



V-Excel Educational Trust  
10 Tiruvengadam Street  
R.A. Puram, Chennai 600 028

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# ACTIVITY REPORT 2023-24

(APR 2023 - MAR 2024)

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[WWW.V-EXCEL.ORG](http://WWW.V-EXCEL.ORG)

**V-EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

# INTRODUCTION

V-Excel Educational Trust is now a **CAF International Validated Organization** and has been vetted through an extensive review to ensure against the risk of fraud, money laundering, or other illicit activities.



# IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Buch (1936-2024)



We lost a cherished one.

Margaret Buch joined us as a volunteer in 2007 in Vocational Training Unit, Shastri Nagar. A person with amazing skills at her fingertips, she designed and created products to be trained on, for our Neuro divergent group based on the trainee's capability. It was "no compromise in quality" for Margaret. Her meticulous methods of training and keen eye for QC have been our guide and tutor. She has never minced words to please us, always made sure we put out THE BEST.

"A spirited magnanimous woman with eye for perfection and brain full of innovation." as described by an associate.

Always smiling, graceful, passionate, compassionate, she had a special grace for sharing knowledge which she did till her last breath. We submit the pride of VTU training and production at her feet and seek the blessings of the departed soul.

Margaret Ma'am will be dearly missed!

Om Shanthi.

# SUCCESS STORIES

V-Excel works with children and young adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual challenges, Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD), Behavioural and Emotional Disorders, and Learning Disabilities such as Dyslexia. Every success is achieved by overcoming challenges, backed by perseverant efforts from teachers, trainers, counsellors and administrators. These are some of the year's success stories:

- **Akshat Ghodgaonkar** - joined the Vocational Center in Nashik in 2019 as a trainee. His is a long story of courage, determination, and discipline, not to forget tremendous patience and perseverance. Akshat has Down Syndrome and intellectual impairment. He was assessed and evaluation and our team realized that he had a particular inclination towards business. We decided to mould this tendency into a passion.



What started as a passion gradually became a mission and eventually became a goal to reach the highest level. With encouragement from his coach Smt. Swati Gaikwad and Akshat's family's tireless efforts, they finally started his business in 2021. At the Akshat Aarti Diya Center, Akshat painted and sold many lamps for Diwali. He also made and sold envelopes and sells them and bought a mobile phone with the money he earned. Today he is a very confident, outspoken, friendly and a social young man who is a role model for his juniors.

- **Kshiteesh Kshirsagar** - joined our Solapur center in July 2021 in the middle of the pandemic. We were then running online sessions through Zoom. Kshiteesh had behavioral issues, a lack of sitting tolerance and an inability to communicate. The online sessions, done with help of his parents, helped in developing a rapport. After the lockdown was lifted, we started one-on-one remedial sessions to help him overcome behavioral issues. We started concepts, classifications and numbers. Simultaneously, we worked on his speech development and ADLs. Today, Kshiteesh attends a mainstream school where, with help from a shadow teacher, he is learning very well. He can communicate with a few words and is able to express basic needs. He recently performed in his school's Annual Day function. He also continues to come to us and we are working on his academic skills through occupational, remedial and group therapy.

# SUCCESS STORIES

- **Shrikrishna Chimmalagi** - joined our Solapur center in October 2016. He was hyperactive, had low muscle tone, speech problems and sensory and behavioral issues. We started him on speech, occupational and remedial therapies. In the following 3.5 years, he improved his eye contact, communication skills, and following commands. His self-motivation improved and he started recognizing and expressing his basic needs. We then focused on his comprehension and fixed pattern issues. Occupational therapy was helpful for low tone muscles, and to correct posture. Speech therapy helped reduce his echolalia. Today, he is in 6th Std. in Shanti English Medium School, Solapur. He is doing well in his academics and communicates clearly. He is socially active and gets involved in playing games with other normal children. He independently does his daily routines and can go to the market place for purchasing things. He is learning to play the synthesizer and has completed Level 1 in it.
- **Prasaad Selvaraj** - a young adult in the Autism Spectrum has been a student of KLC from a very young age. A student who does not carry a lot of expression on his face, but can be very straight-forward, Prasaad likes to share his thoughts with his class teacher through assisted communication. He has been instrumental in creating scripts for a few plays that were staged by the students and teachers in KLC and V-Excel. In *Kadambari*, our annual play staged in March 2023, Prasaad took center stage in a few scenes. He overcame his difficulties that with his own will and with the confidence and support he received from his teachers at school. Very recently, he co-created a script for a Christmas Play, that was staged at Tatva, a regular Waldorf inspired school. When his name was mentioned, he got up and identified himself and accepted the appreciation with gratitude.
- **Sandhya Vijaykumar** - is a quiet, introverted yet smiling girl in KLC's senior school. A verbal child, who can communicate well and can comprehend and reply appropriately, Sandhya is able to skillfully complete the tasks given to her. It was her over-dependence on her peer group that made her teachers focus on improving her social independence. One such activity that the teachers and her parents collaborated on was to make Sandhya travel from home to school and back, in public transport. Initially, one teacher accompanied her in an auto and then on a bus, until she was confident of travelling by herself. We are vigilant that she takes the correct bus while leaving the school and comes to school also comfortably. In achieving this milestone, Sandhya has also been able to develop her interaction with the outside world and improved her functional skills like transacting in money while travelling.



