. The book remains one of the best autobiographies by any Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer since 1947.

Mr. Rasgotra is a resident of 10, Poorvi Marg and is one of the most revered and respected members of the Vasant Vihar fraternity. He hails from a Dogra-Brahmin family from Shakargarh, Jammu and Kashmir. After completing his MA in English from Punjab University he moved to SD College for Women, Sialkot and thereafter to Arya College, Ludhiana as head of the English department.

He joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1949. IFS even then was very prestigious, attracting the best and brightest. Recruitment never exceeded more than 10 candidates annually in the initial years. In his career spanning over four decades his assignments took him to Nepal, Britain, and France, among other countries, as well as twice to the United States.



He also spent four years with our Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, from 1958 to 1962. As first secretary, he made a mark in the Trusteeship Council and the 1st and 4th Committees which dealt, respectively, with the tricky subjects of conventional and nuclear disarmament and liberation of colonies.



When asked: **“what has been the biggest change in your life, from being a foreign secretary then and now?”**, he replied:

“Those days were different. The salaries were low, but the responsibility was high. Today, the foreign secretary is paid much more than I was ever paid. When I retired, my salary was merely Rs 5,000 per month. How I managed, I don’t like to think about that. Now the Foreign Secretary is paid approximately Rs 2 lakh or more per month.”

“However, today I am more peaceful and relaxed, and spend my time in meditation and spirituality,” he added. Shri Rasgotra remains one of the oldest living, outstanding former foreign secretaries and he is also a recipient of the Padma Bhushan in recognition of his meritorious service spanning over four decades.

On September 11, 2022, Rasgotraji celebrated his 98 th birthday with his family and close friends. We wish him continued good health and look forward to sharing many more his memories in the years ahead.

SHRAVANI PARVA CELEBRATIONS AT ARYA SAMAJ VASANT VIHAR

By Saklendra Sikka



Shravani Parva, which was earlier celebrated annually by Arya Samaj, Vasant Vihar, was celebrated this year from August 25th till 27th with great enthusiasm and joy, after a lapse of two years, due to the lockdown and pandemic.

The word 'shravani' refers to the month of Shravan of the Hindu calendar and 'shravan' means to hear, to listen. In the bygone times, people would collect and sing the praises the Almighty and listen to religious discourses. Thus began the tradition of celebrating the Shravani Parva, devoting the month of Shravana to satsang and to listening to the ancient wisdom of our sages. Keeping up with this tradition, the present committee of the Arya Samaj planned and organised various activities, aiming to

encourage the self- study of the Vedas and to attempt to bring the principles of the Vedic way of life in our society.

The three-day programme included yagnas, bhajan sessions, as well as spiritual discourses. Every day in the morning from 9am to 10 am, havan was conducted by the revered Acharya of the Samaj, Pandit Kamal ji, with the chanting of mantras from the Vedas. Poorna Ahuti, or the conclusion of the havan was done on the 27th. There was a packed house during all these functions.

Bhajans and spiritual discourses were held in the evenings from 6 pm to 8 pm. Shri Ankit Shastri sang bhajans on the 25th, and on the 26th members of the Samaj and a couple of teachers from DAV school presented meaningful bhajans in their melodious voices.

The committee had invited a renowned, erudite scholar - Dr Vageesh ji to guide everyone by his powerful spiritual discourses. He is a very impactful orator, who influences and inspires the audience through well-chosen words, anecdotes, and examples. On the 25th he spoke about whether God takes avatars in the world and on the 26th his thrust was on the topic of man and machines. He encouraged the listeners to strive to inculcate godly qualities in their hearts and not to forget to be good human beings in the race for material progress. On the penultimate day he stressed on the need for us to walk on the path of truth with fortitude and courage.

On the final day after the Poorna Ahuti of the havan, a surprise cultural program was presented the little children of the Anand Swami School. Their message of the significance of festivals such as Shravani Puja, Rakhi, and Independence Day was brought home through a musical dance drama that was peppered with wit and humour.

The Chief Guest for Shravana Parva was Padmashree Dr Poonam Suri ji. In his address he emphasised the importance of inculcating moral values in children and reiterated that thoughts have a great power to influence our behaviour and actions. It is therefore essential that right thoughts be imbibed by the students. He mentioned that the DAV Schools were trying to bring this about through the syllabi of all subjects at every level.



The celebrations came to a close with Rishi Langar, in which all present had delicious Prasad.

REACHING OUT

(Under the auspices of Dr. Gautam Vohra)

By Madhu Agarwal



DRAG, or to give it its full name **Development Research and Action Group**, was established in Maharashtra in 1988, and currently has three projects in our vicinity, which consist of a primary school for the deprived and a women's centre in West Delhi, and an organic farm in Haryana.

Based in Mohan Garden, the school and women's centre, are a boon for the many migrant workers in that area. The barren land which was purchased in 1998, today hosts trees and school buildings. There is electricity and water, but the roads are impossible to tackle during the rainy season, due to potholes and uneven pathways.

