

Fire

Air



quintessence

March 2010

Quintessence literally translates to the Fifth Element which is Ether or Space. It can also mean heaven and represents all those things beyond our everyday experience - the spirit, the thought and the creative energy, an energy that can be honed to perform/achieve without using the physical senses.

According to the Upanishads, from the 'Aatman' came Space, from Space came Air, from Air came Fire, from Fire came Water and from Water came Earth in all its manifestations.

For us, Quintessence may help kindle the fire in the spirit, wipe the tear in the eyes, give wind to dreams and bring prosperity to Mother Earth.

Hence Quintessence!!



Earth

Water

## From the editor

Dr Reddys Foundation has two distinct Education initiatives - one is the School Community Partnership in Education (SCOPE) for all out of school children - wherein residential and non residential centres are run to provide bridge courses to children of migrant community, Early Childhood Care and Education centres are run providing nutrition and education to children of migrant workers, aged under 3 years and youth centres called YUVA which impart support courses for school dropouts who want to appear for the Class X examination.

The second education program which has been successfully launched and is now in its second year of action is the Pudami Neighborhood Schools. The aim of this initiative is to provide quality English medium education to children from all walks of life in a school which is inclusive, hence remedies affordability issues through a variety of subsidies and grants which will finally enable the evolution of a self sustaining model.

Though odd, the Education vertical also has with it a Micro Entrepreneur Development Centre which is taking its first steps in the direction of providing support to food vendors in Hyderabad.

Lets interact through Quintessence, we will tell you our stories - challenges, successes, disappointments, pain, tears and smiles.

Please do respond, talktome.drf@gmail.com  
Together, lets make Quintessence a useful tool in our movement.

