

VIEW POINT

*The Retreat - Don Bosco
Yercaud*



VOL. 6 NO. 3



View Point, the e-magazine, showcases a comprehensive report on the various social interactions and activities carried out by the SPS India Foundation and its sister Organization, Shevaroyhills Tribal Development Institute (STDI), at the Retreat Don Bosco in Yercaud.

A HEART TO IMITATE: ORATORY YOUNGSTERS REACH OUT TO THE POOR BOYS

As part of the reach-out programme, the youngsters of Thepakadu went on a Social Awareness trip to Don Bosco Anbu Illam, Namakal. This was scheduled on 16th July 2023. This whole event was solely organized by the youngsters themselves. Out of their own interest for the welfare of the poor children, they voluntarily took this initiative. On 16th July around 12.00 p.m., the youngsters reached the destination place and were accompanied by two young Salesians who were responsible for the oratory; they had lunch with the boys and had a fun-filled game with them. The youngsters were very happy and deeply contented with the welfare of the poor boys.

Moreover, the youngsters voluntarily collected a sum of Rs.15,000/- and donated as a token of their love for the boys and for the purpose of their studies. The oratory youngsters made a great impact and also were impacted by the boys.

However, this would have not been possible without the help and guidance of the Retreat community; hence the youngsters extended their warm gratitude to all the members of the Retreat community. At last, this event was inspiring and learning for the youngsters to care for the poor and needy.



BLOOD DONATION CAMP

“Blood donation is not just a gift of blood, but a gift of life.”

SPS India Foundation of the Retreat Don Bosco in collaboration with the Primary Health Centres (PHC) and other well-wishers organized a life-changing blood donation camp on 23.07.2023 at St. Joseph Primary School, Yercaud, empowering the community to make an important impact on healthcare. Volunteers and medical professionals collaborated to ensure a successful event. The camp attracted about 117 passionate donors from all walks of life, contributing to the urgent demand for blood. It created a sense of collective responsibility among the people.

The event raised a culture of humanity and kindness, ensuring the foundation’s commitment to serving humanity. Lives were saved, and hope restored, as the community came together to make a difference.



SSGY FETE 2023

Every year, Yercaud's various religious institutions collaborate to host a festival with the common goal of raising funds to support the SSGY trust to ensure its continued operation and sustainability of the old age Home which is serving abandoned, destitute poor old people neglected by society. This year the board members organized the SSGY fete on the theme: "God Blesses a Cheerful Giver." The "SSGY fete 2023" took place on the 6th of August 2023, in The Retreat – Don Bosco campus. In order to generate money for the SSGY, our community set up five booths: a music booth, an auction and cake booth, a chocolate booth, an instant photo booth, and a restaurant booth. For the five separate stalls, the student brothers of philosophy from Jnanodaya Salesian Institute were split up into five different groups. The preparation of a month-long process resulted in producing an extremely successful outcome.



MARIAN MONTH AND INDEPENDENCE DAY FOR THE SOTCHO BOYS

Mother Mary stands as the best model and the sure path to a virtuous life. To inculcate in the boys the moral and spiritual life of Mary, the SOTCHO boys were animated and given opportunities to know, study, and imitate Her, the mother of Jesus, for about a month. “To Grow as Good Children of Mary”, was the theme of the Marian month. The inauguration of Marian Month was held on the 18th of July and lasted for about a month. It was concluded on the 14th of August. This one-month preparation was also aimed at preparing the boys to celebrate Independence Day with enthusiasm and with a fuller knowledge of our Freedom Fighters. At the very outset, the boys were divided into four teams. Several competitions, like, drawing, poem-writing, singing, and quizzes on Mother Mary have been held. In a special way, quizzes on the Indian Nation, its wealth and progress, effective leaders, etc., were given to the boys, so that they enhanced their knowledge. Finally, a Marian morning was conducted on the 13th of August, where the boys participated with full enthusiasm and vigor. Dedicating a month to Mary to know her and study her is a great prospect for boys of other religions to spread inspiration so that they may imitate her values.



