



# b - In Touch

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“ Educating minds.... strengthening roots.... To build a better tomorrow ”

The final semester of the academic year was marked by a flurry of curricular and co-curricular activities.

## ◆ Buniyaad Picnic:

The morning of Jan 17<sup>th</sup> dawned bright and clear. It was the ‘Picnic Day’ conducted by **Buniyaad** for all the children in its Nurseries. The little children were all nicely attired in their best dresses, shirts and pants. Their excited chattering vied with the chirping of the birds as they awaited the bus that would take all 40 of them, their teachers, the **Buniyaad** volunteers and a few parent volunteers to Aarey Colony, their picnic spot. The excitement of the picnic started in the bus itself. The children who had been pepped up by a light snack indulged in singing all the nursery rhymes and songs that they knew to the accompaniment of loud claps by teachers and volunteers. The children seemed tired when they arrived at the picnic spot but revived instantaneously as soon as they saw the number of swings, slides and other play equipment in the vast grounds.

The picnickers were joined by **Mastek** volunteers who had been deployed to participate in this event. **Ms. Vibhuti Sheth (HR)**, **Mastek** was the motivating force behind sensitising the **Mastekeepers** for the cause and she was amply rewarded by the support of 23 volunteers. The **Mastekeepers**, used to planning and paying attention to details, applied the same approach to organising & making the day extra-special for the little ones. It was evident in the way they organised themselves into groups, even the paraphernalia for the games were brought along the games planned & by them.

They first introduced themselves, made groups of 5-6 children and began the games and fun. Their upbeat mood and enthusiasm was infectious and soon all began having a great time. They played innovative games like ‘Raising the Bar’ with hula hoops, *Passing the Parcel*, *Running Races* & many more. The volunteers seemed to relive their childhood days becoming children amongst the children. They bonded so well with all that by the end of the day, they could name each child. Even the children seemed quite fond of their Bhaiyyas and Didis. After all that play, the children feasted on a sumptuous meal of Puris, Aloo sabji and Sheera. And as all good things must, the picnic too came to an end and was wound up shortly after lunch. The day ended on a happy and satisfying note for the volunteers and the smiles on the faces of the tiny tots made it all worth the while.

## ◆ Republic Day:

**Republic Day** was celebrated by **Buniyaad** at the Nurseries. The children were told about the day’s significance. and that their country was called ‘**Bharat**’ & ‘**India**’. They did craft work with orange, white and green crepe paper balls which they stuck on paper on which the Indian flag was drawn. The day ended amidst slogans of ‘**I love India.**’

## ◆ Annual Day Celebrations:

The **Annual Day Function** of **Buniyaad** held on Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 at **Powai English High School, Mumbai** was the culmination of the dedicated efforts of the teachers and volunteers of **Buniyaad**.

As one reached the auditorium on the fifth floor one could see some parents and siblings already seated and many more rushing in to be seated before the start of “**The Annual Day Celebrations**”. After all, who would want to miss seeing their little ones’ perform on stage! The function began on a sweet note as each invitee was



welcomed with an offering of sweets at the auditorium entrance. The place was lively with the friendly chatter of the audience milling around, kids in colourful costumes, the colourful streamers & charts put up around the hall.



Amidst all the rush, one could notice the support from corporates, lending a silent helping hand to **Buniyaad** in “*Educating Minds, Strengthening Roots to build a better tomorrow*”. **Sun Microsystems** with a banner saying “*Four is better than two*”, another one saying “*25 years of Innovation*”, “*delivering smarter, safer and eco-friendly technologies etc.*”, a banner from **British Gas** “*because they Care*”, a banner of **Xoriant Solutions** & a lot of smiling volunteers from **Xoriant**. These volunteers were all over the venue like busy bees, efficiently discharging duties allotted to them.



The celebrations began on time with the lighting of the lamp by our esteemed guests **Mrs. & Mr Rajagopalan** followed by the warm welcome address by the hosts of the evening **Ms. Rajlaxmi Singh & Ms. Kala Anand**. It made every invitee feel special and helped build the excitement & anticipation in the auditorium. Parents, grand parents, relatives and siblings were all there, to see the star of their family perform on stage.

The first item was **Buniyaad**'s school prayer song by the little boys and girls of **Parksite Nursery** – “*God who made the Earth... Care for me, Care for me*”. It was praising the Lord for all he has given and with an innocent prayer to ‘Care for me!’ The little ones performed effortlessly and were hardly unnerved by the sizeable audience.

