

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Our Hon'ble Chief Guest, Ms. Minakshi Chaudhry Kanwar, a writer, socially active citizen and a motivational speaker, Rev. Sohan Lal, Member of the School Board of Governors, Mr. John, Principal, Auckland House School for Boys, Mrs. Shikha Sood, Senior Co-ordinator, Members of the PTA, Distinguished Guests, Parents, Friends, Staff, Ladies & Gentlemen and my dear Auckyites, It is indeed an honour to welcome each one of you to this, the 153rd Speech Day of the School.

Our Chief Guest today, Ms. Kanwar did her schooling from Nigeria, West Africa and her Post Graduation from Himachal Pradesh University. She worked as a reporter with the Indian Express but soon left this to pursue her interest and become an author. Madam has written eighteen books including bestsellers such as Ghost Stories of Shimla Hills, More Ghost Stories of Shimla Hills and Love Stories of Shimla Hills. She has also written several books on Himachal as a trekking destination and Coffee Table Books on Kullu Valley and Solan Hills. Her critically acclaimed books include Sunshine-my encounter with Cancer and A World Within, the story of a daughter coping with her father's dementia. Ghost Stories of Shimla Hills and More Ghost Stories of Shimla Hills will soon be converted into a TV Serial. S.H.I.M.L.A. Investigators, a series of cozy mystery novellas for young adults is to be launched soon. These crime/haunted/murder mysteries are set in Shimla, the erstwhile summer capital of the British Raj. A decade ago Madam set up the SEWA Trust with a few friends. This trust works with cancer patients; organizes public discussions on issues of importance; career counselling for students along with public health, education and environment awareness. The Trust is running KHUSHI, a Day Care Centre for Elderly Women at Solan. The Trust has also organized Public Discussions on Fundamental Duties of Citizens in collaboration with the State Legal Services Authority and other Government Department. Some of the Speakers have been Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam former President of India, Mr. Justice Kurian Joseph, Supreme Court of India, Mr. Vinod Rai, former CAG, Sunita Narain Environmentalist, Prof Yash Pal and others.

Auckland House School is indeed privileged and honoured to have a person of such varied talents, interests and achievements in our midst today.

Contd..2...

And now, Madam, kindly permit me to present a brief report of the School during the current year. Our Session began on the 13th of February, with a quiet morning of prayer and meditation in which we were led by Rev. Prateek Pillai and Mr. Racean Mirock. In his message Rev. Pillai exhorted the Staff to always be led by and remember the School Motto of 'Seeking the Higher Things'. This was followed by an Orientation and Motivation Workshop for the Staff conducted by our Chairman, the Most Rev. Dr. P. K. Samantaroy. As usual apart from being fun to participate in, it encouraged us to introspect on our role as educationists and role models.

The IXth, Xth and XIIth Form began classes on the 14th of February and the children of VI – VIII come in by the 25th of February and Nursery to Form V will return on 5th March. This year we have over 1200 girls on our rolls and 252 children in the Upper Primary Department.

This year we sent up 67 students for the ICSE examination, the highest score being 95.2% by Prakriti. Our subjectwise highest in English was – 94, Hindi – 98, Punjabi – 89, Mizo – 85, History – 99, Geography – 99, Maths – 94, Physics – 94, Chemistry – 99, Biology – 98, Computer Science – 98, Physical Education – 99 and Economics – 93. At the ICSE (10th) level, there were 53 distinctions. 62 children appeared for the ISC examination and the highest percentage in the Science Stream was 89.5% with 92.25% in Commerce and 96.25% in Humanities with the subjectwise highest in English being – 95, Physics – 92, Chemistry – 82, Biology – 91, Maths – 84, Commerce – 90, Accounts – 94, Economics – 96, Computer Science – 93, Psychology – 97, Sociology – 100, History – 94, Political Science – 100 and Music – 99. The Class average at the ICSE level was 81.41% while that of the ISC was 79.27%. At the ISC (12th) level, there were 43 distinctions. Seven girls got 100% in Political Science and two scored 100 in Sociology. I am pleased to inform you that Saguna Siddheshwari was the ISC topper for 2019.