EXPERIENCE OF PETER & JANA (FRIENDS FROM THE NETHERLANDS) @ SPS

Peter & and I visited and stayed at SPS India Foundation of the Retreat – Don Bosco for two weeks of Voluntary Work. We stayed from the 5th to the 17th of August at the Retreat – Hospitium. We felt very much welcomed and were wholeheartedly supported in our voluntary work, which consisted of teaching English at Anbu Illam. We felt privileged to take part in the SSGY fete, enjoyed a Tamil Play by the brothers, and were fascinated by the friendliness of all the people we met. The community and the Trust at the Retreat are very dedicated to supporting the local people in many areas and working closely with other local organizations. Some of the social work in this field includes medical camps, female empowerment, and plant nursery training. Both the brothers and the fathers were always open to help us in every way possible and we felt very much at home here in this wonderful place.



EYE CAMP

A joint effort of the SPS India Foundation, DFT, Annapurna Medical College and Hospital, and the Rotary Club of Yercaud brought out a successful event that carried essential eye care services to the Tribal People of Yercaud. This outreach eye camp was successfully organized for the Tribal People in Yercaud at the Government Higher Secondary School on the 13th of August. The camp was held from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

This camp saw the participation of approximately 80 individuals from the Tribal community. Among them, 12 individuals were identified for further medical attention and were subsequently transported to the hospital for free cataract surgery. The beneficiaries of the camp expressed their profound appreciation for this valuable intervention, underscoring how it had positively impacted their lives. Furthermore, the spirit of collaboration and compassion left a lasting impression of care and support within the tribal communities.



A PEACE RALLY FOR MANIPUR

We all take pride in saying that unity is the strength of India; yet, it's been a couple of months since the inhuman violence and unspeakable injustice have been done to the people of Manipur, especially to the Kuki tribal community. To manifest our support and aid for the victims of Manipur, and to show our "solidarity." The religious and people of Yercaud beyond religion and caste – organized a "Peace Rally" on the 20th of August under the theme of 'Let Peace Reign in Manipur,' a resounding call for tranquillity echoed during the rally in Yercaud.

This unity to stand for innocent lives brought together approximately 600 individuals of different age groups – each committed to the cause of peace. Among the participants were dedicated members of the SPS India Foundation from the Retreat Don Bosco, who stood in solidarity with those experiencing hardship. The SPS India Foundation and the Salesians of the Retreat Don Bosco, feel proud for making such a great impact on the youngsters of Yercaud who expressed enthusiasm in raising their voices for the common good and selflessly committing themselves to unity and peace.



MEGA MEDICAL CAMP

A Mega Medical Camp, with a collaborative effort, was orchestrated by the SPS India Foundation in partnership with the Desai Foundation Trust (DFT), along with the valued collaboration of Anna Poorna Hospital, Salem, and the Primary Health Centres of Vazhavanthi, Nagalur, and Yercaud. It was organized on the 20th of August 2023. This medical camp that took place at the Government High School, Nagalur, Yercaud, Salem District, aimed at aiding tribal communities in and around Nagalur.

A holistic range of fundamental health assessments, such as general body check-ups, dental care, and eye examinations to paediatrics, dermatology, surgery, gynecology, tuberculosis screening, x-ray diagnostics, and even consultations with Siddha doctors was meticulously administered to all the beneficiaries, addressing their diverse medical needs. This tireless effort resulted in the attendance of 305 beneficiaries, all of whom received guidance and advice regarding their health.

In a collective display of dedication, volunteers hailing from PHC, DFT, and SPS, as well as interns from Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, worked collaboratively to ensure the event's efficient organization and execution. This medical camp can be a sign of collaboration and shared concern for the betterment of marginalized communities.



PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The personality development program aimed at enhancing students' personal and interpersonal skills, was conducted on the 25th of August 2023 at St. Joseph Boys' Higher Secondary School and Nazareth Girls' Higher Secondary School, Yercaud, Salem, on the theme: "What we think, we become". This valuable program reached out to nearly 900 students and provided them with lots of methods for their personality development. The program covered important areas such as communication skills, leadership, time management, and emotional intelligence. It provided students with techniques to build self-confidence, to improve their communication abilities, and to develop a positive attitude towards challenges.



The SPS India Foundation, along with the Desai Foundation Trust and Retreat Salesians, feels proud for making such a great impact on the school students who expressed enthusiasm for applying the newly acquired skills in their academic and personal lives.



