

LSS NEWSLETTER



Welcome back to our LSS Newsletter! In this edition, we are covering the unforgettable experiences our students have had whilst watching an **Indian Premier League Match** and participating in a **football match** with another NGO. We have also highlighted the impactful work of our **Family Development Project** and included a new section, "**Volunteer's Spotlight**". Don't miss the chance to win a prize from our "**Trivia Corner**" too!



IPL CRICKET MATCH

Cricket is in the heart of a lot of Indians and IPL is the pinnacle of the season. When we received the invitation to the match, it was too good to be true. We would be taking 70 of our children to the stadium!



Having formed a new partnership with **Nam Myoho Daan** Foundation back in March, who now provide weekly yoga classes to our tutorial students, they offered tickets to our children for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. These tickets gave our students a chance to attend an **IPL Match at the Wankhede Stadium** where Mumbai Indians played Punjab Kings. In the weeks leading up to the match, the students were filled with excitement, and on the day of the event, the Bainganwadi Education Center buzzed with a contagious sense of exhilaration. A bus was organised for the pick-up from Baiganwadi and drop-off to the stadium, where the fun began!



The atmosphere was unforgettable, and the students were amazed by the energetic fans who filled the stadium. The final score was 214-8 to 201-6 with Punjab Kings winning the match. Regardless of this, the children found pure joy in the simple pleasures of drinking the iced tea and eating the burgers and snacks provided. Their happiness was not dependent on the outcome, and they savoured every moment. We would like to say a great big thank you to Nam Myoho Daan Foundation.

FOOTBALL MATCH AT KALINA



April gave our Baiganwadi students a chance to use the abilities acquired from our Youth Leadership Programme, in a different setting. As part of the Santa Cruz 'Megha Festival', our students were invited to participate in (5 aside) football matches held at Talai Ground, Kalina. Their opponents were players from the Pancham Academies which created an opportunity for the students to practise their skills and sportsmanship in a new environment, with students from a different part of Mumbai. It was particularly encouraging to see the strong representation of girls in the teams, where female participation was



previously difficult to maintain, due to norms in the area. Our **Youth Leadership Program** includes daily football training but also has an academic element as well as focusing on the importance of service to the community. We are always eager to welcome new volunteers to help out with the football and educational activities so do get in touch with us if you are interested!

SUMMER CAMP WITH ART & DRAMA

The Summer Camp 2023 was a new journey for LSS. Previously, we have organised various summer activities, predominantly centred around art and craft, to keep our students actively involved and entertained throughout their summer break. This year, however, the camp took a new turn. Professional teachers were invited to hold two workshops: art & craft and dance. As well as this, a group of volunteers from different colleges in Mumbai, which Jerissa Thomas headed, conducted a speech and drama workshop. Finally, the photography workshop, designed to attract the youth from the community, was taken by Fr Mateus, Azad and Manish Singh, a professional photographer.



The children were super excited, running from one activity to another. It was beautiful to see them talking about their dreams and aspirations, in a speech and drama exercise, and learning new words as they practised the English play. Dancing, painting, drawing or taking pictures, this year's summer camp was a lot of fun for the children, teachers and the volunteers.



Hearing from the students themselves:

Rakesh Nikam

"I am studying in 9th Std. and this was my first time in a workshop of photography, videography and editing. I liked this activity as I learnt how to take nice photos and videos and how to do editing of photos and videos. The workshop gave me more and more new ideas of my own."

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

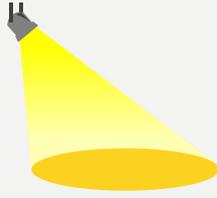


In May we wanted to highlight the work of our Family Development Project through the stories of support and empowerment it provides, not only for the families but for our staff too. **Chandrabhaga** has been working with LSS for five years, having had some experience already working with NGOs. She talked to us about the confidence LSS has given her and the way it has helped her to overcome the shyness she once faced, which she feels came from being raised in a village environment, completely different to the bustling life of Mumbai.

She lived in a joint family environment and even had difficulty talking to her husband's family. Working in the Family Development Project helped her to recognise the value of equal communication and eventually gave her the confidence to stand up and request to change her living situation. She now lives with only her husband and children and is very happy with her life.

From the families being worked with, we spoke to one particular family member, **Asha**. She had the support and assistance of our social worker, Amina. She told us the story of her husband's inability to walk due to a fall that had happened. Amina regularly brought medicines for her husband during this time and additionally called an ambulance for him to go to Bandra Hospital when he became seriously ill. Amina's regular support also came in the form of her assistance with Asha's pension whereby she collected the required documents and processed the pension, which she now receives. Not only this but Asha has appreciated the emotional support that she has received after her husband's passing.

