



A unit of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham Charitable Trust



Activity Report: 2016 - 2017

#10/23, Sharada, Thiruvengadam
Street, R. A. Puram, Chennai 600 028
India

V-Excel Educational Trust

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Significant Events

Café Samarth - The centre has in the past been training special persons in cooking, but this is the first time they have started such an outlet. Nina Reddy, Managing Director of Savera Hotels, presided over the launch and presented aprons and chef hats to the 15-member team that will be taking charge of the café.



Recognition – V-Excel has qualified for the "Advanced Level- GuideStar India Gold" award. This certifies our transparency until the end of 2016. GuideStar India launched the GuideStar India NGO Transparency Awards to recognise organisations that practise and voluntarily demonstrate their transparency and accountability in the public domain. In a ceremony on September 27, at Mumbai, V-Excel was one of the 65 organisations invited to participate in the GuideStar India Transparency Awards. We were recognised for winning the GuideStar India Advanced Level- Gold Certification Award.

Inauguration - The Printing and Documentation Initiative was inaugurated at our centre in Mylapore in July 2016. This initiative has been made possible by **Hexaware Technologies Ltd.**, as part of their CSR programs, and is aimed at enhancing V-Excel's vocational programs.





Wipro Cares - V-Excel has been working with Wipro Cares in implementing the Neev Intervention Program (NIP). This program is targeted at 2-10 year old children who come from underprivileged backgrounds, and are 'at risk' or have developmental delays/disabilities and provides resources and support to assist them in maximizing their child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

Collaboration - Sparsh, V-Excel's Counselling and Assessment unit started a centre in partnership with **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan** this month. It is a centre for counselling and parent resource where workshops will be conducted for parents and others on various topics. It will also offer free services for Geriatric population.

V-Excel has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with Annamalai University** to offer distance education Diploma Programs in Inclusive Education, Vocational Training and a Post-graduate Diploma in Multiple Disabilities. The MoU was signed by Dr. Vasudha Prakash of V-Excel and Prof. Dr. S. Manian, Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University.

Launch of NIOS - V-Excel is proud to announce the launch of NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) program at Bridges Learning Academy which is open to all students. Adopting a progressive and integrated approach, Bridges Learning Academy offers a holistic program that will respect the pace of the children while helping them meet social norms.

New Vocation - Launch of the Sanitary Napkin Project (SNP) was cause for excitement. The project was launched on 20th October, and inaugurated by Mr. Ranganath, MD of Grundfos Pumps India, who are the sponsors of the project.



Solar Lamp Assembly has been introduced from February and six trainees are getting trained in this.

Paper Presentation - Two of our papers were accepted for presentations at conferences. 'The Critical Role of the Early Childhood Educator', authored by Gita Bhalla was accepted at the

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National Conference on Current Educational Perspectives in Jodhpur. A second paper titled, 'Controlled Sensory Integration Therapy for the Development of Verbal Communication in Young Children with Autism (2 – 6 years)', authored by Lalitha Sridhar, was accepted by the Scientific Committee at the Autism around the World Conference 2016, in Dubai

Gita Bhalla presented a paper called '**Guardian of the Light**' at an International conference held in Bangalore in November on "Early Childhood Care and Development" by the Azim Premji University on the attributes of an early childhood educator.



Media Interactions - Dr. Vasudha Prakash was interviewed on Doordarshan Podhigai on October 18 in a live program called "Hello Ungaludan" . Viewers called in their questions. This interview was to focus on creating awareness on autism and early childhood. Dr. Vasudha was also on a live program on RAJ NEWS on October 20, taking questions about mental health issues and counselling.

Blue Blue Sky Choir - On Dec. 21st a performance at M O P Vaishnav college was very much appreciated and left quite a few college girls in tears.

On Feb 12th , the Choir performed at Institute of Hotel Management during their Alumni meeting. Some songs were related to food too and the students of the Institute enjoyed and appreciated the children singing.



Tarang - After a brief hiatus, Tarang series of monthly concerts resumed in June with a Carnatic music performance by Shri Ashwath Narayanan and has been an ongoing event every month.

Christmas cheer – Practising and performing the Christmas play ‘Magic of Love’ during the Chennai storms was a herculean task. The final presentation at Olcott Memorial School on Dec.19 and 20 bears testimony to the fact that tough times don't last, tough people do! The staff and students of KLC put up the play with total dedication and grit and it was a resounding success.



Hexaware Technologies - Our partnership with Hexaware Technologies has now extended beyond vocational training to early intervention. As part of their CSR program, they conferred upon us a grant to enhance and transition our early intervention programs in Chennai.



Wipro Marathon - We had a stronger presence and greater participation at the Chennai Wipro Marathon held on Jan 8th.

