

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE OF INDIA NEWSLETTER



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ASHANKUR (BHOKAR COMMUNITY) SHARES.....

By Love serve one another (Gal 5:13)

Problems are part and parcel of our lives. Our success and happiness in life depends on our willingness to help someone solve their problems in life. Being hostel in-charge and dealing with the girls and their parents has touched me immensely. My ministry gives me a lot to reflect upon today's life and it also keeps me in touch with today's world. I mainly talk to the hostelites about leading a life of values. First, I give them a listening ear, and taking them in confidence, with the help of the Almighty, I help them out with their problems. As I deal with young girls, I need to have a lot of patience with them. It is a challenge to keep them united. But with the help of my community, classes on personal growth, by telling them about the importance of unity and by giving them value education, things keep moving by the grace of God. I need to grow in patience, love and kindness, in order to make my service a meaningful one. My life is a gift from God and I am willing to make it a beautiful gift to God in service to others.

Rita D'souza

Organic Farming

When there is so much of toxic food available in the market, we just take this for granted and don't think of its effects on our health. From the time I saw the episode of 'Satyameva Jayte' on the effects of toxic food in our lives, I was shaken-up on knowing the amount of poison that enters our bodies with the daily intake of food. From that day onwards, I was looking for an opportunity to start 'organic farming' and also to make people aware of the dangers of such toxic food and of the importance of organic farming.



Now, at Ashankur, Bhokar, I have that desire fulfilled. Our farm at Ashankur is fully organic and we also have an 'organic farming' project for our women.



We aim at creating awareness and empowering women by training them and getting them to do organic farming. We have started with a group of 30 women



convincing them to engage in such farming. In this way, we hope to see a difference in the mind-set of people; a big dream is hidden behind our small efforts.

Deodita Gudino RSCJ

Make a Difference

It takes courage to make a difference. 'Ashankur' which means "Shoots of Hope" gives me the hope of not only seeing the birth of a new society but also the birth of my own desire of bringing about a change in society. It is here that I see that the lost and the least are given priority, and they are filled with a positive outlook to move on in life. Life here is giving me a lot of responsible exposure; it is helping me to understand my vocation to social work, which has always been the dream of my life. It is indeed a different experience because here by the efforts made of reaching out to the marginalized and the needy



of society we see the beginning of a new tomorrow in the lives of the people we serve. Here the vocational training given to young women from poor families, the treatment that they receive and the way in which the staff are dealt with all add up to their sense of self-worth and builds their confidence. All this also makes me aware that maturity comes with dealing with others maturely.

Ashankur is a place where development is done through the giving of basic education; but it is also a place where the moral and physical well-being is taken care of. The animators here play multiple roles, in order to bring smiles on the faces of many. No doubt, the barriers are many, but opportunities are much more – each one of us can make a difference.



I am grateful to all those who made this difference possible in my life. I am sure that with the blessings of God and the thoughtfulness of all here I will continue to grow in all ways in the years to come. Let us as social workers be different and let us make a difference.

Gracy Arokiadass CCR¹

¹ Sr. Gracy Arokiadass CCR is working with us in Ashankur in the remedial project. She joined the Bhokar community in June 2018. At Ashankur, the community is a collaborative one, comprising two RSCJ, one CCR sister and a lay volunteer.

The ANM course and the outing of our children from the remedial coaching centres

On 26th June, we started the ANM (auxiliary nursing) course for the year 2018-2019. There are 26 students who joined for this course. As the girls come from economically poor families, we give our best to them at all levels. Here we take care of the mental, physical and emotional well-being of each and every student; we especially take care of their nutrition.



Nutrition enables humans to survive and it requires special attention during the years when a child is growing. However, families mostly ignore the importance of a balanced diet and the nutrition which is necessary for the health and fitness of the body and mind of a student to enable her to study and achieve the tasks assigned.

This year, when we welcomed the girls for ANM course we could see that they were physically not healthy, it was then decided that a supplementary diet should be given to improve the health of these students. In order to see the physical development of the girls we check their weight every month and their progress is noted. We also had the haemoglobin test done and we found that in many cases their haemoglobin was low and in some cases it was just average; even their weight was less. Taking these into account, we thought of giving them extra care with regard to their nutrition.

From 15th of July onwards we started giving them different kinds of fruits, such as pomegranate and bananas, as well as boiled eggs, milk, dal, pulses, chicken, soyabean and different kinds of vegetables which are wholly organic and are cultivated in our own garden. From then till today we can see a tremendous amount of change in the girls. First and foremost, the girls are happy with the food that they receive and we have never got any complaints regarding food. Those whose haemoglobin count was low were also given a supplement of folic acid tablets.



Now as we re-check their weights we can see that everyone has gained weight in just 2 months and they are also happy and satisfied with the food that they get.

For this intervention of giving the students a supplementary diet, I had approached Fr. Gregory SVD who helped us with some finance for this small intervention of improving the health of our students and thus empowering the needy and marginalized.

Remedial Class Outing



On 12th August 2018, Ashankur organized an educational tour for our remedial class children to Ahmednagar, to visit the Efforts planetarium, Dhangarwadi. The children from the respective remedial class centres boarded the bus along with their teachers. There were 122 children and 14 animators from 14 centres. Sr. Gracy Arokiadass CCR, coordinator for the remedial project, and Mr. Atul Abuj, supervisor, took the responsibility for this trip. Sr.

Valeria Rscj, from the Harigaon community, was also with us for this educational trip. The children were from class III to class V. Two luxury buses were arranged. It was a long awaited day filled full of surprises.

The group left for Ahmednagar and reached the Sacred Heart Convent School, Ahmednagar by 11:45 a.m. The children sang songs and danced in the bus and enjoyed themselves; some of them were sick, but as soon as they got down from the bus they went on to the swings, pendulum, and engaged in various other games. It was a pleasure for the CCR sisters of Sacred Heart School, Ahmadnagar, to welcome them, lend their place and spend an hour with them. The children sat in their groups with their respective teachers for lunch; after lunch we left for Efforts Planetarium. At the planetarium, the children gained knowledge about the solar system and its functions. Miss Ketaki Jogde explained about the different planets of the solar system, the milky-way galaxy, etc. The programme was for 1 hour and 10 minutes; it had 3 shows – 2 in Hindi and 1 in Marathi. The highlight of this visit was the show which the students watched in the domed theatre of the planetarium; it imparted information about the planets, the constellations, meteors, milky-way galaxy etc. The children were excited as they were able to see the solar system and the beauty and wonders of the planets. I am grateful to CCR sisters who sponsored the entry ticket to planetarium for the 122 children. It was a great time for the children and they had a lot of fun and learnt new things. I was happy to see that the children got the opportunity to mix with the children of other villages through this outing. Being together as a group, they got the opportunity to interact, and widen their general knowledge.



I observed that the teachers took good care of the children; they were attentive to the needs of the children and were responsible. The children enjoyed playing various games and gained knowledge of the solar system. It was a great opportunity for the children to sit in a luxury bus and travel to a place far from their villages. It gave the children an exposure to places which otherwise they might not have visited. It was not

only a fun filled day for the children, but it was also a day of learning, freedom and enjoyment; and we are grateful to everyone who made this day a memorable one.



Prisca Tirkey RSCJ