I congratulate the girls on their well-deserved achievement and also place on record my gratitude and appreciation for the hard work put in by the members of the faculty.

Once again, our girls have made it to various colleges in India and abroad pursuing careers in Global Affairs, Information Technology, Law, Medicine, Engineering, Business Management and Mass Communication to name a few.

Contd..3...

Apart from striving to attain exemplary academic standards, we at Auckland House School, believe in developing the all-round human personality. In order to achieve this, the classroom, the playfield and the stage form part of the cumulative process of education.

Travel, it is said is one of the best forms of education. Keeping this in mind three educational trips were organized in the month of April. 42 girls accompanied by 05 Staff Members went to Chennai and Puducherry, 46 students accompanied by 05 staff members went to Hyderabad while 09 Juniors and 02 Staff Members travelled to Palampur, Chandigarh, Dharamshala. The children found the trips educative and returned refreshed and enriched by their travels. A group of 20 girls accompanied by two staff members will be travelling to Bangalore – Mysore – Ooty during the Autumn Break.

Sports form an integral part of the school curriculum. In order to ensure the participation of each child on the play field our sporting events are divided into three sections. The Junior Section Sports Day was held on the 27th of April and Mrs. Indiraa Bhasin, Alumna, Auckland House School, was our Chief Guest. The tiny tots put up a brilliant performance which was much appreciated by all present. The Middle Section Sports Day for the students of Forms III – VI was held on the 23rd of August, with Brigadier Gaurav Sharma, BGS CS, ARTRAC, Shimla as our Chief Guest. This was followed by the Senior Section Sports Day on the 29th of August for which His Excellency Mr. Chutintorn Gongsakdi, Ambassador of Thailand to India, did the honours. The children participated in various track and field events including a March Past, aerobics, gymnastics, etc. Credit for training and encouraging the girls in various sports activities goes to Mrs. Sangeeta Chauhan, Mr. Satish Thakur, Ms. Caroline Dutta, Mr. Pankaj Prabhakar and Mr. Siddharth Thakur.

The School team participated in the Eleventh Diocesan Inter School Tournament held at St. Paul's School, Palampur amongst thirteen teams, wherein they won Basketball Under 16, Badminton Under 18, Badminton Under 16, Table Tennis Under 18, Table Tennis Under 16 and were Runners Up in Basketball Under 18. The Auckyites also won the Marching Cup and were declared the Most Disciplined team.

Contd..4...

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, New Delhi organized Regional Games 2019 – 2020 under the aegis of School Games Federation of India. Eleven girls participated in the CISCE Regional Athletics Meet held at Sacred Heart School, Ludhiana wherein Soshimla stood third in the 100m race and second in the 400m. race. The athletes stood third in the Under 17 and Under 19 Relay. Teams from thirteen zones participated. Eleven girls participated in the CISCE Regional Basketball Tournament held at Adarsh Public School, Karnal wherein the School Basketball team stood second. Aditi Kaur, Soshimla Shaiza and Harsimran Sekhon were selected for Nationals from amongst eleven teams.

Two of our girls Manvi Sood and Bhavya Singh Jamwal participated in the State Rifle Association Shooting Championship in Chamba at the District and State Levels and won Gold and Silver medals respectively.

The fourth Atkins Memorial Inter School Basketball Tournament was held on 24th and 25th June, 2019. Auckland House School emerged 1st Runners Up in the Tournament.

At the 24th Annual Rev. Dr. Samuel Slater Memorial Inter School Invitational English Debates held at Bishop Cotton School, Ishani Sharma, Maanika Sethi, Samriti Kaith and Aditi Kaur won the Trophy for Courage in the Face of Adversity and a number of Best Speaker prizes at various levels. The girls have attended a workshop on Debating Skills, conducted by Tanishtha Bhattacharjee.