Annual Day - Plans were finalised and V-Excel will be performing "Lion King" the famous Broadway Musical on the Apr.9, 2017.



Valued Visitor - We were honoured to have Velukkudi Sri U. Ve. Krishnan Swami at our Sharada premises yesterday. He spent time with parents and staff and was shown around the centre. He addressed a small audience on the responsibilities that come with taking up the cause for people with special needs.

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Accolades - At the 42nd National Seminar on "Make in India: Prospects and Opportunities" hosted

by the India Achievers' Forum and held in New Delhi today, Dr. Vasudha Prakash was conferred the Indian Achievers' Award for Education Excellence.

The Jury and Council of Board Members of the World CSR Congress awarded V-Excel with a "Certificate of Merit" at the World CSR Congress & Awards held at Mumbai.



From our departments

The school coordinator Shashi, attended the 5th International conference on Early Intervention at Madhuram Narayan Centre in November and found it a great learning experience.



In February, a few of our students participated in inter-school competitions in Javate 2017, conducted by Lady Andal School and came away with prizes in all the competitions they participated in.

On 24th June, Usha Rajagopal and Charu went for a recording at Puthiya Thalamurai channel to talk about V-Excel and its work with a little more focus on Vocational and young adults.

An interview with Mrs. Usha Rajagopal, the Program Director of our Vocational Training Unit, was featured on the "Pudhu Yugam" TV channel and was telecast on 5th July 2016.

The Department of Neurodevelopmental Sciences, National Institute of Speech and Hearing (NISH) organized a one week talent exhibition called "Inspiration 2016" at NISH with the aim of creating awareness on the extraordinary potential of individuals with Autism. 16 of our students participated in this and each one of them received much appreciation with their poetry or art work.

Disha, the parent body of V-Excel organised a get together for all the teaching, administrative and custodial staff in a unique first time ever program for Teachers Day. There was food, games, speeches, songs and most importantly a deep sincerity with which the parents came together.

For the first time in V-Excel, YES organised an Open Day in September. The trainees decorated all the vocational units colourfully. Our Trustees, all the parents of V-Excel trainees and other special school teachers were invited. The trainees demonstrated all the vocational activities. In the baking unit, trainees prepared cookies and served fresh cookies to the visitors. Our Founder-Trustee, Dr. Vasudha Prakash, organised a parent meet in which she floated the idea of starting a community home. Several parents volunteered and have started planning towards it.

Partners and Trainers

V-Excel announces the commencement of a weekend Certificate Course in Learning Disabilities beginning from 16th July 2016. This course is specifically conducted on weekends so that professionals can avail and benefit from it.

We welcomed three new volunteers from Friends of Waldorf, Germany and are very happy to welcome Lena Braunisch to KLC in grade 6. Carolin Abel and Magdalena Pfeffer have joined Kaustubh.

Every 1st,3rd and 5th Saturdays 15 employees of Hexaware solutions are visiting YES. They take the trainees out for a walk or play outdoor games. Two volunteers are teaching Zumba dance to our trainees.

Four students of TISS Bombay, interested in Waldorf education for special needs are volunteering in KLC and have begun their internship.

During the term break, the teachers attended in-service programs by Mr. John Miller on Occupational therapy and Curative education and by Mrs. Kejal on Areas of Remediation.

We welcomed our new volunteers from VIA .ev , Lauritz Seeberg and Laura to KLC on the 23rd of September.



The Tamilnadu Handicraft project has been coordinated at Sreyes the past month. On Sept 8th , we had the formal coming together of resource persons and trainees at Sharada. This is a program of training the trainers in Handicraft, to work with persons with special needs. The course duration is 6 months.

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On Nov. 12-13, the Counseling Unit of V-Excel conducted a two-day workshop for parents of special children. Entitled "The Road Less Traveled", this workshop was intended for parents to understand their own faulty patterns as well as strengths and learn how to overcome grief.

Liz Blomkamp, from Australia, held a two day felting workshop with teachers across all departments and taught how to make beautiful felting products such as cloth, balls and little gnomes.



David Newbatt, an artist and teacher who works at Camphill, Scotland visited the school in January and held a blackboard drawing workshop for the teachers and had a special painting demonstration with a few children from KLC.

Some of our teachers also attended his deeply insightful two day art workshop on drawing, blackboard drawing and wet on wet painting as well as practical advice to work with our children through David's personal experiences in Curative Education.

Staff Training

From 18th to 20th April 2016, three special educators from Nashik centre attended the in-service training at Chennai. The training program was very comprehensive and enhanced the working knowledge of the trainees.

Parimal Pandit attended two conferences in the UK, one on Leadership and one on Train the Trainers of Anthroposophic Psychotherapists.

