

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2014



Dear Parents,

Greetings from Indus International School Pune.

Following a short winter break the school re-convened on 6th January to begin a new calendar year and to face the challenges of a new semester with renewed vigour and energy.

At the very outset may I express my disappointment at the number of students who rejoined the school well past the official opening date, some without informing the school or having sought prior approval for their delayed return. Keeping to a programmed schedule is a discipline that young children need to inculcate as an important part of personal and professional efficiency and parents play a vital role here as holiday plans are usually determined by parents. The school calendar is published at the beginning of the academic year and it is our earnest request that travel plans be made well in advance to ensure that students are present in school on the first and last days of a term.

The months of December and January have been exciting and demanding with a succession of high-profile events taking place.

EYP SHOWCASE - December 13, 2013

All the children of the EYP came together to present a remarkable show – A Christmas Dream! As the little ones spread the real message of Christmas, it was heart-warming to see their confidence and poise, a reflection on the hours of hard work and their commitment and dedication.

The event saw a beautiful collaboration between the children, their teachers, and in particular, a very special team of parents without whose wholehearted support, this event would not have been possible. We wish to thank everyone for their valuable contributions!

FREE CAREER-COUNSELLING CLINIC: December 15, 2013

A large gathering of students from various schools in Pune turned up at the Courtyard Marriott along with their parents on Sunday 15th December for a presentation by the Career-Counselling and College Placement Cell of the Indus International School Pune. The purpose of the presentation was to enlighten attendees about the Career-Counselling and Placement services provided to students of the Indus Schools (Pune, Hyderabad and Bangalore) and to inform them that the school is extending this service to students of other schools in the city as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility.

The programme commenced with an eloquent presentation by the CEO of the Indus Trust, Lt. General Arjun Ray, outlining the core values of the school, emphasizing the central commitment of the school to create leaders of tomorrow. He pointed out that all activities in the school focus on this central idea: leadership and that even the career-counseling and placement service is part of this focus. General Ray reiterated that at Indus the responsibility of the school does not end with preparing students for excellent academic achievement in the school-leaving examinations but extends beyond to the assurance of admission of these students to the best colleges and universities of their choice in the country and overseas.

Also attending the programme and providing valuable inputs were the Career-Counselling teams from the Hyderabad and Bangalore schools. Ann Wenger, Head of the Indus Placement team, from Bangalore, provided useful information about the requirements of overseas colleges and universities while Ajay Tayade, Career Counsellor and Placement Officer at Indus Pune provided information pertaining to admissions into Indian universities.

The programme concluded with parents engaging in individual counseling sessions with the team of counselors while the students appeared for an aptitude test administered by a professional testing organization.

In the second stage of this process, conducted on the school premises on the 18th December, selected students were administered another aptitude test. This group of 25 selected students will now be provided free career counseling and assistance leading up to college placements. This is a service provided by Indus International School as part of its commitment to reaching out to the community.

STUDENT COUNCIL INVESTITURE: January 10, 2014

The new Student Council of Indus School Pune was officially inducted at an impressive investiture ceremony on 10th January, attended by the staff and students of the school and the parents of council members. In his opening address the Chief Guest, Lt Gen Arjun Ray, CEO Indus Trust, eloquently outlined the responsibilities and expectations of the Student Council and challenged the group to remain faithful to the confidence and trust that have been reposed in them, reminding them that 'to whom much is given, much is expected in return'. The ceremony that followed was impressive for its solemnity and discipline, the highlight of which was the pinning of the badges by parents of the council members and the ceremonial passing on of the baton of responsibility to the new Head Boy and Head Girl by the CEO. In his closing remarks the Principal expressed confidence in the ability and suitability of this elite group of students and outlined the comprehensive selection process by which the Student Council was created.

INDUS LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM 2014 - January 11, 2014

Leadership, as we are all aware, lies at the core of the educational programme at Indus Pune.

In an effort to link our preoccupation with leadership to the realities of the outside world the school recently initiated a public debate on the paucity of effective leadership in the country today and reflected on the role of schools in filling this leadership deficit.

Distinguished speakers representing a cross-section of sectors – corporate, social, educational, political and that of the armed forces – expressed their views and perspectives on the subject “*School education is the long-term answer for redressing the leadership crisis*” at the **Indus Leadership Symposium 2014** organized by the Indus International School Pune at the JW Marriott hotel on Saturday 11th January 2014.

