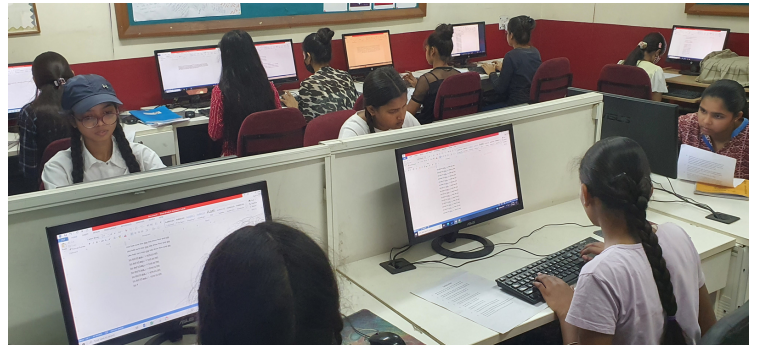


VERY SPECIAL ARTS INDIA



VSAI staff and students wish to record our deepest gratitude to Bollore board of trustees and management for their continued support to our projects and activities to serve the specially-abled and socio-economically vulnerable children, youth and women.

You can help too!

Be a Supporter

You can advocate our cause and reach out to more people to join hands with us.

Be a Volunteer

You can commit your time , skill and expertise to any of our projects and make a difference.

Be a Donor

You can contribute financially and/or share your resources and enable a more effective execution of the current projects or commit to any of our future projects.



EDITORIAL

Dr. Meera Singh, PhD
Hon. Sec. VSAI

The past two years brought us all – young and old – to a sudden halt in our lives. It was unprecedented. An emergency caused by an epidemic which paralyzed normal life and human interaction globally. Wealthy or poor, educated or illiterate, urban or rural – all were impacted both materially and psychologically from the forced isolation we had to live through.

For two years, VSAI had to partially close the campus and adopt digital means to reach our services as best as possible to our challenged and underprivileged children and youth. But they deeply missed the intimate interaction to which they are accustomed and which they especially need to blossom when our campus is open.

2023 began on a happy note when the epidemic threat became more manageable and the government permitted the schools to reopen. The joy of reuniting could be seen on every child's face, and our staff and volunteers were equally thrilled to be back with the students. Just as we settled into our exciting routine, we were again asked to close for two months to prevent the epidemic from resurfacing.

Two months later, when we were permitted to resume in-campus learning, our staff and students came in fully resolved and ready to make up for the loss of those months. Our campus started buzzing again with the resumption of our hectic daily schedule consisting of music, dance, drama, crafts, occupational training, formal learning and computer classes which were fully attended.

I offer my humble gratitude to the staff and volunteers whose extraordinary dedication to serve our children continues undeterred to keep VSAI operating seamlessly even in the most challenging of times. An even higher gratitude is owed to all our children, whose resilience and commitment is admirable even in the face of such unprecedented times like the epidemic. They have set up a remarkable example and clearly shown us that social isolation and its negative impact on our mental, emotional and physical healths can be handled with courage and grace.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Sonia Sahny who has taken over as Director of VSAI and she brings with her rich experience and vision to our work. My best personal wishes to her for her success.



Our flagship project of Special Education is a cause that is very close to all of our hearts. In the year gone by, we had 38 students in this project. They are given functional education, skills development, cultural training and life skills training.

Their day is packed with several activities that aid their overall development. These are music, yoga, dance, theatre, art & craft, cooking, computers, pottery and functional academics.

We are looking at giving occupational and speech therapy to the needy students and look forward to more support in terms of funding and skill to be able to provide the students with these services.

VSAI INCLUDES SPECIAL EDUCATION

A peek into the year gone by...

VSA India was invited by the Springdales School, Pusa Road as a guest performer on the eve of the Disability Day on November 25, 2022. VSAI students presented a dance on a popular Kumaoni folk song 'Bedu Pako Baromasa'. It was a wonderful experience for our students as they not only performed but could also watch the performance of the special students of the Springdales School. The host school distributed gifts to the students as a token of their love and appreciation.

VSA India was invited to perform in the "Annual Day and Akshya Utsav" by the Akshya Pratisthan school on December 1, 2022. It was an overwhelming experience for all of us. After two years of Covid restrictions and hiatus the children were very excited to attend this event. Finally, everyone could meet, participate and celebrate with enthusiasm. VSAI students also danced to a Kumaoni folk song "Bedu Pako Baromasa." The children were awarded a trophy and certificates. The performance was appreciated by the school and parents of the students who were also invited to the event.