This was followed by the recitation of Sanskrit shlokas starting with

“*Om karam Bindu Samyuktam..*” focusing on the 1<sup>st</sup> *Pranava Sound* while offering flowers at the altar, then salutations to **Lord Ganesh** followed by “*Gurur Brahma*

**Gurur Vishnu**”. It was a thank you message to the teachers for moulding them with education. Yes, the *gurus*’ deserved this prayer from their little *shishyas*. The ease, with which the tongue-rolling words were recited by the **Milind Nagar** students, gladdened the hearts of all present. The students of **Parksite Nursery** then chanted shlokas for health, happiness & peace – “*Shubham Karoti Kalyanam...*”, & the **Gayatri Mantra** for intellect “*Om Bhurbuvah Suvah...*” They ended with a shloka on **Goddess Parvati** – “*Om Sarva Mangal Mangalye*”. The innocent but tough chants were heart rendering.

Then came little girls on stage, from the **Parksite Nursery**, dressed in pretty pink frocks & beaming smiles who brought alive what **Hansel & Gretel** saw in the woods– a **Chocolate ka Bangla & Toffee ka Ghar**. They danced with houses of chocolates hanging around their necks with graceful movements & the beaming faces of the pretty girls transported the audience into fairy land.

The boys, not to be left behind were on stage in their black bow ties and broad catchy red belts around their dancing along with the girls, in delicate frilly whites, the **Wiggly Woo**. They broke into a jig when the song started and did it with perfect co-ordination.





The music & dance had the audience tapping & clapping to the beat. *Milind Nagar Nursery* children thanked the audience and parted with a flying kiss!



This was followed by the students of **English Conversation Certification Program** – one of the newer initiatives of *Buniyaad*. This one year certification course has attracted students from all walks of life – homemakers, tuition teachers, household helps, nurses etc. The girls put up a skit titled **“Superstitions”** – a story of a *tantrik* who cheats people of their money with a promise to cure them of all illness. The skit ended with a social message to the public that doctors are the ones trained to save lives and not *tantriks*.



Then, *Mrs. Saigita Narayan, Chairperson, Buniyaad* enlightened the audience on *Buniyaad*'s various activities, new initiatives, challenges faced and ended with a sincere appreciation of the efforts of the volunteers & teachers of *Buniyaad*, all of whom, came on to the stage with happy and content smiles. What could be more rewarding than the loud applause from an appreciative audience! If one were to translate into words, one would hear – Kudos, Well done, Thank you! Prizes were given away for the



various inter-nursery competitions held during the year, including the Best Teacher Award for 2008-09.

The audience were then treated to some coastal fare on stage by the little *Koli* fishermen and fisherwomen, of *Milind Nagar Nursery*, who danced rowing their boats on

high seas – if they could express themselves, I am sure they would say, we are confident to row over the tides of life with the efforts of our teachers behind us.



A trip to **Old Mac Donald's Farm** was in the schedule. There was a veritable farm on the stage with kids of *Parksite Nursery* dressed as animals along with Old Mac. The carefree animals had a literal run on the stage with each kid doing their own thing and one could hear cows mooing, ducks quacking, pigs oinking and dogs barking all to the tune of the music.



The children who worked hard and practiced endlessly to make this event a grand success were rewarded with a magic show by **Magician Raj**. The children enjoyed this well deserved treat sponsored by **Entertainment Unlimited**.

It was then the turn of the *Milind Nagar* kids to sing **‘Hum Honge Kamiyaab’**.



*Buniyaad* has laid the foundation and taken the 1<sup>st</sup> step towards a golden future for its students. This was reinforced by the children singing that they would be winners all the way through. Good luck to all of them! The evening ended with **‘Thank you Prayer’** by the *Milind Nagar* students followed by the **National Anthem** by one and all.

The proceedings came to an end with sumptuous snacks and drinks distributed to all the kids. They received goodies like a school bag with **‘Buniyaad’** printed on it as well as **‘Pichkaris’** to play **Holi**.

The feedback from the parents who attended the event were all positive and encouraging as can be seen from below **“My son is four years old and is very happy to attend the classes, he has something new to tell us everyday”**; **“My older kid is in this class, my younger kid is two years old, I am waiting for him to grow up so that I can enroll him too”**. Thank you parents – Education is a gift to your future generation!