Madhusree Vemuru  
Head - Partnerships & Communication  
DRF - Education

## What's inside?

### Cover Story

Reaching for the skies

### Spotlight

On the right track

### Showcase

Global Partnerships  
An English Affaire

### Fifth Estate

Green Baton - The Journey Begins



DR. REDDY'S  
FOUNDATION

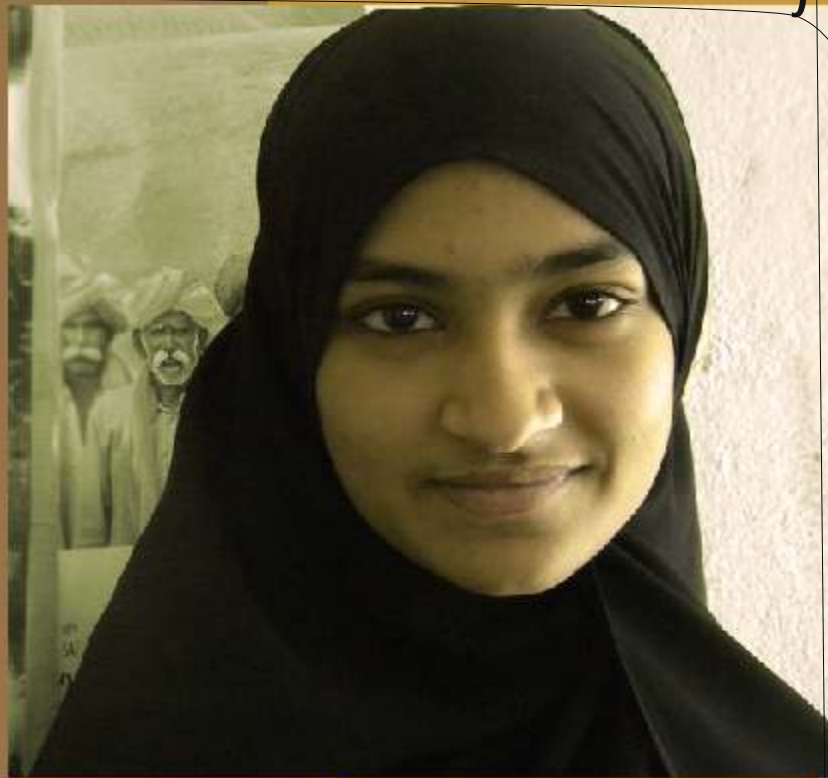
## Reaching For the skies

Nazmeen is now studying to be a nurse. It's a dream come true for this girl from not just a conservative but also a family in severe financial problems. One of the seven children of Syed Ibrahim, Nazmeen was a bright student, good at academics and with genuine communication skills. She was forced to drop out of school in Class VII due to financial constraints. She could not do much to help herself out of the situation though she was a pillar of support for her mother whom she used to help doing in Zardozi embroidery work.

It was at this juncture that her cousin Mohd. Qurram opened a window of opportunity for Nazmeen Bano.

Mohd. Qurram had dropped out of Class VII due to financial problems and joined into the family trade of carpentry. The family slowly moved into better times financially and Mod Qurram continued in the trade with his father and brothers. But at several junctures in life he felt that he could have done better or more business had he been more educated. He wanted to overcome the limitation that lack of education had put him into. In 2006, at the age of 22, almost 10 years after he dropped out of school he joined the YUVA centre at Kishanbagh. He passed his Class X examination in English medium with flying colours. He is an entrepreneur now, running his own carpentry business with new confidence levels. He says, "I know the value of education, especially after the huge gap that came in."

He not only told her about the YUVA program designed especially for school dropouts to complete Class X but also got her admitted in the Kishanbagh centre. He also convinced Nazmeen's father on the importance of educating girls. Nazmeen has not looked back after that - she cleared one hurdle after another and is now doing a degree in Nursing with an institute run by a corporate hospital in the city.



**Nazmeen Begum**

The elated father now says, "Girls should always be able to support themselves, a good education will go a Long way in helping themselves."

Nazmeen has been a source of motivation for several girls in her community. Her classmate in YUVA, Yasmin Bano is following her footsteps. Yasmeen is now doing a vocational course in her junior college. She too will continue her education and pursue nursing. Her spoken English skills are getting polished as well.

There are several such stories where school drop-outs have picked up the threads and come back into formal mainstream education. They have after completing their Class X examination seized every available opportunity to progress with great zest and zeal. Take the example of Mohd. Wajid Ali, a school drop-out who completed his Class X exam from the YUVA centre in 2007. He is now doing a vocational course in City Constructions in a regular junior college, pursuing his II year of B. Com from the Open University and is also a salesman for a local adhesive company!

With stars in his eyes he says, " I am now on the right path. I will soon complete my degree and find myself a decent job at one of the reputed construction companies in the city!"

That's the confidence that education breeds and its the same confidence that leads the youth to success - success with a positive attitude!



**Nazmeen With her father**

Mohd. Qurram



Mohd. Arif



Wajid Ali



At Yuva Centre



Yasmeen Bano

DRF strives to wean working adolescents away from exploitative work, help them continue their education, and empower them to gain secure employment. The community-based Yuva Youth Learning Centers help bring long dropouts and working children back into mainstream education.

The Centers offer academic, counseling and job-related training programs for youth in the 13-18 years age group. Reading rooms and computer education facilities are provided for the benefit of the students, as well as other youth in the neighborhood. The Centers prepare the students for the Class X Board exam, so that they can obtain formal academic certification. They also provide career counseling and job-related training in fields such as Early Childhood Care and Education, Mechanical and Electrical Technology and basic computer skills.

During the year 2009 -10, Yuva Youth Learning Centres were established at various locations in Hyderabad that are: Moosapet, Hafizpet, Suraram, Pahad, Uppuguda and Borabanda.

Of the 331 students who took the Board Exam held in March and June 2009, 228 successfully cleared it. Most of these successful children were mainstreamed into college-level education, with 40 of them taking up two-year vocational courses in Kallam Anji Reddy Vocational Junior College.



