



One By One

Year 23 Issue I

November 10, 2023

'How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.'

George Washington Carver

New Event!!!

As the world seems to darken and it seems harder and harder to find things to smile about, we bring you...

FINDING JOY

Our vision is to create a family-friendly, multi-discipline, reflective, fun and challenging set of activities. A fun way to link people around the world to our One! International family of students and staff in India.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR FREE!!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) for details.

Tania's Corner Being Resilient & Finding Joy

Aside from the hard to digest news that everyone is consuming, the One! International world has been rocked by news of its own.

One of our young girls was kidnapped 6 months ago and still has not been found.

One of our teenage girls was walking the railroad tracks attempting to commit suicide—thankfully, with Vijay's counsel, she changed her mind before anything happened.



Disease and addiction continue to plague our families.

Pollution has become unbearable.

Incidents of sexual harassment and abuse continue to rise.

Houses have been broken down and inflation makes

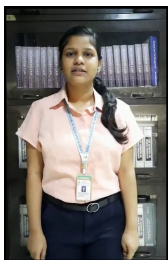
day-to-day existence more and more difficult.

Through all of this, it is the resilience through adversity that we celebrate: graduations, recoveries, literacy. Small successes every day that keep hope alive and have everyone striving for more and more positive change.

Every day, our staff escapes their own problems by going to school and seeing the children smile—their ability to find joy despite everything in their surroundings is a lesson to all of us.

I hope, like our children, you are finding joy in your lives and will find joy in these pages.

University Perseverance



EKTA—
Even through her parent's emergency hospitalizations and surgeries, she did not let her studies stop. She graduated with her MBA in July and secured a job as a branch manager at Kotak Mahindra Bank.

SUNIL—
5 years turned into 6 due to the pandemic, but Sunil didn't hesitate and instead took it as an opportunity to truly learn every detail and hone his medical skills. He is determined to serve his community.



SAURABH—
Halfway through his Law Degree, his father suffered a stroke which left all family responsibilities on Saurabh as the only son. He struggled to balance study, work and family but did not quit. He hopes to protect families like his with his degree.



JEETU—
The sudden loss of his mother last year, that could have been prevented, increased his desire to help more families in need by studying social work.



SAPNA, KHUSHBOO, SANJAY and NASREEN have now begun their university journeys!

Vijay's Corner— Journey Moving On...

Exploring the man behind the words:

“Never would have imagined or thought of the place where I am right now with all the bad habits and manners in my educational life. As I come from Asia’s largest slum area, Dharavi, chances of becoming a bad person was always on the cards, but it hasn’t been in my case. Surrounded of thieves, gangsters, alcoholic, druggist, life was not easy to get through. Many a time it seemed I will turn into an alcoholic or get into some sort of bad group. But Life had a different story written for me and now I can’t believe myself and my work. I was a dishonest, stubborn, irresponsible and disrespectful person during my school days. I used to trouble my teachers by my mischievous behaviour and nev-

er got along with my classmates. My life is itself a teaching for me and helped me to change into an honest and trustful person. There were many incidents that made me realize about the job I have in my hands for the wellbeing of the society. Hence, we should not judge a person on his school life behaviour and leave him/her due to their rude or intolerable behaviour or nature. There is a stroke of light that emerges all of a sudden that changes a person completely.

It has been slow and steady changes in my life and really had to be strong in keeping calm and patience to wait for the right time to come. Today things are not



good around the world and it has been really difficult to keep motivating the children to stay positive but still we have to move on positively without bothering about things going

around.

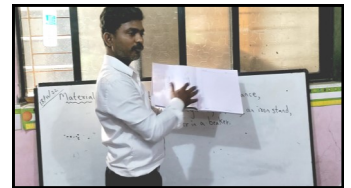
I wanted to be an IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer, but due to financial instability and lack of guidance was unable to achieve my ambition. I joined One! in December 2008, and since then my life has changed completely. My sadness of not being able to achieve my ambition of IAS officer was no more. I was given the opportunity to serve the community with higher responsibilities by One! and Tania Didi.

There are lot of work to complete and I am trying to stay focused and positive as much as I can. Life is test-

ing me with more difficult situations and problems, maybe some huge work is waiting ahead. No matter what is there is in future, I am just taking one day at a time and trying to keep myself and others happy and strong in this difficult time.

Sweet smiles of the children gives me lot of strength to move ahead facing all the hardships of life and I truly believe that one day there will be a change with peace and happiness all around.

Thank you to all the members of One! and all those who have been supporting our organisation directly and indirectly. I am able to work with dedication and commitment only by all of your trust and believe in me and my work.” - Vijay



Parents Meetings— Building Strong Relationships

cannot properly support and protect the children.

Aside from educational topics related to addiction, safety and security, and community developments, we try to encourage the parents build relationships

with their children in positive ways and truly get to know them.

Who are their friends? What are they doing when you aren’t home? Communication between all family members is crucial.



As a father himself, Mahendra uses his own experiences to guide him in these discussions. Jeetu is guided by the relationships he wished he had growing up.

Parents meetings are a crucial part of our One! International programming. We believe that without strong relationships with the parents (mothers and fathers), we



... and Activity Days For the Fathers & Mothers

of stress and responsibility in our parent population that was causing depression, sadness and even aggression.