The 27th Annual Art Competition held in the month of October saw an overwhelming response. We received around 350 entries from various schools in 8 different categories. Students made paintings on various topics like architectural heritage, nature, festivals, traditional arts in the senior group, while the junior students submitted paintings on topics like my house, garden, park, flowers, etc. The winners were awarded with cash prizes and certificates.

At VSAI we always look out for avenues to give an opportunity to our students to showcase their talents. Even though we opened after a period of two years, and were unsure of the times, we tried to participate in and host many events throughout the year for the over all development of our students.

Some snapshots of the celebrations...

ANNUAL CULTURAL DAY

INDEPENDENCE DAY

GANDHI JAYANTI

CHILDREN'S DAY



DIWALI

REPUBLIC DAY

CHRISTMAS



Life is a celebration at VSAI. Whereas we try to celebrate most festivals, festivities are an everyday affair at VSAI. In our endeavour to make our students feel special and important, we celebrate the birthday of each student. We are able to do this with the help of our supporters, and volunteers. Thank you for always reaching out!

A day at school...

MUSIC

ART & CRAFT



ACADEMICS

POTTERY

YOGA & GAMES

DANCE

COOKING

THEATRE

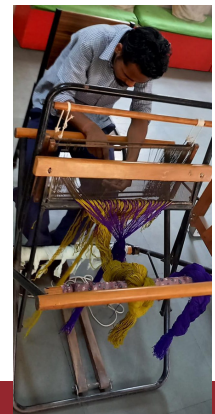
VSAI EMPOWERS VOCATIONAL TRAINING

VSAI is proud to state that our computer training programme for the underprivileged and special children has received accolades from one and all. 142 underprivileged and special students were enrolled in different courses last year.

It is indeed commendable to see these students gain remarkably in their confidence and self-esteem with each passing day as they become computer literate.



Tailoring and Weaving



Computers and IT

Empowering a woman with financial independence is a giant leap in making our society both inclusive and equitable. That is the prime aim of the stitching and tailoring course at VSAI. It is heartening to see the students learn this skill with full interest.

Some of the students come from very humble backgrounds and are employed full time. Their dedication is all the more commendable because of their determination to upgrade themselves and give more security to their families. Most of the students have started taking stitching orders at home and earn their livelihood.

A group of 5 special students and 60 underprivileged students were enrolled in the weaving course last year.

VSAI EMPOWERS VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Candle Craft



Let us light up the world... 40 special and underprivileged students were enrolled in our candle making project last year. They learnt to make different types of candles such as T-light candles, floating candles, pillar candles, and terracotta diyas. The beautiful candles they make not only lights up our homes, but also help in income generation and making them economically independent.

Block Printing



Block Printing course also attracts many aspiring small scale business women from the most humble backgrounds. They learn the art of vegetable dye printing on both paper and cloth. The end products are items like ladies sarees, kurtas, dupattas, table and bed linen, shopping bags, gift envelopes and packing paper to name a few. The demand for block printing is increasing day by day in the market and many of our students have started getting orders for the same. A group of 42 students was successfully trained in the art of block printing.

VSAI INSPIRES VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE

THE BRITISH SCHOOL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT 6TH FEB-10TH FEB 2023

DANCE & THEATRE

GARDENING



WALL PAINTING

POTS PAINTING



The human heart has a unique emotion, the emotion of gratitude which rightfully makes us the most powerful of all species. 21 students from The British School participated in a week-long community service project at our centre in the month of February and experienced this emotion in its entirety. These students interacted with children of special needs and got involved in various other activities at the centre with them. While some painted the boundary wall and pots, others sowed saplings in the garden and learnt the basics of block printing. Dancing and singing with their partner of special needs helped them uncover that part of their personality that they did not know existed. It was indeed a joyous and enriching experience for both groups of students from The British School and VSAI.

'An Experience Beyond Measure'

Thank you! VSAI

Gaurika Bhalla, Volunteer VSAI



Being associated with Very Special Arts India has made me realise the ground realities of life; how privileged we are, and grateful we should be, every day. An introverted girl, as I was when I joined the NGO, teaching kids and learning from them has helped me push my limits. Initially, I was quite apprehensive about myself as well my teaching abilities, but every interaction, every session that I conducted or attended has altered me in a more humble, courteous and magnanimous human being.