Expressive Arts Therapy Training Workshop was conducted in July, 2016. A group of 10 individuals from diverse backgrounds like teaching, Occupational Therapy, counselling, facilitating parenting, art and craft training for children with special needs, came together on the two days to experience the therapeutic function of expressive arts.

Community Impact



The Counselling Department finally completed the large scale community intervention project on behalf of **Nalanda Way**, in the month of March. What began as an idea about our counsellors reaching out to a small number of children traumatised by the floods of December, took shape into a massive programme covering

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over 2,000 children experiencing play therapy, joy, engagement and interpersonal interaction. The team covered several Corporation and Government schools in and around Maraimalai Nagar and Tharamani.

Five students of **JBAS college** from the department of Interior design, completed the painting of the wall outside the Sharda Building and we gratefully acknowledge their contribution in creating a warm enlivening space for our organisation.



Four of our children went to **Huma Speciality Clinic** in December where they painted the pots to plant herbal plants and enjoyed the Christmas Party which was celebrated there.

The Exhibition cum sale at the **Overseas Women's Association** was a good experience. We had a spread of 47 products across activities at the tailoring machine, block printing, papier mache, quilling, embroidery, bead work, jewellery making, simple craft, cord and jute products.

The trainees and staff at our Youth Empowerment Services Center in Mylapore, Chennai, delivered their first corporate order of 200 personalized mugs to **Valeo Service India Auto Parts Pvt.Ltd**

The highlight of December was the 3 exhibition cum sale in **L&T, Amazon & Redington.**



This year on 16th July the 5th edition of **Vegam**, a dedicated sports event for differently abled children, was hosted at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Chennai. Many of our children participated and four of them won medals



Satellite centres



Srirangam - A bhoomi puja for a new building to house the Abhyasa Kendra, the joint initiative of Kinchitkaram Trust and V-Excel, was held at Srirangam on June 3. The event was graced by the presence of Sri U. Ve. Velukkudi Krishnan Swami.

Within a month after the millet food products training program was organised, the centre has witnessed sales up to Rs. 9,000. This achievement has encouraged them to work more and empower more children.

Nashik - Yet another milestone was achieved in June, with the inauguration of V-Excel Youth Empowerment Services in Nashik. The inaugural function took place in a new premise taken solely for Vocational Training Centre for young adults with disabilities.

On Nov 9th, the inauguration of the leaf / paper dish manufacturing machine was done by the members of the Samvedhna foundation, who donated the machine to the vocational training unit.

The **YES** trainees successfully launched the paper cups made by them using the semi-automatic machine. The first lot of 520 cups were sold to a software company in Nashik.

Solapur - On September 16th, IN Cable News team visited our Center and covered our program and this was telecast on September 17th Prime News

Smt. Sunita Vaidya got the Best Teacher's award from Redington Foundation Chennai.

Success stories

1. When a young 7 year old boy with slight ASD features, started play therapy about 2 months ago, he was very resistant. He would not enter the therapy room and had severe separation anxiety from his mother. Initially, his mother would sit in and around the therapy room, we didn't shut the room door either. During this period he would not play or even look at any toy. He threw tantrums and refused to cooperate. Finally we decided that the best way to tackle him would be if she left him and returned to pick him up. The tantrums continued and he even sat outside the room and cried. As of a few weeks ago, we were delighted to note that he stopped crying and started playing! He even asked for drawing material! After that he continues to come for play therapy sessions with a smiling and a seeking spirit, drawing and ready to fully engage. Outside of V-Excel environment also, he has improved a lot. He doesn't mind his mother going out, when she was busy for a week and he hardly saw her he didn't call her even once! He has grown in leaps and bounds and continues to do so. The mother is very happy to see the progress.
2. A boy, who couldn't stop using bad language, dark colours particularly black and splattering and pouring paint began to paint scenes of peace without tearing or pouring paint, much more relaxed after three sessions of art therapy. He also stopped using bad language.
3. A young trainee from YES with Autism who came with issues of spitting and reluctance to participate was absolutely relaxed, participative, spoke, sang and even requested the therapist for particular songs and began to work at his centre after just two sessions of music therapy.
4. An autistic boy who has mental retardation and hyperactivity is taking therapy program for his motor and sensory issues for years. He never allowed any new therapist to handle him but now has started accepting everybody. Though he is comfortable with elders, he was ignoring other children and was aggressive towards them. His mother has given birth to a baby girl and the family members were keeping an eye on him always to ensure her safety. He is now sharing his beads with another girl while he strings and stopped misbehaving like hitting her or pushing her down. We got to know that his mother is also relaxed and happily taking care of both of her children in the same room and need not worry about the little baby's safety