

March Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Fervently hoping that this finds you amidst best of things.

This is to update you on the developments at Parivaar during February and March.

You would be glad to note that there are now 45 children at Parivaar. 10 more children are being admitted over the next two weeks, which would take the number to 55.

Thus we have surpassed our target of 40 children for the first year. Starting with 3 children on January we have definitely covered some ground in our endeavour to impact the lives of homeless children.

Enjoy the pics attached and also those in the photo section on our website.

[www.pariivaar.org/photo.htm](http://www.pariivaar.org/photo.htm)

A couple of noteworthy events at Parivaar were the Excursion to Fun City Amusement Park and the successful admission test into St. Elizabeth School, Thakurpukur where 38 of our children have been successfully admitted.

Admission Test at St. Elizabeth School, Thakurpukur on 16th March

The children underwent an Admission Test at St. Elizabeth School for ascertaining the classes in which they should be admitted.

It is notable that none of the children at Parivaar have ever been in formal system of education. Thus the children after being admitted into Parivaar have been rigorously prepared to come to the level of the standard that corresponds to their age. For example four eight-year-old children at Parivaar were prepared to be admitted to Class III even though they have never been in Class II or I. Crashing them with structured curricula followed in the standards of formal education they missed was no mean a task. 38 children have been admitted into various classes ranging from Class I to III at St. Elizabeth School, Thakurpukur.

Other children who are very young would continued to be taught at Parivaar and admitted into mainstream schools only in the next academic session. Having come straight from a traumatized past this surely would make them more settled and comfortable.

Excursion to Fun City Amusement Park

John Baptist, a Parivaar member describes the excursion in his words,

"Children went for an excursion to Fun City, the nearest Amusement Park from Parivaar Centre. Being the first such trip of this kind from our Centre, the children were overexcited

many days in advance. Since the children have come in January they have been put to a busy schedule with five to six hours of studies each day as they are being prepared for admission into formal schools.

The trip was sponsored by a Calcutta based gentleman. The day began with children eagerly awaiting the arrival of the vehicle that was to take them to the Fun City. A girl who had been previously to an Amusement Park was whetting the imagination of other children by the narrative of her own experiences.

The authorities at the Park were magnanimous to give us a 50% off on entry tickets. The children were agape at entering the premises, they wondered which ride was what! They had never ever seen such things in their lives. Imaginably, it was difficult to keep the children in a group !

As a starter it was decided to take the children to a simple ride - the toy train of which the cabins were designed as Donald duck and Mickey Mouse. After some increasingly dizzying rides, the kids were taken for some hot food. All of them felt thrilled at being able to sit on the chairs of the open-air restaurant and have some chips while they waited for their food to be served. The first item they enjoyed was noodles, then samosas, then pastries, and then cold drinks. It was a day of being pampered. Were they happy? One just had to look at their faces to make that out. Wide grins and laughter!

The group again started going on various rides and finally stopped at the children park. There one could piggyback on the many dummies of animals and swings.

Somnath was challenged by an accompanying IIMC student volunteer to go the length of the rope only on his hand, not touching anything with his feet. Promised the reward of an ice cream, the temptation was too much for him. He tried and tried until he succeeded in the third or fourth attempt; not before having his leg peeled off. But it was a minor wound for a boy of 9 years who had just won his first competition. Seeing him win an Ice cream by his heroics, 7-year-old Chhotu too declared he would accomplish this feat. He too started attempting it without being challenged and without success.

But seeing their love for ice creams it was decided to treat them with not one but two ice-creams each."

Thanks for the many encouraging words many of you have been writing to us. Together we will succeed in our efforts.

I conclude by an Upanishadic quote, a favourite of Swami Vivekananda, celebrating the power of the 'collective'.

"The grass when made into a rope by being joined together can even chain a mad elephant, but when alone is trampled even by a mouse.

The Lord will guide and strengthen us.

Faithfully,  
Vinayak