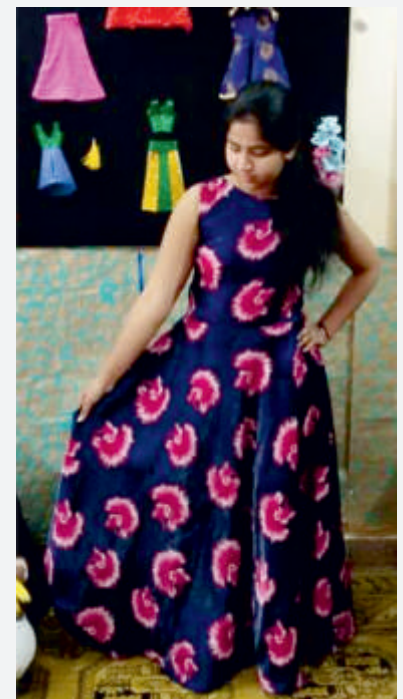
However, even in these circumstances, we have a 3-storied building which hosts classes at the primary level, vocational training, and tuition classes. Skills such as computer usage, tailoring, and stitching are imparted here. The children are given tuitions in Maths and English and are prepared for mainstream education.

Besides traditional education, DRAG has always believed in extra-curricular and innovative activities. Under the guidance of Patricia Montalto, the children, using kitchen utensils as musical instruments and wearing chef hats, presented a musical show. On another occasion, they recited the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling and performed it in a competition held at the BASS school, at Tickli Bottom, Haryana.

Tarshito, a well-known Italian painter, visited our school three years ago and demonstrated that strength lies in unity through illustrations, such as getting all present to dip their hands in different colour paints and then stamp them on canvas sheets, to say "we are all one". He also did quick evocative sketches to inspire the children to be spontaneous.

There were many such visitors : Japanese, Americans, Germans, British.... Each one brought his/her inputs in order to inspire the children and open their minds to new cultures and new methods.

Under the Scholarship Scheme, DRAG gives scholarships to deserving children from financially stressed families for the child to continue education in a mainstream school of his/her choice. Today, from the 11 children who first received scholarships in 2016-17, in 2021 we have 34 children benefiting from this scheme.



The Women's Centre, also in the Mohan Garden area, caters mainly to young girls and women. It provides vocational training, increasing their skills in sewing, stitching, beauty culture, mehndi, etc. so that they can supplement their finances, either by doing work at home or getting jobs in local beauty parlour.

Of course, let us not forget that they are trained in computer skills, Maths and English during the vacations of the school.

A few years ago some novel concepts were introduced by Patricia Montalto, our volunteer from Switzerland. One was pleated dresses a la Fortuny, a master craftsman who was a Spanish textile (and other arts) designer. Paper and other materials were used by the women to create dresses, which were then enhanced with other decorations.

Then came dresses which were made using disposable items. This activity taught all of us how to make maximum use of disposable items. Hence dresses were made and decorated with paper plates, glasses, plastic forks and knives. Despite it being a new venture for them, as with the Fortuny dresses, the women adapted quickly and became experts.

As is evident, we train women and children in various skills so that they learn to be independent and self sustaining.

LADIES CLUB VASANT VIHAR



The monthly meeting of August was pure entertainment. A film show was organised for the members. Ladies enjoyed watching the film "Sharmaji Namkeen" which was the late actor Rishi Kapoor's last movie. To get a total movie going experience the member's were served chips, soft drinks, homemade burgers and ice creams etc. which was highly appreciated.



Before the screening of the movie the members celebrated the 75th year of India's independence. A cake was cut and all of us sang patriotic songs and the national anthem.

For the **September meeting** we had invited **Dr. Ravinder Agneesh** for a talk. Dr. Agneesh is a retired government officer. Earlie, he belonged to a family of Vaid's & Astrologers from Hoshiarpur Punjab and has been a student of nature and astrology since childhood. His talk was very interesting and knowledgeable and he had the ladies in splits with his comic antidotes. The interactive session was enjoyed by the ladies and they all requested to him to come again for a session. The meeting ended with delicious home cooked food by the "E" Block members.

Members can look forward to 12th October, when Ladies Club along with Vasant Vihar Club will organise Pre Karva Chauth celebrations at the club premises. All are welcome to enjoy the festivities with Mehndi Artistes Churiwalas, Dry Fruits, Chaats etc.

FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome back dear friends!

Since the last issue was for two months, we missed talking and interacting with you. Now that the festive season is in full swing, our cover page features different places of worship in Vasant Vihar. We hope to feature some of them individually in subsequent issues.

We invite our members and readers to please send us articles written by them, or suggestions about what they would like to read in our Journal.

As always we try to cover a variety of subjects. We are sure you will have enjoyed **Anita Mani's** article about the various birds which come to visit us, and **Lalita Phadkar's** article about her project to restore the monuments at Orchha in Madhya Pradesh

Enjoy the mithai and the gifts and the season of joy and happiness this month.

Do remember the many people around us who are alone, or cannot afford to join in the festivities and let's share some of our joy and goodies with them. Bring a smile to someone's face and your celebrations become even more special!

Regards
Milly Murgai
Editor - aVWAZ

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