Furthermore, the sheer intelligence, pleasing manners and beaming smiles of children has made me realise that one should be ecstatic and celebrate small victories in life. As a volunteer who worked consistently for the project, I believe we all have unique opportunities to assist and improve circumstances for a particular strata in the society. Although, this alone cannot bring about a change; however, making this world a better place to live in, one person at a time, through gradual incremental steps is in its own worth it.

In my volunteering capacity, I have had the privilege to change young lives through the simplest of actions which in turn filled in me immense gratification and exhilaration. Perhaps, by simply listening to, solving other's problems, spreading smiles, our own problems don't seem to bother us profoundly. I'm indebted to have had the opportunity to be an almost negligible fraction of this community and contribute my bit which not only gave me an aroma of proficiency and how things work professionally but also taught me how crucial it is to strike a balance between leisure and work ethics. This experience can be carried forward, not only professionally but also in navigating other life experiences as well, over the years.

It is an old saying- 'We rise by lifting others', however it is only in my time here, that I have actually realised and got to terms with it, which has helped me alter my perspective, motivated me to work harder, brainstorm newer and innovative ideas for children to grasp easily. With this, I want to unfold newer capabilities and more importantly, learn and grow from this journey, thereby transversing myself into a socially responsive human being.

In all, it is a project that brims you with hope and gives you a purpose in life amidst all vulnerable times. Thereupon, when your hands are ready to serve and your heart has enough love to shower, **Very Special Arts India is the destination!**

Some more reflections...

2023 में आना शुरू किया
सिलाई सीख रही हूँ और उसके साथ में
ब्लॉक प्रिंटिंग और मोमवर्ती बनाने की कार्य
शाला भी सीख रही हूँ इससे पहले मैं
सिलाई का कोर्स कर चुकी थी पर वहाँ
से मैं बहुत अच्छे से नहीं सीख पाई
थी फिर मैंने VSAI के बारे में सुना
यहाँ प्रवेश के बाद मैं अपने कोर्स
के बारे में और सिलाई के बारे में बहुत
सी नहीं चीजे सीखी मेरा अनुभव मेरी
अध्यापिका के साथ इतना अच्छा रहा की
बाद में मैंने दूसरे कोर्स को भी करने
का फैसला किया और दोनों ही कोर्स
में मुझे बहुत अच्छा लगता है और मैं
जाफी कुछ ज़्यादा सीख रही हूँ VSAI
जो कार्यशाला व्यवस्थित करता है उससे
भी हम अलग-अलग काम सीख रहे हैं
जो भी बिना किसी शुल्क के ये चीज
मुझे बहुत अच्छी लगी क्योंकि बहुत बार ऐसा

...ingle one of the children
and the welcoming atmosphere
they created.

The only improvement I
could think of would
be a school tour, so
we know our way
around better ♥

This has been the most

Hindi, my partner was
Moreover, I really liked how
unity service helped me to
it with friends that I had
used with.

The experience of working with VSAI was meaningful and rewarding. What I learned working with this organisation were the skills of teamwork, communication, time management, problem solving and decision making. I also developed empathy and compassion. I learned to adapt and be flexible and also become more confident. Working with the children at VSAI, I developed an emotional connection with them and helped me gain a greater understanding and respect for the challenges these children face.

मेरा नाम सावित्री है मैंने
दो महीने पहले आना शुरू
किया है मैं यहाँ सिलाई करना
सीख रही हूँ यहाँ आने से पहले मुझे
सिलाई के बारे में कुछ ज्यादा जानकारी
थी यहाँ आने के बाद मुझे बहुत कुछ
नया जो मिला यहाँ के अध्यापक /
अध्यापिका बहुत अच्छे हैं सीखते वक्त उधर
प चीजे समझ नहीं पाते हैं तो वो आपको
बारा अच्छे से समझाते हैं ताकि आपको
सीखने में आसानी हो इसी वजह से
मैंने दो महीने में ही इतना अच्छा
कार्य करना सीख चुकी हूँ की अपने अलवा
हर के कपड़े भी सिलने लगी हूँ।
सिलाई के साथ-साथ मुझे
दो मोमवर्ती की कार्यशाला में भी सीखने
का मौका मिला जिसमें बिना किसी शुल्क
में सीख रही हूँ।
जल्द ही अब मैं महीने में 2-3 हजार
रु कमा लेती हूँ।

From our teachers and trainers...