# SUCCESS STORIES

**Lokesh Kumar** – a very timid and shy young man, joined our Adyar Vocational Training Unit in 2022. He had been confined within his home for the large part of his life and watched TV compulsively. At VTU, we started our training program post-lunch and slowly worked our way backwards to make him come full-time. We worked on his transition and after three months, he was introduced to the digitization project. He never had any exposure to computers so we first started with rapid typing and then to scanning. In six months, he became fully independent in the entire process. He learnt other activities like block printing, making paper products, bead work and culinary skills. His demeanor and communication skills improved.



Lokesh started his internship at Writer's Café from November 2023 and has been very regular. He is part of the service department and we have received positive feedback from them. Prior to the internship, we had counselling sessions with him and his parents. We also had functional academics sessions in social skills, taking instructions, attire, greeting his colleagues, hospitality, etiquette, and general manners. Every so often, there are low times when his tantrums surface, but we are continuing counselling for him and the family.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

April 2023

- To commemorate **Autism Awareness Month**, our Nashik Centre held a health checkup camp of at Ashoka Medicover Hospital. Students with special needs came in large numbers with their parents and availed of this facility. Our psychiatrist, Dr. Sule, spoke on autism and neurologist Dr. Tejas Sakle spoke on seizure disorders. Both doctors patiently answered the questions raised by the parents. Many thanks to Mrs, Astha Kataria, Director of Ashoka Medicover hospital and her vibrant team.



- The last show of **Tarang** for the academic year 2022-2023 was conducted in a grand manner. It featured a dance program by Deepthi Ravichandran along with the "Natya Goshti"

**SOLAPUR ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**  
In Association With  
**V-EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST SOLAPUR**

**CME On Autism Awareness**

11am to 11:30 am	Welcome Address	Dr. Kundan Chopade
11:30 am to 11:50 am	Lamp Lighting & Felicitation	Performance
11:50 am to 12:10 pm	Diagnosis of Autism	Dr. Suchit Tamboli
12:10 pm to 12:25 pm	Management of Autism	Dr. Suneel Godbole
12:25 pm to 12:45 pm	Overview of Therapies	Dr. Radhika Honap
12:45 pm to 1:00 pm	Autism & Epilepsy	Dr. Shriganesh Patil
1:00 pm to 1:30 pm	Importance of Diet in ASD	Dr. Ashwini Godbole
1:30 pm to 1:45 pm	Question and Answer Session	All Panelists

Date : 9th April 2023 Time - 11am to 2 pm Applied For MMC Credit Points  
Venue : Raghoji Hospital, Hotgi Road, Solapur.

Please attend in large numbers

Dr. Kundan Chopade Dr. Ashutosh Yajurvedi Dr. Deepa Babladi Mrs. Sunita Vaidya  
President, IAP, Solapur Secretary, IAP, Solapur Secretary, IAP, Solapur V-Excel Co-ordinator

Early identification of children with developmental delays and disabilities is critical for ensuring that they meet their potential and have a bright future. Doctors, especially Pediatricians and Neurologists, play a very important role in this process as parents approach them when their child does not meet the development milestones in areas such as speech, response, motor control, communication, and social skills. Recognizing this, V-Excel's Solapur Center organized a Doctor's Conference on topics relevant to Autism.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## April 2023

- The Early Intervention Unit in Chennai started a summer Camp on April 19 with 10 students. The theme of the Summer Camp was "Power of Play". The day started with circle time followed by scheduled activities. Activities like dots and splashes were introduced for fine motor skills while number games, on-the-floor movement, and traditional games were used to enhance gross motor skills, focus and attention. Life skills were also integrated into the sessions.



- KLC had organized a Summer Camp for its students from April 18th - May 12th under the guidance of Ms. Gita Bhalla. Nine students participated in this camp. We witnessed some positive changes in the students with the structure, work and care given by the teachers.

- The second edition of YES newsletter was released on 29 April during the employee engagement session of Hexaware Technologies. The CSR coordinator of Hexaware, Mr. Logabiraman Sekar, received the first copy and copies were also distributed to all volunteers who attended.





# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## May & June 2023

- In our ongoing association with the Accor Group of Hotels, we were invited to conduct Sensitivity Awareness Training at Novotel OMR on May 8 and at Novotel SIPCOT on May 9. There were 60 participants at both sessions, including staff and management. V-Excel's trainers comprised of Gayathri Suryanarayanan and Jayadevi Jayaprakash. They were assisted by Divya Venkatesh. The interactive training sessions were well-received and the feedback has been very favourable. We are grateful to Prince Singh (Learning & Development Executive) and Kenneth Rocha (Learning & Development Manager) who share with us a common vision of creating an inclusive culture for the specially-abled.