## On the Right Track

Chandanagar - in Hyderabad - is on the fringes of the IT supertown within Hyderabad. Tens of thousands of apartments and various other construction activities have been a constant feature here for the past 5-7 years. This part of the town has been moving at breakneck speed to accommodate the residential, shopping and entertainment requirements of the blue eyed families of Hyderabad.

Quite obviously, wherever there are construction activities, there will be construction workers, their families, children and their needs. Very often, all of us tend to overlook the basic needs of the people who actually, literally build our dreams for us. At the very bottom of the ladder of priorities and sometimes quite invisible are the education needs of their children.

The children of construction workers often have very different education needs - they may have come from a different state, speaking a different language or may have never been in any school for any substantial period of time because of the migratory nature of their parents work, hence not having any reading writing competencies at all.

However, if you visit the Gangaram Colony Government Primary School at Chandanagar and have a chat with the Headmistress Mrs Shantakumari - you are in for a pleasant surprise. This year alone she has in her school 31 children who have been mainstreamed into her school from the Non Residential Bridge



Children at Chandanagar Govt. Primary school

Centre run by Dr Reddy's Foundation with the support of SSA. The centre is being run in the construction site of My Home Jewel to cater to the construction workers children's education needs. There are 150 odd children of various ages living at the site out of which DRF has brought upto 120 children to the Non Residential Bridge Centre and of these mainstreamed to the nearest government school were 31 students this year alone. About 60 of the balance children are under 5years of age, and are part of a World Bank supported nutrition program.

The Headmistress Shantakumari is full of praise for the efforts being done DRF in weaning the children away from labour, giving them basic reading writing competencies and then mainstreaming them into the government primary school.

She said "I hope more and more children are mainstreamed every year and I assure DRF whatever support is possible from my end to bring the children to school.

In her words and ours - The children are on the right track, once they are in school!!



Headmistress, Ms. Santhakumari with the Children

## Showcase

# Global Partnership: Pudami And West Rise School (UK)



## Glimpses of Pudami children with the teachers from West Rise Schools(UK)



Elaine Goff and Susan Johnson, school teachers from the town of Eastbourne in Sussex about 60 miles from London were planning their first visit to Hyderabad and India. Their school - Westrise Infant School had tied up a partnership with The Pudami Neighbourhood School ( Hayathnagar). These partner schools have now been selected for a Global Schools Partnership grant sponsored by the UK Aid. The British Council in Chennai coordinates all South region schools in India for this partnership programme.

These partner schools will now engage their children in projects of global relevance to make their students true global citizens.

Both Elaine and Sue were thrilled to be in Hyderabad and shared several valuable suggestions not only to take forward the projects but also increase interaction between the students on both sides.

They spent 10 days with the Pudami family, visited several Pudami schools, and interacted with the students, teachers, community and parents.

One remark made by both Elaine and Susan had all of us beaming - "Your children have such good English handwriting, much better than our children."

The tiny tots in Pudami just loved their new teachers from Britain and responded extremely well to them, repeating the new rhymes in English and enacting the songs taught by them!!

# Showcase An English affaire

The vast pool of English soft skills in India has given the country a global edge in IT and outsourcing and that has further driven English to become a language of aspiration, a passport to economic and employment opportunities for the masses. Cutting across the social strata, a heavy educational differentiation is being seen towards the language of instruction over regional medium. To meet the overwhelming demand for the language, Govt. institutions, besides other initiatives, have introduced English right from Class 3 which was earlier taught as a second language in Class 5-6th and the private schools too are flourishing. But then the quality of education still remains in question. A report sites: In one of the elementary schools, children were heard reciting "ayaa thandaa" when the lines were actually 'I hear thunder' which even the instructor didn't bother to understand and correct the children. Often the illiterate poor parents can't tell what their children are being taught in the schools. English medium education is no more elitist, but in terms of quality it is. DRF's Pudami Schools fills the gap by not only catering to the marginalized population with a subsidized fee structure but also by providing 'quality' education.

