

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1

JANUARY 2014

Dear Friends,

We at Ullas are happy to bring to you an edition covering the happenings from our various chapters! We are proud to share with you that as of Jan 2014, we have reached a total of 6,728 children across our chapters under the Summit program including new Achievers joining our fold (1,983 Class 9 children). And under our Touch The Soil initiative, we are thrilled to share that we have covered across the 4 states of TamilNadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and NCR region, 58 districts, 179 schools, 1213 scholarships (Class 9-10), and conducted Diary of Dreams workshop and Planning workshop for 70,000 students (Class 9-12). We still have two more months to reach our goal of 100,000 students in TTS this year and we are looking good to achieve the same.

We thank you for your unfailing support towards both the Summit and TTS initiative and for keeping Ullas flying high amongst the children and the schools! In this newsletter we have endeavored to bring you snippets from key happenings across our chapters, and insight into our Ullas students, and Volunteers - a regular feature we hope to cover from here on. Thank you!

God Bless.

Col. Vidyasagar - Head, Ullas Trust



Meet Malar

Malar is a Class X student of St. Charles HSS in Aathanavoor Village, Vellore District. She was awarded the Ullas scholarship during our TTS initiative district program held in Vellore. 15 year old Malar is a bright student, whose father is a coolie with daily wage of Rs.100. Despite the hardships her father has managed to put Malar, her elder sister (currently in Class 12), and her older brother (pursuing a polytechnic course) through school ensuring that they don't miss out on their education.

Malar aims to be a doctor and has already begun her preparation by identifying medicines used for various illnesses. The scholarship she received during her Class 9 has motivated her to pursue her students with greater vigor and she in turn is motivating her juniors in school as well. She considers Ullas scholarship and workshops as important instruments of transformation in her life and other rural children like her, residing in Yelagiri hills.

Volunteer Speak: Hear Vibhudhendar share his Ullas Summit Program Experience



Vibhudhendar (BSC31) addressing students during the Summit program at Carex

“I see the Ullas Summit Classes as an excellent way to interact with the senior students of today and a fascinating insight into the way their minds work, with me learning as much from them as they from me. For every activity that I ask the Ullas kids to carry out, they come back with brilliant responses that constantly surprise me and make me wonder about the way they think! Some of the kids in my group are live wires, who keep the entire class alive and buzzing with their energy. The confidence that some of these kids exude are sometimes more than what I have seen amongst my official colleagues.

I would like to think that through these classes, the Ullas children learn some aspects of life that they are unlikely to learn through a more formal medium (such as their schools) and this knowledge will be of help to them in the years to come”.

Afrina Begum shares about her personal transformation at Ullas

Afrina a young Ullas Achiever from Immaculate Heart of Mary’s Girls HSS, Avadi is currently in Grade XI. She started her journey with Ullas in the year 2010. In her own words “The summit classes conducted by Ullas is very useful and has helped me to come out of stage fear. The planner provided by Ullas helped me to improve my planning and scheduling in studies. Of course, the computer education provided by Ullas motivated me to choose Computer Science group in my higher studies. I feel very proud to be a part of the Ullas family. My goal in life is to become an IAS officer”



From the HeadMistress Desk

In this edition, we bring to you Mrs. S Selva Kumari, Assistant Headmistress of Chennai Boys HSS, Purasaiwalkam. When we asked her about Ullas and how it is benefitting her students, here is what she had to say to us “Ullas Trust has been motivating the children especially those coming from deprived and underprivileged background. Thanks to Ullas Trust for the enormous effort in developing the skills of these students. The trainers convert the ordinary students into confident human beings who undergo a thorough change in their personality and demeanor!”

TTS with a difference! At Nagapattinam District

Ullas one-day workshop for the teachers happening simultaneously at the eight talukas in Nagapattinam District

(Vedaranyam, Keezhvelur, Kuttalam, Nagapattinam, Tharangambadi, Tirukuvalai, Mayiladuthurai, Sirkazhi)



Ullas embarked on its very first TTS “with a difference” - a pilot Touch The Soil program that reached out to 480+ teachers in 8 talukas in Nagapattinam district. At the behest of the District Collector (Mr.Munusamy), and the District Chief Educational Officer (CEO-Mr.Ramakrishnan) and in support of their program to “increase pass percentage of 10th and 12th standard students” - Ullas conducted on Saturday, 25th January, a one day workshop for the teachers.

Given that the board exams are around the corner (beginning March 1st), the CEO requested Ullas to conduct a workshop for the teachers who in turn can take the message, tips / aids to their children as part of their revision schedule. With that thought, the Ullas team put together a one day workshop consisting of the Diary of Dreams workshop and the following lesson plans - Planning and Prioritization, Memory Techniques, and Stress Management - very relevant for the students taking their Boards.

Ultimate goal being - inspire, and encourage the teachers to be change agents! This pilot TTS program with a difference was conducted simultaneously across all 8 talukas of Nagapattinam on the same day. Each taluka had a maximum of 60 teachers and the Ullas team comprised of 2 trainers from Polaris, 1 Higher Education Scholarship student, 2-3 Vidyarambam Trust tutors.

The overall program was received extremely well by the participating teachers. Specifically stress management - how to identify, cope and address stress was well received by the teachers! This was one where the teachers did role-plays both as children and as adults to better understand coping techniques.

It was heartening to see the teachers turn into children for the day, especially during the role plays, warm up games and exercises. They even took center stage to share about their dreams! Interestingly the experience of the teachers ranged from 2 years to 20+ years.

At each location, the trainers shared with the teachers

the need to go beyond their curriculum and the absolute need to spend time with their students to better understand their fears, their dreams, and their aspirations and be their guiding star!

The workshop ended on a high note with the teachers expressing their happiness and thanks to the Ullas team for having inspired, motivated, and rejuvenated them to reach out to their children! Each of them made a commitment that they will incorporate elements of the workshop into their classrooms from thereon.

A hearty thank you to all the volunteers of Polaris who made this possible! And kudos to the entire Ullas team for having pulled off a one-day workshop across 8 locations on the same day at such short notice (10days). It was a moment of elation for all involved in this workshop when we realized that these 482 teachers in turn will reach that many more children in the coming days - igniting their dreams and inspiring them to achieve!

Mission Accomplished!

Meet Velraj V (BSC 33)

Ardent Ullas supporter talks about his TTS experience!



Velraj, along with his enthusiastic band of team comprising of Satha G, Uma Maheswaran D, Kannan

Rajaram, Suresh K V, went from district to district as part of Touch The Soil program. They covered 20 schools in Ariyalur and Tiruvarur districts.

In his words "The journey of shaping young minds in the rural villages of our southern districts was really amazing to us as a team. We came across some really talented children who shared some of their personal stories. One young girl, R Barkavi of Class 9 studying in Govt Girls HSS, Valangaiman had tears of joy at the conclusion of the Diary of Dreams workshop. She came upto the podium and announced her intention to serve her school in future, similar to the manner in which Ullas has been rendering support to the rural children. Parents in the group also endorsed her comments and thanked the Ullas team for the support given to rural schools".

We thank you Velraj for your ardent support at all times!