In his inaugural address, the Chief Guest of the event, His Excellency, Shri Bharat Vir Wanchoo, the honorable Governor of Goa, commended the school for initiating a discussion on a subject that, he said, is not only dear to his heart, but an imperative in the country today. He urged parents to be the first ethical instructors of children and asserted that schools must take on the responsibility of bringing value education back into the classroom and inculcate leadership skills that translate vision into reality.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Indus Trust, Lt General Arjun Ray, in his keynote address, reiterated the need for the restoration of moral education in schools and the development of leadership qualities in students through a structured leadership curriculum and the provision of experiential opportunities for students to practice leadership skills. Leadership, in his opinion, must be transformational and should aim at serving others. He also supported the revival of liberal arts in school curricula so as to generate leaders who are creative and innovative.

Mrs Anuja Kale Agarwal, of the Deutsche Bank, expressing the corporate perspective, supported the view that the current educational system failed to create a reasonable percentage of employable graduates. She felt that a paradigm shift was needed in pedagogy and teaching methodologies to create leaders who are able to celebrate diversity and promote creativity.

Mrs Lila Poonawalla, describing her own stellar work with less privileged women urged the audience to ask four key questions in order to take responsibility for social change: Why? Why not? Why not me? Why not now? Her passion for her work was evident in her emotionally charged presentation.

Mrs Sarojini Rao, Principal of the Indus International School Bangalore, analyzed the concept of whole education as it is practiced in the Indus Schools. Her presentation explored the nature of experiential learning and how this contributes to the development of leaders in the school.

A spirited panel discussion was moderated by Mr Arun Bhatia, President of the People's Guardian Party, with panelists Air Marshall K S Gill, Commandant of the National Defence Academy, Mr Pelham Lindfield Roberts, Head of the United World College and Mr James M Paul, Principal of the Indus International School Pune exchanging views on the role of value education in schools and how this could contribute to the creation of more effective and ethical leaders of the future.

The day's deliberations were brought to a close with an address by the Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education, Mr Vineet Joshi, who was accompanied by Dr. Sadhana Parashar, Director of Academics, Research, Training and Innovation, CBSE. In his brief but pertinent address, Mr Joshi summed up the day's proceedings by suggesting that it is time to move forward from discussion and deliberation to action. He recommended that schools worry less about the syllabus and focus more on the curriculum. He expressed the view that leadership development should not be aimed at creating a few islands of excellence but should create leaders at the pincode level.

A large number of parents and other invitees present on the occasion unanimously conceded that the event, conducted in the very impressive ambience provided by J W Marriott hotel had been masterfully organized.

Congratulations are extended to the core staff team who organized the event and the school's Student Council who were also present on the occasion to welcome guests. Some of them distinguished themselves by responding with confidence and impressive eloquence to questions posed to them.

SUMMER SCHOOL ORIENTATION – January 13, 2014

The Indus Career-Counselling Department hosted a seminar for parents of students from grades nine to eleven, enlightening parents on Summer School Programs for students during vacation periods at universities of international repute.

The Summer School programs provide students with exposure to university level teaching methodology, academic rigor, research skills. They also gain credits and grades for their performance during these 4-6 weeks summer programs.

We have been sending students for a Summer Program to Oxford, Cambridge, New York University. This year the placement department plans to apply in the best universities in US, UK, CANADA & Singapore.

Four students from Grade 11 have already secured admission in Oxford University; whereas one student has received admission in Cambridge University in their choice of major for Summer School Program.

Parents also learned that, apart from attending summer school, students can spend their vacations engaged in workplace internships which provide practical exposure to industrial working systems and introduce the students to the challenges expected in an industry.

INDUS DAY – January 24, 2014

This important annual event provides an opportunity for the multi-talented students of our school to demonstrate their manifold skills in a wide range of creative disciplines in a programme of dance, music and drama. This year the programme was held in the outdoor amphitheatre on Friday 24th January.

