

## From the Editor's Desk

Volunteers are an asset to any organization especially so for a non-profit. They are the untiring foot soldiers who act as a bridge between the organization and the community they serve. They also play a crucial role in helping the organization deliver valuable services and achieving its goals.

Organizations have always been enthusiastic about what each volunteer brings to their programmes.



The diverse backgrounds and experiences coupled with the zeal and devotion of volunteers keeps the organization moving forward. *Involvement of volunteers is a barometer of how invested people are in their local communities.*

Volunteers have been a major part of Pustakaar, since its inception. Over the years we have had more than 50 volunteers support us who have dedicated their time and skills in shaping the programmes that Pustakaar has today. They have played a vital role in realizing the mission statement of Pustakaar: that of opening the magical world of storybooks to children, adding

curiosity and imagination in the process of reading.

Pustakaar's volunteers have assisted us in a range of activities ranging from storytelling and lesson planning to decision making and fundraising. Through story telling sessions, they have added life to the characters of stories. They have mentored and influenced a huge number of students by the lessons they have taught through the stories.

Careful selection of Read-Aloud stories and systematic lesson planning for the same stories was also an endeavor started by yet another volunteer.

Another way our volunteers have helped us immensely is giving us visibility by spreading word among their family and friends. This has, in turn, given us more volunteers to work with. They have been advocates of our cause who have boosted our outreach by conducting several book

drives. They have campaigned for us to acquire new donors and raise funds, which is always a challenge for the sustenance of small NGOs.

We have been fortunate to have a group of volunteers who have steadfastly believed in our cause and mission and utilized their skills to influence the community we serve.

Shobha Bhansali  
Shruthi Hegde  
Karuna Koripella

## Expansion of Reading Accelerator Programmes



The Reading Accelerator programme started last year in four of the Rainbow Foundation homes. This mobile application-based program has now been expanded to 12 homes. A total of 38 Lenovo tabs have been distributed to these 12 homes. Every child from grade four to six spends 10 minutes every day using the Read Along app to read stories.

Pustakaar team visited all 12 orphanages in August and conducted a baseline assessment of all 182

children. This will provide us an understanding of the reading levels of these children and help us compare their progress at the end of the year.

We also remotely track the progress made by the children on a weekly basis. A Pustakaar field coordinator also visits each of these homes to provide additional inputs and for monitoring. We hope to make a difference in their learning outcomes with the help of programmes like these along with our regular library programme.

## New Partnerships - Collaboration with Nirmaan

Last year Pustakaar provided financial assistance to students in partner schools whose parents had their livelihood disrupted due to the pandemic. This ensured many students completed their 10th grade. But, we soon realized that these students needed not only financial aid but guidance as well in terms of choosing the right course and career path for the future. This paved the way for our collaboration with Nirmaan who provide life skills

and career guidance required to make better career choices based on their strengths.

Students at Vikas Model School underwent a psychometric test through the app, Best Career, developed by the Nirmaan team. Based on the results of each child, the team will now conduct further workshops to help them make appropriate career decisions.



Pustakaar was fortunate to receive a large in-kind donation from IOL Chemical and Pharmaceuticals Limited, Ludhiana. CEO Sanjay Chaturvedi and his wife Renu have been Pustakaar supporters for many years. Renu was a volunteer at the Nanakramguda school. IOLCP has donated books, Lenovo tablets, and a laptop through our Amazon wishlist. We are grateful for their support!

## In-person Story Sessions



*Kids at Vivekanda school with their idols.*

We are extremely happy to have resumed our in-person story sessions in all our partner schools. These sessions were stalled for almost two years because of the pandemic.

Ten of our dedicated volunteers visit eight schools every week. Every volunteer spends an hour each week reading a story from the 'Story Packet' provided. The story packet contains a book, a

lesson plan and activity sheets related to the story. In a typical story session, the volunteer reads the story aloud and engages the children in language enrichment activities.

On special occasions (Independence day/ Ganesh Chaturthi/Christmas), some of our volunteers take the extra effort to plan specific activities and worksheets suitable for the occasion.

### *Volunteer Profile*

#### **Shreya Thakkar**



"I have known the work of Pustakaar for two years now. I have loved the passion the team has for spreading the joy of reading to young people. In three months of my experience as an volunteer at Pustakaar, I

have felt safe, joyful, and a valued member of the team. I loved that every time we had an opportunity to send stories to children, we were

given support to not miss it. All the staff and volunteers here bring a unique set of skills to keep children engaged with the books. The resources used to supplement the learning of children are also of high quality and easy for any of our facilitators to use. And the deliberate effort of the core team to make sure that while trying to formalize the outcome measurement, we do not forget that the 'joy of reading', is at the core of our work, does inspire me to keep hoping and working towards quality education for all children."

## Your support keeps us motivated

Basic level picture books are the need of the hour for us to set-up our libraries for a new project that is in the pipeline in association with Teach For India, a long-time partner NGO. You can buy/donate preloved or new books for the same. You can also support us by conducting a book drive in your community. Please get in touch with us to get more details about the book drive.

Bank Details for Donations:

Account Name: Ansh Foundation

Account Number: 111405000966

IFSC Code: ICIC0001114

**\*\*Kindly write your name in the reference line so we can track donations\*\***

### Contact Info:

[www.pustakaar.org](http://www.pustakaar.org)

[pustakaar@gmail.com](mailto:pustakaar@gmail.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pustakaar](https://www.facebook.com/pustakaar)

Instagram: @pustakaar

## From Our Archives



*Volunteers at a workshop conducted for kids from low-income schools in association with Teach for India.*