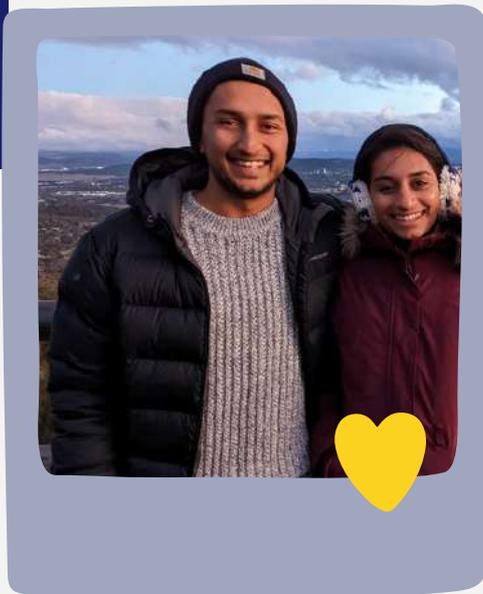
The Family Development Project provides support in a variety of shapes and techniques, which can often transform the lives of these families. The guidance and the direction given aims to empower people to shape and improve their own lives in the long term.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

We are excited to introduce the new Volunteer Spotlight section, which will be a recurring feature in every newsletter. Here we will showcase the incredible efforts and achievements of our volunteers. This month we would like to introduce you to three particular volunteers that we think you should know about.

The map will plot the various places where the volunteers featured each month hail from. This will help you to understand the value of our volunteers through the local and international knowledge and expertise they undoubtedly bring.



Rita and Arvind gave up six weeks of their time to volunteer with us in our Baiganwadi tutorial centre. Here they taught a variety of subjects to the children from 9 am to 5 pm every day. Although they were both raised in Australia, Rita is from a Fijian Hindi-speaking Indian background and Arvind's family is originally from Mumbai and hence, speaks Marathi. Here's what they told us when we asked them about their experience!



Names: Rita and Arvind

Volunteered: November - December 2022

Hometown: Melbourne, Australia

Occupations: Water Engineer and Finance Manager

Source of Inspiration: We had been looking for a volunteering opportunity with an organisation where we could make a meaningful contribution and build a long-lasting relationship. Both of us have a strong connection to India with our ancestral roots, Mumbai being Arvind's birthplace and Rita having lived and worked in Pune for 6 months. After our first meeting with LSS, we immediately felt that volunteering for them was going to be a fulfilling experience.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteer Experience Highlights:

During Christmas, we were asked to help a few students write a letter with a list of wishes for the new year for themselves, their family, their school and their community. We were extremely moved by the responses from the children who showed a strong desire to personally drive change and motivate others to help their community for the better.

Some of the other best moments were the laughter and banter in the classroom amongst the students and with the teachers. During our daily interactions with the students, there were countless little moments that we continue to cherish.

Difficulties faced:

Naturally, such an experience had difficult moments. The ways of teaching and learning in schools in India are very different to what we have experienced throughout our own education. The teachers at LSS helped us to understand these differences and supported us in bringing our new ideas to the classroom. There were some days when we felt like our academic teaching was not effective but upon reflection, we realised building rapport with the students and sharing stories was just as important to their learning and development.

Takeaways from the Experience:

Our volunteering experience has already made a significant difference in our lives and we are excited about providing our continued support to LSS. We met incredible people at LSS and are grateful to them for making us feel so welcome. Their kindness towards each other and resilience push us to be better versions of ourselves, to take action and do what we can to help vulnerable communities.





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Jerissa has been volunteering with us since January, helping out regularly in our Youth Leadership Programme. In May she played a major role in our Summer Camp, co-ordinating all our volunteers that were helping and conducting workshops. Jerissa is originally from Kerala in South India. This is what she told us about her time with us so far...



Name: Jerissa

Hometown: Mumbai

Volunteered: January - Present

Occupation / Studying: Postgraduate in Life Sciences (Neurobiology)

Source of Inspiration: I was working as a research assistant in Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, one of the most reliable cancer treatment and research centres in the country. I was on a break from my work life in order to pursue my higher studies. That's when I happened to come across Lok Seva Sangam through Mateus and was really happy about the work that they do for the underprivileged. Initially, when I came to the Baiganwadi centre with Fr. Mateus I had the opportunity to witness many different walks of life. I was taken in on a side of poverty I've never before seen, and on a very intimate level.





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Highlights: It was an amazing experience for me to interact with the children. I've always gotten along with children harmoniously, so the volunteering job was a perfect match. They were all very enthusiastic and eager to learn irrespective of their family background and difficult life situations. Through the volunteering experience, I met some amazing other volunteers and teachers doing their best for these children.



Difficulties faced: When I started teaching I was doubtful of my teaching skills as this was the first time I was educating a class of 20 but the response from my students on asking subject-related questions to them boosted my confidence as well and I was happy that they understood whatever was being taught to them in class.

Takeaways from the Experience: Volunteering at Lok Seva Sangam is one of the best decisions I could have made. Working with children helped me to develop patience, empathy and compassion. Though this volunteering experience helped me to give back to the community, I honestly feel the community just gave more to me. I would recommend everyone to get out there in your community and get involved. You never know the impact you can make in others' lives and also where it will take you.



Without our volunteers, we would be at a great loss as they have provided us with invaluable support and dedication. We want to say a great big thank you to all of our volunteers for the hard work you have put in and the difference you have undoubtedly made in others' lives.



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TRIVIA CORNER

For a chance to feature in next month's newsletter and win a prize, answer the following question:

What are the key initiatives Lok Seva Sangam focuses on and in which states of India do we work on these?

The names of those people with correct answers will be included in the prize draw.

Answers should be emailed to:
contact@loksevasangam.org.in.

