Aarohi

School exposure - Yoga session

NEWSLETTER

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Brittany Chung

25th Annual General Body Meeting

Aarohi is 25 years old!

On May 27th, we celebrated our 25th Annual General Body Meeting (''AGBM'') – an event which was as special as each of our last twenty-four annual general meetings. We celebrated the work that we have accomplished over the last many years, but also took cognizance of the work ahead of us. Our community folks attended the event and through dance, drama and food, everyone was suitably engaged.

A wonderful journey of love and trust, we would like to thank our friends, well-wishers, volunteers, beautiful people of the mountains and each one of you who has been a part of Aarohi family in making it what it is today!

You have touched our hearts by your continuous love and support.

Swasthya Melas

Swasthya Mela is a platform of creating awareness on matters related to maternal and child health through the medium of mass communication – such as role-plays, songs, games and quizzes. The melas are an excellent way of creating awareness of the community towards important and relevant health issues.

In April and May, Aarohi organized four Swasthya melas, an average of over 200 hundred people attended each mela. Aarohi's team of field supervisors worked tirelessly to organize these melas. The Melas had skits and songs in local dialect on current relevant issues which included diarrhea and safe drinking water, importance of antenatal checkup and necessity of iron supplements during pregnancy.

School Health Exposure

As part of our health intervention, school exposure trips are organized for children with an intention to emphasize the importance of personal and environmental hygiene and sanitation. These trips, for most children, happened to be their first such outdoor camping experience.

In May, 100 children were taken on an adventure trip to Kashiyalekh. The camp was located amidst a dense oak forest with spectacular Himalayan views. The children were engaged in activities such as valley crossing, ladder climbing, Burma

bridge and the like. Interspersed with these activities were messages on team building, working together to keep their surroundings clean and personal hygiene. An enriching experience for all!

CLINICAL HEALTH

Dr. Upreti, Chief Medical Officer, Nainital District with the rest of our clinical health team at Aarohi Arogya Kendra for the inauguration of our new ultrasound machine.

Cataract eye surgery camp held in April – **Dr. (Col) C.S Pant, Chairman, Aarohi** with the patients post the eye surgery

NAMIK VALLEY MEDICAL CAMP

For the last six years, Himjoli and Aarohi have together been conducting biannual health camps in high altitude villages of the Pindari Valley in Bageshwar District of Uttarakhand. This time, we decided to venture into the neighbouring lesser known Namik valley in Pithoragarh District of Uttarakhand. Between the 1st and 9th of May 2017, a small team of doctors and medical staff from Aarohi, Pankaj of Himjoli and a few volunteers, trekked up to the picturesque Namik valley to conduct their first medical camp in the region. The aim was to understand the general state of health of people in the region, assess their healthcare needs and offer free out-patient medical and dental consultations to the local village communities.

At all four camps conducted in this Valley, we received a very welcoming response from the locals. The team worked incessantly from morning to evening attending to patients, managing and pacifying crowds, dispensing medicines and constructively engaging children. A noteworthy 753 patients were seen over a span of just four days of which 327 were school children and 341 were general patients. 60% of the general patients were women. 61 free dental extractions were performed over the period by Dr. Tejasvi Bhatt, Aarohi's resident dentist. In Kimu and Ratirketi in particular, we received an overwhelming support from locals who served us tea, milk, ghee and food from their own homes. With school children, we played games, told stories and distributed water colours which they used to paint on rocks. We also addressed the children on general tips on maintaining cleanliness and hygiene.

After the camps, we trekked from Namik to BalechinaKund where we camped for the next two nights. From there, we trekked to Thaltok (3385 m), crossing many beautiful meadows en route, and caught fantastic views of some of the highest peaks including Nanda Devi (7848 m), Nanda Kot (6861m), Trishul (7120 m) and the Panchchuli range.

In all, we completed a successful medical camp that was positively received by the people and we hope to visit the valley again, very soon!

Source: Google

SCIENCE WORKSHOP

We organized a science workshop in May at Mini Kashmir Brahm Samiti school in Jhulaghat, under Aarohi's outreach program which was conducted by Ashutosh Upadhyay and Gaurav Bohra from Pratham Education Foundation's Science team under the flagship program of 'Alliance for Science'. It was a three day workshop with classes 6-8th, comprising of hands on model building, discussions, quizzes and roleplays.