- YES celebrated the closing of the academic year 2022-23 on 17 May 2023 with an art fair, 'Kalai Sangamam', a day dedicated to native folk art. Mr. V. Balakrishnan, founder and artistic director of Theatre Nisha, conducted an archery and sword-fighting workshop. Following this, a pottery session was conducted by volunteers from Take A Step. Simultaneously, there were other activities like doll decorations, bracelet-making, photoframe-making, an art corner, wire weaving, juice, buttermilk and salad making.
- Post-lunch, Mr. Manikandan, renowned master for native folk dances of Tamil Nadu, conducted a *thappattam* session. He made sure that all trainees and staff experienced the taste of our folk dances. He also let them try the *thappattam* instrument.
- The highlight of the day was the children from our Early Intervention Unit attending the event in two small groups.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## May & June 2023

- A **free medical camp** was organized on 18-May-2023 at OutReach Learning Center for Exceptional Children, Pollachi in association with Ahalia Medical college and Hospital, Palakkad.
- Dr.Kavya Sri, paediatrician, Department of Balaroga, Ahalia Hospital along with house surgeons conducted screening and consultations for our 25 students with special needs and their parents. They prescribed medications;14 days free medication will be provided to all students.
- The camp provided a much-needed outlet for parents to express their feelings and the struggles they undergo while they search for a cure, and to accommodate these children with special needs, at home and at school.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## July 2023

- Six trainees from YES unit of Nashik started work in the assembling unit of Nashik Metal Dust company. The officials of the company received them and gave them a short orientation tour of the factory. Our Special Educator, Mahesh Jawale, will be assisting for at least 3 months.



- V-Excel inaugurated its newest center in Pandharpur, Maharashtra, on Sunday 9th July, 2023. We wish the new center all the luck, good work and hope all the trainees and their families there are benefited from the services provided.

- On the occasion of 30 years of FLO Chennai, a celebration was held at the Leela Palace, Chennai on July 16. The ceremony was graced by Ms. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, MP, Lok Sabha. A part of the celebrations involved a performance by Dr. Sudha Raja's Choir. She had also invited a few staff members and trainees from YES to sing with the choir. Our heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Raji Raju, chairperson FLO Chennai for this opportunity and Ms. Sudha Raja for taking our trainees under her wing.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## July 2023

- Dr. Vasudha Prakash, Founder- Director, V-Excel has been accepted into the 2023 Gratitude Network Fellowship Program. This is a 12-month leadership development program for social entrepreneurs looking to scale their organizations. Fellows receive guidance from a dedicated Coach as well as help from sector advisors, a network of peers, in-person learning opportunities, and on-going support post-program.



- V-Excel Educational Trust (Early Intervention Outreach) partnered with Tata Power for their Pay Attention - Autism Support Network in Tamil Nadu. This is mainly for the training and sensitization of public workers. The first set of training workshops were held in Tirunelveli on July 26, 27 and 28, 2023 for 60 Aanganwadi workers, 45 Public health workers and 97 primary school teachers

- The Blue Blue Sky Choir performed on 13th July, at an event for the young leaders of Hexaware, our CSR partner, at Taj Wellington Mews (Taramani). Bringing awareness about special students among the public has always been one of our goals and particularly to the young leaders who will play an important role in bringing about a change, particularly in the workspace environment was achieved through this program.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

*July 2023*

- The EI/VRC Unit of V-Excel Educational Trust associated with Bharathi Rehabilitation Centre in Coimbatore for providing technical support and guidance. An orientation program for therapists, special educators and teachers was followed by assessments for 44 students. Individual Therapy, special education and skill assessments were administered between July 10-12. Following this, a training program for the staff was held to facilitate the implementation of the goals set for the students.





# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## August 2023

- For parents of children with special needs, the pandemic took an enormous toll on their lives. A physical meeting was what many were longing for. KLC organized a '**Parent's Day Out**' on 12-Aug-2023. It was a reason to celebrate the parents, let them relive their childhood and facilitate interaction. The intention was to provide a time for relaxation and rejuvenation.
- Almost all parents went home with a broad smile on their face and felt this should be organized more often.



- The **Kite Festival** was an important and exciting occasion for our children. 7 children and 3 teachers from KLC took the opportunity to visit the second edition of the Tamil Nadu International Kite Festival at the TTDC Ocean View Resort, Mamallapuram on 12th August. The children enjoyed the long drive on ECR with wind in their faces, the scenic beach view on one side and the Muttukkadu backwaters on the other. Children were in awe of the myriad shapes of kites - sharks, dolphins, giant squids, an array of Santa Claus, a tiruvalluvar statue and a huge globe. There was also a '*chota*' show of 4 kites flying in a synchronised way to music.
- As part of the outreach program supported by Chola MS General Insurance a **Screening Camp** was conducted at the Olcott Memorial School on 16-18 August. Mrs. Lekshmi Ramesh conducted a Teachers' Sensitization Program while therapy and remedial interventions were conducted for students in the age group of 3 to 9 years. Reports and interpretations were discussed with the teachers. 102 children and 9 teachers benefited.
- The EI/VRC unit conducted an **assessment camp** for 12 children with special needs identified by the Pediatricians and Occupational Therapists of the Dr. Jeyasekharan Hospital, Nagercoil. It is a Multispecialty Hospital offering quality medical services with reliable diagnostic facilities. V-Excel is grateful to Dr. Renu Devaprasath and her team for their hospitality and support.





# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## August 2023

- The **Vocational Training Center** in Solapur was **inaugurated** on 4th August. This center will help students to be gainfully employed or provide the requisite skills for self-employment. Sri Sunil Baldawa's grant made this possible. Students will be trained to become independent, gain self-confidence by putting their talents to use and towards earning an income.



- Our trainee, Ms. Saiyuvashree Dharmarajan, from the Vocational Training Unit in Srirangam has been placed in Eswari Cool Drinks Shop, Thiruvanaikoil, Tiruchirappalli. She has intellectual disability but learned the job skills required during her enrollment with us.

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# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## August 2023

- An order for 500 packets of chocolates with 12 pieces in each packet, was successfully completed by YES, Mylapore, and delivered to our CSR partner, Hexaware Technologies. Each packet had a tag with the logo of V-Excel and the cause it is associated with. Nine trainees were actively involved in this production along with 3 staff members.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## September 2023

- On September 5th, the EI/VRC unit celebrated Teacher's Day and Janmashtami to emphasize the role of a child and a teacher and how the relationship is very vital. The children were all dressed up as little Krishnas and Radhas. Shri Seetharaman, Chairman, Super Auto Forge Ltd., and Smt. Radha Seetharaman graced the occasion as Chief Guests. The staff and children performed a variety of programs. As a part of felicitating the teachers, mementos were given to the teachers and staff who have been supporting us.



- As a school, working with special children, KLC receives many outside students as interns, volunteers, coming in to observe and work with our students. One such occasion was the visit of 15 psychology students of class 12, from Kola Perumal School, Arumbakkam, accompanied by their teachers. They observed the students in the class during activities, spent time with their teacher and program coordinator Neha Bharadwaj asking questions to quench their curiosity about the students. They also spent time with Gita Bhalla our principal who talked to them about the children, the disability, their sensory issues and how their spirit is intact. They also met Ms. Jayadevi, our counselor and spent time learning more about their subject in relation to the special children.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## October 2023

- The YES unit of V-Excel celebrated its 10th anniversary on 11 October, by recognizing the team, showing gratitude to all the members who contributed to its growth and to the support teams who have been a consistent part of the unit's path to success. Mr. Bala Siva, Founder and Chief Enabler of Able Aura was the Guest of Honour. V-Excel's trustees Dr. Vasudha Prakash, Prakash Natarajan and Radhakrishnan Iyer, along with the heads and coordinators of other units were part of this celebration. The third edition of YES's newsletter was also released the same day.



- V-Excel's 2nd Annual Art Exhibition, **Tattva 2023** (Freedom of Expressions), was held with great fanfare at the SPASTN Auditorium in Tharamani, Chennai on October 28. The Chief Guest for the event was Mr. Shyam, a renowned artist, while the Guest of Honour was Mr. S. Seetharaman, Executive Chairman of Super Auto Forge (P) Ltd.
- Photographs and paintings from 8 participating NGOs and special schools along with the host V-Excel, were on display and were up for sale.
- This free event was open to the public and was well-attended by patrons, participants, and well-wishers alike. It was also covered by the print and visual media.
- On 12th October the Annual Nashik staff picnic was arranged at the Grapes County Eco Resort. The day began with a guided tour of the garden with tropical trees, herbal and many exotic plants, butterfly park, outdoor pool, lake, flocks of geese and ducks. A large space was dedicated to expand the growth of native flora that provide a rich habitat for many species of animals, birds and insects. All these activities made this place as a biodiversity hotspot.





# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## October 2023

- As part of their curriculum, the 12th grade students of Humanities and Science of Chettinad Vidhyashram visited VTU and YES. 44 students visited both units each in batches. They were split into groups and sent to each vocation and were asked to experience the activities. Our trainees were happy to teach and interact.



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# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## November 2023

- As part of the EI/CRC unit's outreach program, supported by Chola MS General Insurance, a **screening camp** was conducted at Korattur Government School. 55 Students from grades I, II, III, and IV were screened during the camp.



- A similar screening camp was conducted at the Cathedral Free Primary School on the 21st and 23rd of November 2023. Students from grades II, III, IV, and V were screened during the camp. Ten children were identified as having substantial difficulties in regard to their psychomotor development and/or learning.
  - A sensitization session was conducted for the school teachers by Ms. Lekshmi Ramesh, Unit Head, Early Intervention and Remedial Unit. She spoke about the importance of early intervention, how it helps children with special needs, and how it is a collective effort by parents, the school, and the early intervention team to help address the needs of the child.
- The Festival of Anthroposophy 2023 was held between 2nd and 5th November at Erode at The Vels Academy. KLC was invited to demonstrate and to give practical experience of Curative Education and Social Therapy, that KLC works with the students. 6 of KLC staff attended this Festival, bringing in bit of awareness to many of the participants on 2 days in workshops that involved movement, handwork, music therapy, form drawing, a short main lesson, foot massage and putting together the efforts of stitching of the participants into a combined piece of a center mat.





# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## November 2023

- Rekha, one of KLC's senior students, at the age of 21, she has taken a small step into the outside world, to work as a trainee at Writer's Café, Egmore for a period of 6 months. She started her training accompanied by one of the teachers, Mahalakshmi, who has been helping her to slowly settle down into the new environment and routine.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## December 2023

- December 3 was World Disability Day and this year it was more about the inclusion of, and the contributions from, the trainees of V-Excel. 9 trainees and 3 trainers from VTU and YES participated in the event **Margazhi Maatram**, an inclusive music and dance performance, organized by SciArtsRUs. The event took place in the P.S. Dakshinamurthy Auditorium, Mylapore. They were part of a choir presentation and sang 8 patriotic songs in different languages along with the Sargam Choir of children and adults. Ms. Sudha Raja, the founder of the Sargam Choir trained the V-Excel team for about 2 months for this performance.



- On 14 December 2023, YES team was invited to Novotel, SIPCOT for a tour of their live kitchen. The trainees were taken around the kitchen where an explanation of various cuisines and hygiene measures was offered. They were also shown a live demo of pizza making. This was followed by a grand buffet lunch. Everyone enjoyed the experience of the star hotel menu.

- Our Annual December Bazaar, took place on December 16th. Our main building *Sharada*, was utilized with the theme of Karthigai - birth of Lord Muruga and the mighty Lord Shiva on Thiruvannamalai, and a set up with the birth of Christ - a manger and Mother Mary waiting for the arrival of the Lord. All the 4 units of V-Excel - EI, KLC, YES and VTU in Chennai came together and held hands to make this experience a success. There was music, food, games, stalls of products made by the students, trainees and staff, and experiential learning of some of the vocational activities of V-Excel.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## December 2023

- On 19 and 20 December, we had sensitisation sessions at NOVOTEL in both their premises at OMR and SIPCOT, Chennai. The sessions were conducted by Gayathri Suryanarayanan, the counsellor Jayadevi Jayaprakash at SIPCOT, and Lavanya Ashok at the OMR premises. The sessions focused on the disability sector and intellectually challenged community. There were activities to understand the challenges these individuals face. 35 participants were part of each of these sessions. All of them participated with great interest and wanted to know more about this sector. They were also sensitised on social inclusion and how to accommodate people with special needs in a workplace.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## January 2024

- Dr. Vasudha Prakash was invited to a panel discussion on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at ANB Systems in Chennai.

- As part of EI/VRC's outreach program supported by Chola MS General Insurance, a review assessment was conducted at A.M.P. School, Kallikuppam on the 10th of January 2024. Twenty-six students from grades II and III were assessed during the review.



- The annual **Avapanam Conference** was held in "The Friends of Camphill, Bangalore" Campus, from 5th to 7th January. It is a matter of great honour and pleasure that our 2023 production of Kadambari is still making ripples and one of the forums was allotted to viewing the show and subsequently having a group sharing and discussion on it. Neha and Puja, who directed it, were invited to talk about the process of pre-production, the preparations and the presentation. There was a screening of the play and a discussion with questions asked by the conference participants. 7 of us from KLC attended this conference and each of us shared different aspects of the process. Some of the topics included inner work for teachers, community participation, working as a human beehive, co creation of students and teachers.



- A festive and culturally rich celebration was done at all the three centres in Nashik for the **Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha** at Ayodhya. The children were involved in the event, dressed as characters from the Rama, Lakshman, Seeta and Hanuman and got to witness the live telecast of Rama idol Pran Pratishtha at Ayodhya. Puja, Aarti, and prasad distribution was done at all the centres. Such events contribute to cultural awareness and understanding among students.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## January 2024

- **Sara's** (with the blessings of Sringeri Sri Saradhambal) - Our **hand-crafted organic soaps** is an initiative by our young adults with special needs, in Pollachi. Our students who are 18 + years are trained in cutting soap base, collecting herbs from our garden, extract the juices of the herbs and blend it with the soap base and selected essential oils and carrier oil (coconut oil). The carrier oil was prepared by our remedial students from coconut harvested from the trees in our school premises - the main objective behind using all the ingredients is to train our students in the process of soap making and to include only organic materials handpicked from the garden and cost effective produce available from the local resources is our motive.
- On 29 January, Ms. Thendral, a research scholar from Anna University, conducted a workshop at YES on **Media Literacy**. This workshop focused on appropriate usage of gadgets, healthy ways of using social media, ways to understand to validate any news on social media and the repercussions of extended screen time. This workshop also focused on how not to get distracted by adult content on the internet, and the negative impact it has on our mind. There were questionnaires pre and post the session. The audiovisual medium helped trainees to relate to the subject and understand the points in a much better way. This was a very useful session as we work with adults and most of them in one way or the other addicted to gadgets.





# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## February 2024

- As part of TATA Power's **Pay Attention Project**, a 3-day learning programme was conducted for NGO Administrators, Special educators, and volunteers at CADRRE, Trivandrum, from February 6th to 8th, 2024.
- The participants were split into batches of 3-4 (a total of 12 batches) to engage in the sessions, where they got to shadow the therapists at CADRRE while they worked with the children at The Autism School across the three centers.
- We are thankful to Mr. Vijayaraghavan, the Honorary Director - CADRRE, the co-coordinators of the CADRRE centers and Tata Power PAY ATTENTION team for the arrangements and hospitality.



- V-Excel has signed an MoU with Rasee Charitable Trust, Chennai with the support of Super Auto Forge Company's CSR Initiative to set up an **Early Intervention and Remedial Center for Children with Special Needs in Unamancheri village**, off. Kelambakkam-Vandalur High Road, Chennai. In this regard, a Bhoomi pooja for the construction of the building was conducted on 24th Feb 2024. The Center is expected to function from June 2024 and will provide special education & therapy services free of cost to the beneficiaries.
- On February 22, 10 children in our Pandharpur center were given **Swarna Bindu Prashana**. (SBP) is a metallic medicinal preparation widely used in Ayurveda pediatrics. The main ingredients of SBP are swarna prashan (gold nanoparticle), gou ghrita (cow ghee), madhu (honey), and other medhya dravyas (drugs which enhance intellectual, memory). Dr. Patil joined us as a physiotherapist and his services are now available in our Pandharpur branch.



# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## March 2024

- As part of our collaboration with TATA Power's Pay Attention Project, a meet up was organized on the 8th of March 2024, in the Manur Block of Tirunelveli district to conduct an awareness session for the Anganwadi workers on Women's Day. The session was to guide them to incorporate fun-filled group activities during playtime for children that could take care of the therapy needs of children, if any. A demonstration of the activities was carried out as part of the session. The guests of honour for the event were S. Parvadarani, District Programme Officer, ICDS, Tirunelveli, and J. Samsudeen, Statistical Inspector, ICDS, Tirunelveli. Eighty-nine anganwadi workers participated in the session. This was done as a part of the closure event for our Pay Attention Project in Tirunelveli.



- The TheatreNisha Group conducted an **Exclusive Movement Workshop** for the V-Excel Chennai staff on Saturday, 16 March 2024 at SPACES, Besant Nagar, Chennai. Twenty-seven staff members from the 3 Chennai centres of V-Excel participated and benefited from this workshop. Ms. Meera and Ms. Aparna of TheatreNisha facilitated the session which incorporated movement, music, dance and team activities supplemented with loads of fun and laughter. Our sincere thanks to TheatreNisha and its Artistic Director, Sri V. Balakrishnan, for suggesting and executing this exclusive workshop.
- Early intervention and consistent care play a vital role in promoting the health and well-being of toddlers with special needs who have various challenges, including sensory sensitivities. Toddlers with special needs may have difficulty maintaining proper oral hygiene, making them more susceptible to cavities. Early and consistent eye care also contributes to the overall well-being of these toddlers. They may have unique visual challenges, and tailored interventions can support their visual development. With all these in mind, the Early Intervention and Remedial Unit of V-Excel Educational Trust organized a **free health camp** in Sharada on 2nd March 2024, in association with Kauvery Hospital, Chennai.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## March 2024

- Fashion Spectrum, the annual inter-college Cultural Fest, hosted by National Institute of Fashion Technology, requested the participation of **Blue Blue Sky Choir** on March 21st. A few of the students and teachers participated in this Fest. The students at the college came a few days ahead, interacted with the school students, watched them practice, and designed a badge for the scarves that the choir wore.



- On 21st March, 2024, **International Down Syndrome Day** was celebrated at all the centers in Nashik. Down's Syndrome Day served as a powerful reminder of the resilience, joy, and inherent worth of individuals with Down syndrome. Through collective action and unwavering solidarity, communities around the world affirmed their commitment to building a world where diversity is celebrated, and every individual is valued for who they are.
- The celebration was marked by a rally, where individuals of all ages and backgrounds marched hand in hand, advocating for equality and acceptance. Colorful banners and enthusiastic chants echoed through the streets, spreading messages of love, respect, and understanding. Various activities and inclusive games were taken to showcase their talent and abilities.

# CELEBRATIONS

- There were lots of festivity and celebrations across the various V- Excel Units. In keeping with the spirit of the times, Janmashtami, Navratri, Ganesh Chaturthi, Golu, Diwali, Christmas and Eid were all celebrated in their own unique way. The common message that resonated in all this was happiness, prosperity, peace, meaningful work, growth and good wishes for V- Excel and all stakeholders of the organization.
- The theme for **International Yoga Day 2023** on June 21, was 'Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', effectively encapsulating our collective aspiration for 'One Earth, One Family and One Future'.
- For the **World Music Day**, also celebrated on June 21, five trainees from YES along with trainer Divya Venkatesh and center Coordinator Gayathri Suryanarayanan, participated in the choir singing with the Sargam choir group. We are grateful to Ms. Sudha Raja, founder of *Sargam* for the opportunity.
- **Ashadhi Ekadashi** was celebrated in Nashik and Solapur on June 29. Many students came dressed in traditional *vaarkari* attire. A few boys came dressed as Lord Vittal and Goddess Rukmini. Prayers and spiritual chanting were done by students and staff at all the three centres.
- **Independence Day** was celebrated with full *josh*...the thought across was love and respect for our motherland with its wonders and flaws, brotherhood, space for dialogue and freedom for all!! There were expressions shared by students and thoughts shared by teachers-to create not just an India but a world that is worthy for our children of today and to go back to the basics that make us human and to tread carefully on the thin line of exclusion and inclusion.