## Ram & Lakhan



You would have noticed the picture, the confidence and poise the boys exude standing straight with arms firmly across their chests, besides their resemblance. Ram and Lakhan are twins. They are gifted: Lakhan possesses exceptional analytical skills; and Ram, immense language abilities. But the picture was not always like this. Their parents recognized their potential, heard about PNS while the twins were studying in Class II in a regional medium school. It's a year of grooming at PNS that has given them the twins the finesse.

## Pranav to Pudami



At Nursery of PNS Yacharam, a timid boy sitting in the back is asked by the teacher to recite a rhyme. When you would expect him to look vacuously, stumble his way to the imaginary podium, fumble for words and finally manage to blurt out some broken fragmented incoherent sentences backed by prompting, Pranav purses his lips, with a faint slant smile, stands up confidently, goes to the front with ease and effortlessly performs the feat. When he finishes, the teacher asks for one more. This time it is a long rhyme with intermittent difficult words for a four year old boy. You are sure he will falter. But no! Initially it appears to you as an animated drama, somewhat thoroughly practiced, a regular ritual. His voice intonations, expressions and actions while reciting soon pacify your reservations: he seems to understand every word he utters.

Pranav's father is an auto rickshaw driver, an ambitious poor, who didn't deter to aspire for the best for his son. There are not too many private alternatives in the far flung suburbs in Yacharam. Fortunately he came across PNS: ever since he has never stopped thanking DRF for the initiative and he too like the teacher never minces at an opportunity to showcase his son's talent.

There are apprehensions and fears related to medium transition that are not entirely unjustified: firstly, the fear of losing an academic year and secondly, coping up with the transition. But at PNS, the methods of training imparted and the structured language development resources, specifically designed for Medium transition, and developed by an in-house ERC (Education Resource Centre), make such transitions extremely smooth and there's also an added incentive that the children don't lose an academic year in the process.

Today, at the Classroom of Std.3 at PNS Nagaram: you hear a child's voice, narrating the tale of the ant and the dove coupled with action - in fluent English. That child is Ram who has held his classmates in raptures with his engrossing storytelling. And there amongst the audience sits Lakhan who revels in his outstanding mathematical skills. The class is proud of the prodigious twins, as the School is.

# Green Baton : A Tryst With Environment.... Connecting the Community

Dr Reddy's Foundation and the employees of Dr Reddy's Laboratories have tied up a unique partnership whereby the volunteers from DRL will visit the schools supported by DRF and equip the children to engage in environmental friendly activities. The first program under this initiative is to spread awareness on the negative effects of the rampant use of plastic and to start a campaign against use of plastic carry bags

The volunteers of DRL, with the help of a power-point presentation explained to the children the basic truths about climate change, environmental protection and several measures that can start with the individual which lead to making the earth a better place to live.

All other children then agreed to donate the paper bags made at Green Baton to their local grocer..

This discussion was followed by a film show - The Eleventh Hour which was thoroughly enjoyed by one and all. It was an eventful day for the children and the volunteers - a new line of knowledge, lots of promises made and responsibilities accepted, fun and films - in all a Saturday to remember, 6th February 2010!!

The DRL volunteers who initiated the children into their first tryst with environmental protection activities are Vijayalakshmi G, Padma P, Srivalli T and Prasad. The children of classes 3,4 & 5 eagerly listened to every word of the presentation and were bubbling with answers - waiting for the volunteers to ask questions. When Srivalli asked them if they are willingly joining in this venture the entire 150 odd students in the hall shouted a resounding "YES".

With huge positive energies and palpable enthusiasm the Green Baton journey kicked off at the Pudami Neighbourhood School in Hayathnagar.

The children enthusiastically answered several questions asked by the volunteers. They wanted to walk and cycle wherever possible to save energy, talked of pooling transportation, saving water and electricity, planting trees...

And finally, when the issue of plastic carry bags came in they all volunteered to make paper carry bags. One boy whose father owns the local grocery said he would ask his father to use paper bags made by him in the place of plastic carry bags!!



Team - Green Baton



Children at a Green baton presentation session