CAREER GUIDANCE

A Career Guidance Program was conducted at St. Joseph Boys' Higher Secondary School and Nazareth girl's Higher Secondary School, Yercaud, Salem, on August 25th. This event was organized by the SPS India Foundation in collaboration with the Desai India Foundation Trust, which brought about a resounding success. The program which was centred on the theme: "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door", was aimed to empower students with valuable insights and resources to make themselves informed of their career choices. The students interacted with the counsellors and the organizing team who shared their experiences and knowledge. In order to ensure the active collaboration of the students, the workshops on various career paths, skill development, and goal setting were also conducted. The assurance of students gaining clarity about their career aspirations and the steps needed to achieve them was a clear sign that the program was highly effective and successful. Almost every student expressed his or her gratitude for the guidance they received, and several discovered new interests and potential career paths.



BAL HEALTH MELA

A Career Guidance Program was conducted at St. Joseph Boys' Higher Secondary School and Nazareth girl's Higher Secondary School, Yercaud, Salem, on August 25th. This event was organized by the SPS India Foundation in collaboration with the Desai India Foundation Trust, which brought about a resounding success. The program which was centered on the theme: "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door", was aimed to empower students with valuable insights and resources to make themselves informed of their career choices. The students interacted with the counselors and the organizing team who shared their experiences and knowledge. To ensure the active collaboration of the students, the workshops on various career paths, skill development, and goal setting were also conducted. The assurance of students gaining clarity about their career aspirations and the steps needed to achieve them was a clear sign that the program was highly effective and successful. Almost every student expressed his or her gratitude for the guidance they received, and several discovered new interests and potential career paths.



EXPERIENCE OF INTERNS @ SPS INDIA FOUNDATION

MR. MATHEW

This past month has been a transformative journey as I embarked on a new chapter of my life with the SPS India Foundation. Joining this organization has not only given me an incredible sense of purpose but has also been a profound learning experience.

Week 1: Welcoming and Orientation

My journey began with a warm welcome from the SPS India Foundation team. The first week was primarily focused on orientation, where I learned about the organization's mission, values, and various ongoing programs. The commitment of the team to empower underprivileged communities was truly inspiring.

Week 2: Connecting with Communities

During the second week, I had the privilege of visiting some of the communities the foundation serves. These experiences were eye-opening and humbling. Meeting the people whose lives were positively impacted by our work was a heartwarming experience. It reinforced the importance of our mission and motivated me to contribute my best.

Week 3: Diving into Programs

In the third week, I started to engage in ongoing programs actively. Working with a passionate and dedicated team was invigorating. Each program and camp had a unique set of challenges and opportunities, from education initiatives to healthcare programs. I found myself learning something new every day and was constantly motivated to make a difference.

Week 4: Impact and Reflection

As the month neared its end, I had the opportunity to witness the real impact of our work. Seeing children access quality education, families receive essential healthcare services, and communities thrive filled me with a profound sense of fulfilment. I also had the chance to interact with the beneficiaries.



EXPERIENCE OF INTERNS @ SPS INDIA FOUNDATION

MR. VEERAMANI

During my one-month internship at SPS India Foundation, I had the invaluable opportunity to work with Retreat Don Bosco Yercaud. It was a dynamic and impactful work environment that left an indelible mark on my professional growth. Fr. Selvakumar was an exceptional mentor, always available to provide guidance, and he actively contributed to various projects aimed at empowering underprivileged communities through education and skill development initiatives, support, and valuable insights.



I collaborated closely with a passionate and dedicated organization to work on the “weekly program” and other projects. This allowed me to enhance my communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. My responsibilities included conducting programs, assisting in program planning and execution, and engaging directly with beneficiaries.

This deepened my understanding of the challenges they face and the positive change that can be achieved through concerted efforts. It was inspiring to see tribal village people and school students positively collaborate with programs.

I also participated in a medical camp and other programs aimed at providing help to tribal peoples, education of students, and support to poor children. This was an eye-opening experience as I had the opportunity to engage with individuals in need actively. I assisted in their daily routines and provided emotional support. Fr. Selvakumar’s guidance was instrumental in navigating the challenges of this work, and his constant encouragement fostered an environment of compassion and understanding.

Overall, my internship at SPS was a truly rewarding experience. I had the freedom to contribute to meaningful projects in the tribal village, and the support provided by Fr. Selvakumar was immense. This experience has not only bolstered my academic knowledge but has also ignited a profound sense of purpose, motivating me to pursue a career dedicated to social impact. My time at the SPS India Foundation has been transformative, shaping me into a more compassionate, resourceful, and socially conscious individual, and I am immensely grateful for this enriching opportunity.