# CELEBRATIONS



- **Onam** @ KLC, this year was a celebration of colours in reverence of Vaamana, the 5th Avatar of Vishnu. The celebration started with music, as children from each grade took turns to place different colours of flowers in the kolam. The story of Onam was narrated by Sindhuja. Nikhil - a student of Stirring hearts dressed as Mahabali and Arya Sarathy - a student from the Kindergarten dressed as Vaamana, graced our celebration in a divine way and were the highlight of the day. The whole celebration ended with a traditional Kerala dance by the teachers.

- International Day of the world's Indigenous people also known as **World Tribal Day** is observed every year on 9th August to raise awareness of challenges faced by this people and to promote and protect their rights around the world.



- **Raksha Bandhan** was celebrated with full zeal and endeavour that one associates with this auspicious festival. In V-Excel's Nashik center, children came in traditional attire enthusiastically to celebrate. The main objective behind celebration was making them aware of the virtuous bond of love between brother and sister. The new age Raksha Bandhan emphasizes siblings protecting, helping, and loving each other for a better tomorrow.



# CELEBRATIONS

- **Janmashtami** is an annual Hindu festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna. His life and teachings inspire devotees to lead a life based on Dharma (righteousness), Karma (action), and Bhakti (devotion). This year, in Erode, the students and staff conducted a small pooja and the students performed a dance and a small skit on Krishna's *leela*.
- **Vinayagar Chaturthi** was celebrated on 15th September 2023 at Abhyasa Kendra, Srirangam. Teachers and students cleaned the classrooms and decorated them for the occasion. They also prepared *kozhukattai* and *sundal* for *Neivethyam*.
- YES, celebrated **Navratri** in style and grandeur. A thematic golu was put together and the theme this year was 'Vocational program at YES'. Apart from the regular dolls, different set ups were created depicting all the vocational activities of YES. Slokams were chanted every day and a special *rudram* chanting was held on the Vijayadasami day.
- On 8th November, our Solapur unit celebrated **Diwali**, the festival of lights. Children and teachers came dressed in their traditional best. Rangoli and diyaas added glamour to the festivities. As an element of surprise, a music troupe had been arranged to entertain our students and guests. The highlight of the celebration was the bursting of crackers and distribution of some goodies.



# CELEBRATIONS

- On November 14th, 2023, **Children's Day** was celebrated in Abhyasa Kendra, Srirangam. On that day, all the staff arranged a colouring activity for the children in the Remedial and Vocational Unit. Once the colouring activity ended, all children and staff joined together and cut a cake with joy.
- **Karthigai Deepam** festival celebrations were held on November 27 at VTU, Adyar. Terracotta lamps were lit by trainees and they sang songs around it and prayed for the well-being of the world.



- **Christmas** was celebrated with Joy, peace, Love, forgiveness and deep calm in KLC this year, with Santa (Kailash, our regular Santa and a school Alumini) visiting school and meeting everyone patiently in the building, adults to the youngest child, hearing their wishes and posing for photos with all of them. Carols reverberating through the floor, rendered by Neha and in the classes by the teachers.



- **Vaikunda Ekadasi** is a 21-day long festival celebrated at Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam. The festival is divided into two parts: Pagalpatthu (morning part) and Irappatthu (night part). The opening of the Paramapathavasal gates, which is the most auspicious and central event of the annual festival, was scheduled for December 23.
- The trainees of our unit along with the staff visited the temple to be a part of this auspicious occasion. First, we visited the Garuda's Temple, Thayaar Sannidhi, and then Chakkarathalwar Sannidhi. After that, trainees had lunch and started to get through the Paramapada Vaasal.



# CELEBRATIONS

- Traditional **Pongal** celebrations were held across all units on January 12th. They had the usual fervour, earthiness and natural feel like it happens in the villages of Tamilnadu. Pongal in a mud pot over wood fire, with the traditional shout of "Pongalo Pongal" when it overflows, offering the Pongal to the Sun God, dancing by the students and teachers along with singing brought in the essence of the celebrations.



- **Makar Sankranti** was joyously celebrated at all three centres in Nashik, with children engaging in kite-making activities. The celebration included the tradition of sharing "Till Gud" - jaggery and sesame sweets, symbolizing the exchange of sweet and kind words among each other. This festive occasion fostered a sense of camaraderie and positivity among all the participants.