*Ms. Archana Rajagopal* and *Ms. Shweta Iyer* were the official *Buniyaad* reporters who have done a commendable job covering the event. The day's proceedings amply demonstrated that if you want to be a Champion, you have to be willing to give it your all.

### ◆ Best Teacher Award:



The **Best Teacher Award** for 2008-09 was bagged by a promising teacher – **Mrs. Sarika Matode**. All the best, Sarika! The tears in her eyes reflected the joy that her hard work had not gone unnoticed. Upon our children, rests the future of tomorrow's world and our teachers persevere towards that end.

### ◆ Holi celebrations :

The spirit of **Holi** seemed to have seeped into the classrooms much before the day of the festival dawned. The festival of **Holi** was celebrated in the **Buniyaad Playschools & Nurseries** on March 11<sup>th</sup>.



The class teacher explained to the children the significance of the festival by narrating the story of **Holi**. The children were made aware of the dangers of unsafe **Holi** and how much more fun it is to play with herbal, home made colours. The safe use of the *pichkaris* was also explained. Children were very excited that they would be celebrating the colourful festivals by actually getting colour not just in their art and craft books but on each other. Different colours of poster paints were applied to the hands of the children. The glee of the children when the poster paints were applied on their hands was worth watching. The class teachers then made them place their hands very carefully onto the charts to get that perfect hand imprint. Even after their handprints were made the children showed off their painted hands to each other, each poring over the other's hand.

Once all the hand imprints were done and duly admired, the children sang the song "*Holi Aali Re*". The celebrations were rounded off by distribution of sweets.

### ◆ Inspection Of Nurseries:

The English Medium Nurseries had a surprise inspection by an external inspector, **Ms. Vithika Krishan** who visited both the nurseries on different days along with a few **Buniyaad** volunteers. The functioning of the nurseries was reported in terms of academic performance, teacher – student interaction, educational displays, etc. The **Parksite Nursery** received the highest rating of 9/10 followed closely by the **Milind Nagar Nursery** which received a score of 8/10. We thank **Ms. Vithika Krishan** for taking time out to carry the Inspection. She has been a teacher in **Arya Vidya Mandir (Juhu)** and **Hiranandani Foundation School (Powai)** having taught both the primary and the secondary sections.

### ◆ General Health Camp:

**Buniyaad** held two medical camps, one on the 5<sup>th</sup> and one on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March at each of the Nurseries. On both the days, it was found that the overall medicines disbursed was lesser as compared to the previous health camps, thus indicating an improvement in health and hygiene conditions, as well as increased awareness.

### ◆ Annual Reports Day:

The 10<sup>th</sup> of April was the last working day for the **Buniyaad Nurseries** for the current academic year. The children along with their parents assembled in the specific locations. The **Buniyaad** volunteers spoke to the parents about the importance of good education in brightening a child's future and the missions and objectives that **Buniyaad** has set out to achieve. **Ms. Meghana Desai** from **Xoriant** spoke about the opportunities that English Medium Schools offer to children and stressed the Gandhian philosophy where the education of the girl child results in the education of her entire family. She distributed the Report Cards at the **Milind Nagar Nursery**.



**Mr. Sushil Sapre** from **Xoriant** kindly took the time out of his busy schedule and distributed the Report Cards at **Parksite Nursery** bestowing words of encouragement to each child. He spoke about the different governmental schemes & scholarships available & that parents should make themselves aware about them and avail them for the educational progress of their children. He also encouraged the parents, especially mothers to educate themselves along with their children so that they could be better equipped to guide their children. Each child at the Nurseries was handed over his/her Report Card along with their files and a parting gift.



### ◆ Best Male & Best Female Students.

With the objective of overall development of students' personalities in mind, **Buniyaad** had instituted **The Best Male Student Awards & The Best Female Student Awards**. Each award recognizes the deserving student's for their outstanding performance in the field of elementary academics, extra-curricular activities and general proficiency. The award consists of a trophy, a certificate & a cash prize. These are christened the **P. G. Sundaram Award for Best Male Student** which went to **Mst. Omkar Datkhile** from **Parksite Nursery** & the **Smt. Swarnambal Sundaram Award for Best Female Student** which went to **Miss Diksha Tadaake**, from the **Milind Nagar Nursery**. Pride and joy were manifest on the parent's faces when their children went to collect their Awards.



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