We decided to try out Parent Fun Days—a chance for them to drop all responsibility and be children

again!

With plenty of games, parents are relearning to smile and find joy. We were happy to find that the mothers are as keen to participate as fathers. It has proven to be a very good bonding opportunity

between staff and parents. Activity days bring balance to the seriousness of the meetings, and because of them, parents are gaining confidence to speak at meetings.



Our social workers saw that there were high levels



Soccer Practice

Since January, we have had a soccer club! Sessions started on Saturdays from 7 am to 9 am. After a few months, everyone 'needed' them to be twice a week. The club has become very popular. After much kicking and running around, lemon juice and a

healthy snack made with sprouts are given to the students while they watch videos showing performances of renowned footballers around the world. Waiting for few more students to join and have 22 players!

Meditation



Mind Your Mind: through life's rough patches, learning to take things gently.

Staff noticed that students struggle to find positive ways to face stress and tension. Given the opportunity to attend meditation workshops, small batches of students have attended. The workshops have helped students express and open up by sharing their problems and worries. Hopefully the students continue the simple mental exercises, and soon see that a regular practice will be fruitful.

Encouraging Reading

Every day starts with a reading session. Fiction, non-fiction, as well as newspapers are read out in front of the students. The teachers encourage the students to question and discuss further. General knowledge has greatly increased by the non-fiction material shared. In the higher grade level sessions, students are given a chance one by one to read a short paragraph and improve their reading skills and confidence.



MENTAL HEALTH

According to the WHO: *"Mental Health is the state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to his or her community."*

There is no doubt that the 'normal stresses of life' can seem overwhelming for our One! International community on the ground. Here are some of the ways that we try to counteract those stresses and teach coping mechanisms.

Safe Entertainment & Social Media

As in most parts of the world, teenagers and young adults in the One! International communities are intrigued by mobile phones and the access they give to social media. Constantly bombarded with videos—both positive and negative, it is hard to maintain a healthy relationship with social media and not let it affect your self-esteem.

We have included internet safety in our curriculum: examining sources of information; how much can/should be shared; good habits and bad habits; etc.



Relationships: Family & Friends

In our health classes, as well as meetings (student, parent, and staff), we stress the importance of building positive relationships with everyone around us—especially family and friends. One! International feels that it is important periodically to take time out of busy schedules and routines to spend quality time with loved ones. These pictures are from a staff 'rest day' which was given when morale seemed particularly low. It boosted the stamina and spirit of everyone. A time for peace, calm, reflection, in order to care for others one must care for oneself.



Eat Healthy

Nutrition is a crucial part of our physical health but has a huge impact on mental health, as well. So far in 2023, more than 25,000 snacks (bananas and biscuits) and 20,000 full meals have been given. Aside from healthy meals 5 days a week, healthy and inex-



pensive food is made in school and packed for day trips outside of school. This ensures a lower level of oil, salt and greater food hygiene.

Fruit snacks are now given during celebrations. Students tend to opt for too sweet or too salty snacks. We are trying to introduce them to healthier options. With fruit being seasonal (and expensive), it ends up being an opportunity for most students to taste some fruit that they would otherwise never get the chance to find on their plate.

Breakfast is provided to traveling students and also soccer playing students! We know: **Full Bellies Learn Faster!**



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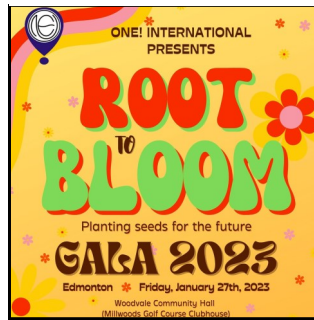
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Gala 2023



Woodbridge Hall, our new venue, was wonderful—the infrastructure but in particular the staff.

As usual, live chats with Indian staff and students were a highlight. Though 6 am in India, everyone was excited to be part of events in Canada again.

The hand-made flowers by our students brought hope and joy through their vibrant colours.

A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered and attended. The night was a huge success!

Though our online Gala celebrations through Covid brought continuity and hope during difficult times...it was particularly awesome to be LIVE again for Gala 2023!

There was a buzz in the crowd—like a family reuniting.



Elections



After two weeks of election theory classes and preparation, 5 nominees were chosen to stand for the mock school election.

They had 3 days to campaign with their 'parties' - collaboration emphasized, not the victory of an individual.

In the end, the parties of Sohail (Khar) and Ravikishan (NS) were elected!



School Program '22



After 2 years without on-site events, no words are needed to describe the excitement of the 2022 Program.

The pictures speak for themselves! The pride the children felt was obvious through their smiles.



Village Project Update

From January to June, our village project continued with great results. The students were like sponges and soaked in all of the academic, as well as

extracurricular knowledge being given them.

Staff continued to be enthused about the new environment and obvious need.

Unfortunately, we were not able to restart in July as planned due to the rains and logistics.

The mountain became an unsafe mudslide for 3 months. With staff safety our



priority, we had to inform the villagers we would have to temporarily close the project. We hope to restart as soon as possible.