- Teachers and students in Nashik came together to observe **Saraswati Puja**, a cherished Hindu tradition worshipping the goddess of knowledge, music, and arts. Amidst chants and prayers, the school's faculty and enthusiastic students, offered flowers, incense, and sweets to the sacred deity. All the devotees sought blessings for wisdom, creativity, and academic success in their pursuits.



# FIELD TRIPS

- On 25 April, 19 members (trainees, parents and staff) from YES visited the **Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati** for an exclusive *darshan*. The trip was organised by RYA (Rajasthan Youth Association) Metro Food Bank Trust. They were provided comfortable T-shirts and caps for easy identification. A special train was chartered with entertainment on board, timely meals, and special arrangements were made for a quick yet undisturbed darshan.
- All the participants of this trip were given a bag loaded with gifts and *prasadh* as takeaways.
- Many, many, thanks from Team V-Excel to the organizers for initiating this and for ensuring a smooth process and impeccable execution.



- VTU started their field trip for this academic year by visiting the **Puri Jagannath temple** and **ISCKON** on ECR. The *purohit* at the temple narrated the story of Puri Jagannath to the trainees.

- V-Excel was granted passes to witness the live **Launch of Chandrayan-3** on Friday July 14, 2023, thanks to Dr. T. Ramasami, our Advisory Board member. Forty students and trainees from KLC, YES and VTU and 27 staff members went on this trip. They were accompanied by members of the Lions Club of Chennai Golden Cultural Capital and Lions Club of Chennai Infinity who sponsored. We are grateful to Dr. Sankaran Sathiyavagèswaran, SHAR (ISRO), Dr. Srinivasa Reddy, Mr. P. Gopikrishna, Group Director, SHAR, (ISRO) and Mr. Nagendran who helped and coordinated the passes. The trainees and staff witnessed the launch at ISRO, Sriharikota.



# FIELD TRIPS

- Trainees, teachers and staff from VTU, Adyar, went on an experiential learning trip to the **Traffic Signal Park** and the **Museum of Possibilities** on 31st Aug 2023. The park staff explained basic signals on the road. At the Museum of Possibilities, they observed all the tools and played few games.



- On 29 September, 25 trainees and 10 staff from YES visited **Anandam Old Age Home** and Anandham Learning Centre in Ambattur. The residents of the home and the children from the learning centre had rehearsed and joyfully performed dances for us. We reciprocated by singing and dancing for them. We were provided with a good lunch, tea and snacks and were given a tour of the impressive facilities at the Learning Centre. Before leaving, a few of our trainees shared gifts with the residents and experienced the joy of giving. The trip was inspiring in many ways and we took away valuable lessons in diversity and inclusion.



- Ten trainees and eight teachers/staff from VTU went to **Singeri** in February. Their flight to Bangalore was very comfortable with constant support and care of the Indigo staff. Trainees did darshan of Goddess Sharada, both Acharyas blessed trainees individually and took time to appreciate all the products made by them.
- All had a good stay in the Parampara Resort in Horanadu and then made the return journey to Chennai by bus.

# FIELD TRIPS

- The year 2024 began for YES, Chennai with an outstation trip to Mysuru. 17 trainees and 10 trainers travelled to Mysuru on a 5-day outstation trip from January 7. The outbound journey to Mysuru was on an IndiGo flight while the return was by the Vande Bharat train.
- It was a well-planned trip and also one with packed days. Thanks to Aditya Tours and Travels for making this trip very easy and smooth. Special thanks to the IndiGo staff at Chennai and Mysuru and to the parents, donors and all well-wishers for their immense trust and support.





# AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- On 19th October Navdurga Award was presented to our Regional Director Mrs. Jayanti Vishwanath for rendering her time and mind to special needs and being devoted to an important social cause i.e., Rehabilitation of children and young adults with Special needs. This Award was instituted by Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), North Maharashtra region. This award had felicitated 15 selected women for their outstanding work in their respective fields.



- Our Sports Trainer in Nashik, Sagar Gawande, was appointed as a representative of special children's parents for Nashik District for the Special Olympics for the period of 2023 to 2027.



- Surya School of Music recognised and awarded Dr. Vasudha Prakash and Mrs. Usha Suresh, for their contributions in the field of Special Education and for organising *Tarang* (Music Program for the special students and trainees) respectively, on 6th January at Centenary Hall, P S Secondary School, Mylapore.



- School counsellor Pradnya Apte of Nashik received Nation Builder Award from Nashik Rotary Club on Teachers Day.





# PAPERS & CONFERENCES

- **The International Conference on "Inclusion and Integration of Persons with Disabilities across the Lifespan"** was organized by the Manipal College of Health Professions (MCHP) and Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA) on 12th February and 13th February 2024.
- Ms. Gayathri Suryanarayanan, the Center Coordinator of the Youth Empowerment Services Unit (Mylapore), presented a paper on the Effective Processes for the Inclusion of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Transitioning to Open Employment. Her paper covered the steps and challenges involved in open employment of such individuals and was based on experiential evidence. The presentation was well-received and appreciated by the panel of judges and the audience.



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