We were fortunate to have as our chief guest a distinguished former civil servant and a prominent citizen of Pune, Mr Arun Bhatia. In his address, Mr Bhatia urged students and their parents to be responsible citizens, to be more aware of the problems faced by the country, to be instruments of change and to exercise their option to vote for better governance. As always, the CEO of the Indus Trust, Lt General Arjun Ray was a dynamic and inspirational presence, emphasizing the importance of educating young people for leadership responsibility and also exhorting students and parents to become more socially aware. He threw out a challenge to all parents to take up the cause of improving the quality of education in government schools in Pune district. The Principal sketched the achievements of the school during the first term of the academic year and urged all stake-holders to work together collaboratively to help the school realize its potential to be one of the leading educational institutions in the country.

The programme featured a presentation by the new school orchestra which performed a medley of classical and popular tunes. The entire PYP was on stage to present an energetic and fun-filled musical: 'The Mysterious Case of the Missing Royal Ring' that conveyed a strong message while thoroughly entertaining an appreciative audience.

The senior students presented an inspirational original playlet, 'The Impossible Dream', that tracked the life of an ambitious young girl from a tribal village who travels to the city to fulfill her dreams of getting a good education and finally uses her knowledge and experience to transform the lives of others, thereby illustrating one of the key beliefs of the Indus family – that education must be transformational and must contribute to the improvement of society.

One of the highlights of the programme was a solo vocal presentation of a semi-classical song by Priya Nandini, a student who has recently joined the school. Priya is the winner of a nation-wide talent search conducted by the Shankar Mahadevan Music Academy, which will train and groom her for success in the music and entertainment industry. Indus supports her outstanding talent by offering her a full scholarship during her period of study in this school.

Despite an unexpected cloudburst that disrupted the programme temporarily, the evening was a grand success with the stage performances and the general organization of the event – including striking audio-visual projections - winning the appreciation of the audience.

REPUBLIC DAY - January 26, 2014

Boarders and all campus staff – teaching and non-teaching – attended a simple flag-hoisting ceremony in the courtyard of the administrative block to commemorate Republic Day on Sunday 26th January 2014. All joined in the singing of the National Anthem after the Principal unfurled the national flag. The Principal then delivered a brief address, reminding the assembly of the significance of the occasion and the importance of the Constitution of India.

TEACHER ADVOCACY PROJECT

Teachers of IISP, in an effort to reach out to colleagues in government schools in the community, have undertaken a teacher advocacy programme, JIGYASA. The motto of the programme is to ‘enable, enhance and build’.

The aim of the programme is to help Zilla Parishad teachers in the nearby community to develop their competence in English language and skills of pedagogy in order to equip them to deliver the curriculum effectively in their classrooms.

So far sixteen teachers from different ZP schools have enrolled for the programme. Five teachers from IISP have volunteered to train the teachers. Sessions are conducted thrice a week and a Saturday every month.

Overall, the experience has been extremely satisfying and fulfilling for all who are involved in this endeavor to make a difference.

AN UPCOMING EVENT: IISP – IIMUN 2014

After successfully participating in the first chapter of UPENN University's Ivy League Model United Nation Conference, Delhi in Oct 2013, Indus International School Pune will be hosting the Pune Chapter of the Indian International Model United Nations Conference 2014 from 7th to 9th February 2014. Students from Grade 7 – 11 can participate in this conference and already about 50 of our students have signed up for the experience. Around 400 students from most reputed schools in Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad are going to be a part of IISP – IIMUN 2014.

ACADEMICS now regains its focus after the month-long procession of major events. All 'Whole Education' periods have been taken over for extra classes to complete the curriculum and to provide support as students prepare for the mid-term examinations that begin in mid-February.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT IISP

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| ❖ MSP Leadership Camp Begins | - 01 st February 2014 |
| ❖ MSP Leadership Camp Ends | - 07 th February 2014 |
| ❖ IISP-IIMUN | - 07 – 09 February 2014 |
| ❖ 2 nd Mid-Term Exam Begins&
Clifford Day (EYP to Grade2) | - 14 th February 2014 |
| ❖ HOLIDAY – Shiv Jayanti | - 19 th February 2014 |
| ❖ 2 nd Mid-Term Exam Ends | - 21 st February 2014 |
| ❖ Classes : Grades 6 to 12 | - 22 nd February 2014 |
| ❖ PYP Table Tennis Match | - 25 th February 2014 |
| ❖ Mock Exams for Grade 10 & 12 Begins | - 28 th February 2014 |

Sincerely,

JAMES M. PAUL
PRINCIPAL

February 2014