The School has conducted various sensitization programmes on Crime Control, Drug Addiction and Traffic discipline for the parents and students. The children also participated in various awareness rallies and marathons regarding the same. Drugs have become rampant in Himachal and in order to sensitize the children against substance abuse Ms. Shubhra Tiwari, I.G. Narcotics, Himachal Pradesh conducted a session for the girls of VI to XII. She highlighted the ill-effects of such dependency and encouraged the students to be forthright and refuse to succumb to any such pressures. An Anti-Drug Cell has been formed in the School with Mrs. Shipra Sood as Convenor. Various competitions and activities propagating the harmful effects have been conducted. An awareness about Disaster Management was created by organizing Mock Drills through proper evacuation procedures. Conserving the environment is yet another area of concern. We encourage outdoor activities and a love for nature. A workshop on Memory Skills was organized by Dr. Brijesh Chauhan and conducted by Mr. K. K. Bansal, National Trainer of Memory Skills on 8th April. Another workshop on the role of the Company Secretary as a career option was conducted by Mr. Chetan Kumar and Mr. Arun Sharma. A workshop on the Higher Education system in Finland was conducted by Ms. Priyanka Sood, an alumna, for the students of Form IX to XII.

The Students have participated in various competitions like Science Quiz, Painting, Mathematics Olympiad, Slogan Writing, Declamation, Essay Writing, Quizes as well as Debates and have emerged with flying colours. The School team won a cash prize of Rs.12,000/- in an Inter-School Environment Quiz. Prachi Rohta, Samriti Kaith, Mannat Dhani and Kendra Pathania stood first in the Senior and Junior categories of the Science Quiz respectively. Phurichaya of Form IX was adjudged first in the Slogan Writing and Ishani Sharma and Amreen Kaur won the third prize in the Senior and Junior category of Maths Olympiad. The four House Days, followed by picnics, were celebrated with gusto!

The 153rd Founders' Day was celebrated on the 31st of May and attended by a large number of alumnae. The Annual School Carnival held on 1st June was an enjoyable event with lots of games and numerous stalls selling delicious eatables cooked by the staff. Mrs. Prabha Chawla, Alumna, Auckland House School, from the 1961 batch, was our Chief Guest and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

A workshop on Summer School at Amity University, Noida was conducted by the Deputy Director and Senior Manager, Amity University in March. 36 girls volunteered to attend the same and were at Amity from the 2nd to 10th June, getting a feel of various disciplines of their choice.

The School was awarded the first prize by H. E. the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for making the highest contribution to the Red Cross Paper Flag Fund.

The State Health Department has extended some of its schemes to school children such as De-worming and distribution of Folic acid tablets. Doctors have delivered lectures to the children on prevention of various medical diseases such as Swine Flu, consumption of boiled water to prevent an outbreak of Jaundice to state a few.

A team of three representatives headed by Communication Expert Mr. Sahil Sharma from Shimla Jal Prabhandhan Nigam Limited visited the School on 31st July. They enlightened the students about different ways of saving water. Mr. Dinesh Salian from the Scripture Union, Mumbai conducted a workshop to enlighten the children on the importance of inculcating values by showing power point presentations on kindness, honesty and a firm belief in God.

The Career Counselling Club has been functioning actively under the guidance of Mrs. Gurpreet Kaur. The aim of this club is to make students aware of their own potential and assist them in choosing a career. In addition to this, the club also assists students in solving educational and behavioral problems which in turn aid in enhancing academic performance. Keeping this in mind a number of workshops and counseling sessions have been held by eminent and Senior Counselors of the Institute of Career Studies, Lucknow, who have guided the children in opting for a Career by Choice and not Chance.

Miss Neelam Bali is conducting regular counseling sessions for the students and parents thrice a week both in groups and individually. This is proving to be very useful to the girls who very often require a listening ear.

As part of our exchange programme two girls and a teacher from St. Mary's School, Johannesburg, South Africa, visited Auckland House School, Shimla, in the month of June, 2019. They mingled well with our girls and enjoyed their visit here. Earlier in the year three of our girls spent three weeks at St. Mary's.

The School has always been conscious about various environment related issues. Apart from having a paper recycling plant and rain water harvesting facilities, the School has also installed solar geysers which provide hot water to all the dormitories. A tree plantation drive was organized on 31st July wherein 40 saplings of Deodar, Willow, Rhododendron, Oak and Thuja were planted. Six Agga composters have been installed within the School campus. These composters are used to convert biodegradable waste produced in the school, into manure by the process of aerobic decomposition. We also have a vermi-composting pit.