On the first day, children created a model of the human body and the digestive systems. It was the first time they studied science by self explorations and kinesthetic learning. The next day was dedicated to the human skeleton system and after a fun quiz on different types of creatures and their skeleton systems, the children created excellent working models of the human skeleton using scrap cardboard boxes. The last and final day was filled with curiosity and wonder. It was about astronomy and the mysteries of our planet earth and the universe. The discussion between children and the facilitators went from questions around night and day, hours of the day, changing weather, galaxies, gravity, the moon, the stars and our wonderful universe. Each group created a mini planetarium for themselves and using small torches, experimented with how the angle of the sun's rays affect our existence on earth. After a discussion and model building, a roleplay exercise was conducted, where children were given different characters to play.

All the children performed with utmost enthusiasm and explained many complex phenomena with great understanding and depth. It was immensely helpful for children and teachers in understanding the importance of learning by doing and how comprehension and awareness increase by using both our minds and bodies.

EDUCATION EVENT - WHAT A DAY!

On June 10th, Aarohi held an event for all those children who had appeared in the recent board exams of Class 10 and Class 12. The children were from our Aarohi Bal Sansar alumni, children of our staff and those from the community who are covered under our scholarship programmes. The intent was to bring all these bright, young children together for an informal session, to hear them out and maybe in a small way motivate/guide them. We had talented, young speakers from our local community- Kamla Bisht, Rakesh Rana, Shubham Thapa and Savitri Bisht sharing their experiences, their journey, their struggles, and successes – this prompted many others to pour out their hearts too. The session was rich with emotions, inspiration, and encouragement.

Jyoti, Aarohi's Secretary puts it aptly:

> "Today was simply a beautiful day. What a lovely energy flowed through our premises. We often wonder about the impact of our work. We wonder if we are going in the right direction at all. For me it has always been a question. I often feel lost, but then there are moments when I find myself. Today was one such day when I found myself...through all the stories we heard; and I was closer to all of them with my camera, I felt inspired. I felt, if not this then what could be the impact of our work?"

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Brittany, an SIT student, interned at Aarohi, researching the changes that traditional midwives have undergone, owing to the increase in institutionalization of maternal care. In addition to this, she did a brilliant job of documenting case studies of our local Dais/Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) who have been associated with Aarohi for the last many years.

Brittany shares her experience:

My experience with Aarohi was everything I could have asked for. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to live in the Kumaon Region of Uttarakhand for a month, surrounded by some of the most kind and welcoming people I have ever met.

My decision to work with Aarohi was the best choice I could have made for my research project. Aarohi was there for me at every step of the way. Aarohi not only helped me gain a greater understanding of the context in which I was conducting my research but also challenged me to better my research in whatever way possible.

Beyond conducting research, living in Satoli was an adventure in and of itself. To trekking in the mountains to attending a Kumaoni wedding, every day was its own experience, filled with its own lessons and challenges.

I especially want to emphasize the strong sense of community I felt in Satoli. I was treated with utmost care and kindness, two rarities in today's world.

I want to thank Aarohi for welcoming me, a stranger, into their family. Thank you for your never-ending support and care. Most importantly, thank you for the important work that you do for the broader Kumaoni community.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

You can become a member of Aarohi or make a donation towards any of our projects. You can reach out to your family and friends and talk about our work. You can help spread the word.

For more information email us at info@aarohi.org

DONATE ONLINE!

We have partnered with GlobalGiving offering an easy and safe platform for online giving. **Go to www.globalgiving.org and search for 'Aarohi'.**

JOIN HANDS

We welcome doctors, teachers, managers, designers, musicians, theatre persons, IT professionals or anyone with a desire to share his or her skills to volunteer with us. Aarohi encourages creative ideas and provides a unique opportunity to experience a different way of living and working.

All contributions to Aarohi are eligible for Income Tax Exemption under section 80G of the IT Act.

Aarohi

Aarohi is a voluntary organisation founded in 1992. It is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It is also registered u/s 80 G and 12 A of the IT Act and under the FCRA.

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