Education for Special students

Education plays an important role in everyone's life for improving mental, psychological & even physical aspect of everyone. However, there is no set formula for imparting education. The methods vary from person to person and from situation to situation. Special children too vary - some are emotionally impaired & some physically. Needless to add that special students requires special approach for their all-round development. I believe that if God takes away one thing, he compensates it in some other way. Therefore we have to look for that quality & its development to the maximum but at the same time try to cultivate other qualities which the student lacks. That is what VSAI is striving to do. We accept the challenges & try our best for their all round development.

Sonal Khosla



बैजू के दिल की आवाज़ ...

ईश्वर ने हर मनुष्य में एक न एक कला जरूर डाली है और इसी कला का उपयोग करके इन्सान अपना जीवन यापन कर रहा है। एक कला मेरे अंदर भी है, नई - नई चीजें सीखने की। मैं किसी भी नए काम को करते हुए देखता हूँ, तो मेरा मन उस काम को करने के लिए उत्सुक रहता है। ऐसे ही २००५ में मैंने एक कार्यशाला देखी, उस कार्यशाला में मोमबत्ती सीखा रहे थे। उसे देखकर मेरा भी मन किया की मैं भी अपनी पसंद की मोमबत्ती बनाऊँ, और ईश्वर ने मेरी ये इच्छा पूरी की। २००६ में मुझे मौका मिला और मैंने मोमबत्ती बनाना शुरू कर दिया। मुझे मोमबत्ती बनाना बहुत अच्छा लगा। जैसे-जैसे मैं मोमबत्ती बनाता रहा, वैसे-वैसे मेरे हाथ में और सफाई आती गई। मैं नये - नये प्रकार और नये - नये तरीके से मोमबत्ती बनाता रहता हूँ, और मैं अपने इस प्रयोग में सफलता भी पाता हूँ, और इसी सफलता से मुझे प्रेरणा मिलती रहती है। मेरे द्वारा बनाई गई मोमबत्ती लोगों को बहुत पसंद आती हैं। जब लोग मेरी बनाई मोमबत्ती खरीदते हैं तो मेरे मन को एक सुकून मिलता है। मैं मोमबत्ती बनाने के साथ-साथ दूसरे बच्चों को भी मोमबत्ती बनाना सिखाता हूँ। मैं ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करूँगा की भविष्य में बहुत से लोगों को मोमबत्ती बनाना सिखाता रहूँ।



Its been almost 8 - 9 months since I started as a dance teacher with these kids. Its been a great journey as we all started afresh after covid, interacting and dancing together. Initially I was apprehensive whether they will accept me as their new teacher after their much favorite Divya mam left for Dehradun. But they all accepted me with open arms and heart. I had heard but now witnessed also how they love to dance. As soon as they listen to music their body moves and become excited to start the class. They recognize me as their dance teacher. Some of them even come up with steps or ideas when I play a new piece of music. They enjoy doing mudras- hand gestures that we use in kathak. A few of them even recite kathak bols and dance different kathak steps.

Diksha Upriti

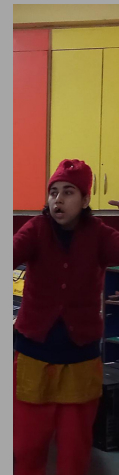
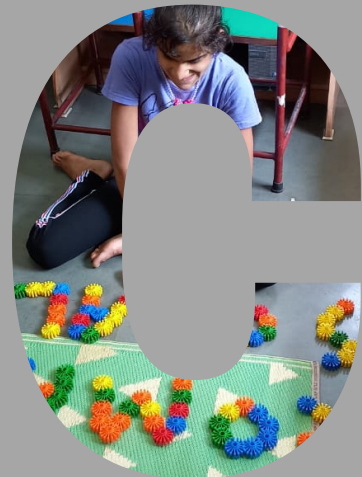
'... and miles to go before I sleep'...

Perhaps Robert Frost wrote these lines keeping us in mind over a hundred years ago. We have yet a lot more to achieve, more than a few more promises to keep, and extend our hand to help build many more lives and spread many more smiles.

A few projects that we want to undertake in the future are:

- Beauty, Make-up and Reflexology
- Culinary Craft
- Nursery Teacher Training
- English Conversation
- Performing Arts
- Fine Arts

We reach out to all of you to help us turn these dreams into a reality, because that's how magic will happen.



THANK YOU!!!

YOU HELP US TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER

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