The Junior Section Speech Day for the girls of Nursery to Form II was held on 13th September. Dr. Brijesh Chauhan, Principal, Government Post Graduate College, Seema, Rohru was our Chief Guest. In accordance with our tradition each and every child of this section participated in one event or the other and the programme was as colourful as usual. The Middle Section Speech Day was held on 20th September and presided over by Ms. Anu Sharma, Principal, Shimla Public School. The children put up a brilliant performance which was greatly appreciated.

Technology has been introduced and incorporated in our classrooms. The girls are taught with the help of 34 Smart Classes. The School has introduced the use of an interactive App – Snap Homework to communicate with parents on a daily basis.

Contd..7...

The Tribune in Association with Chandigarh University organized an award function for schools wherein we were felicitated for Excellence in Sports and Outstanding Contribution in Community Initiative. Once again Auckland House has been adjudged the Number One School in Shimla by the Education World. We are indeed humbled by God's Grace and Love.

This year the Reynoo Mathur Memorial Scholarship has been awarded to Dixita Verma of VII C. The Hazrat Maulana Syed Rahmani Scholarship is shared by Aaruhi Shahi and Ikra Ansari. The Indira Shandil Memorial Scholarship for Literature is awarded to Aditi Kaur and Ishani Sharma of Form XII. The late Mr. Arjan Singh and Mrs. Mohinder Kaur Batra Memorial Scholarship has been awarded to Samriti Kaith for being adjudged the Best All Rounder of the Year. Aditi Kaur, Maanika Sethi and Harsimran Sekhon of Form XII, Divya Marwah of Form X and Soshimla Shaiza of Form IX respectively are recipients of this scholarship for Excellence in Extra Curricular Activities and Sports. Late Mr. B. R. Marwah Memorial Hindi Prize has been won by Shweta Negi. D. J. Prim Memorial Award for Excellence in Art has been awarded to Simartana Nota. The K. K. Sood Memorial Shakespeare Trophy goes to Maanika Sethi and Mrs. Champavati Sood Memorial Shakespeare Trophy has been won by Samriti Kaith. Apart from this the School has disbursed scholarships and freeships worth Rs.50,00,000/- and above to deserving students, both in the Girls and Boys Schools. In its Sesquicentennial year the School started an Endowment Fund for the Girl Child to be awarded a sum of Rs.50,000/- for education at the tertiary level. The recipient of the scholarship for the current year is Achal.

Finally Ladies and Gentlemen, I must state that the purpose of Education is to make better people. We must teach our pupils to be morally correct, know the difference between right and wrong, be empathetic to those who are different from us or in need. Our emphasis must be on character building, faith in God, pursuit of excellence and inculcation of self discipline. It is only then that we can bring about a holistic development in the children and train them as intelligent people who know how to live well and wisely. Parental contribution to this endeavour is sought as it is very crucial towards the overall development of each child.

Before I conclude, I would like to place on record my appreciation and gratitude to the teaching, non teaching and support staff of the School for their whole-hearted commitment and dedication to their work. I must also place on record my appreciation of the co-operation received from the parents and well-wishers of the school. The contribution and support of the Members of the PTA is acknowledged with gratitude. I would be failing in my duty if I did not express my gratitude to the Chairman and members of the School Board of Governors and Mr. John for all their guidance and support.

<<<< 8 >>>>

May the Almighty continue to bless Auckland House in its efforts to provide quality education to the children of this and other countries.

Auckyites, always aim for the best and excel in all you do. Place your trust in God and walk humbly, for as the poet, Saxon White Kessinger, says:

*Sometimes when you're feeling important;
Sometimes when your ego's in bloom
Sometimes when you take it for granted
You're the best qualified in the room.*

*Sometimes when you feel that your going
Would leave an unfillable hole,
Just follow these simple instructions
And see how they humble your soul;*

*Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hand in it upto the wrist,
Pull it out and the hole that's remaining
Is a measure of how you'll be missed.*

*You can splash all you wish when you enter,
You may stir up the water galore,
But stop and you'll find that in no time
It looks quite the same as before.*

*The moral of this quaint example
Is do just the best that you can,
Be proud of yourself but remember
There's no indispensable man!!*

Jai Hind

Sunita John