

# DAVIDHA

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Dear Readers,

Greetings! As we begin yet another academic year it is a privilege for us at KGERC as we begin to discover further new aspects of giftedness. We are extremely excited as mentioned in the previous newsletter that we are celebrating 10 years of working with gifted students in schools and with parents and children, Pan India. This has been an interesting journey with loads of dreams that are slowly gaining momentum. We are currently representing our expertise for 'Dhruv' an initiative of the Ministry of Education to include gifted nurturing, and we are in their core committee to work with other stakeholders in setting norms for gifted nurturing. Dr. Sameena Manaswala has drafted KGERC recommendations and we would be visiting New Delhi for the same. This is an encouraging step towards working on NEP 2020.

The alumni have been visiting our new office to meet the team and share their experiences and new journeys in higher education or work. October 18-19th, would be a significant day to bring educators, parents and researchers together. Kindly grace us with your presence and share your journeys as well. India has been in the backdrop as far as giftedness was concerned and we are slowly moving towards making sizable changes to continue to ignite minds of educators, students and organizations.

In this newsletter you can read about our facilitators journey from counselor to gifted facilitator, gifted alumni's experiences of the nurturing program's impact on their lives and teachers, parents who have shared their views about this wonderful topic. Enjoy the year and may this tribe grow as significant members of the community.

Wishing you all a great school year beginning  
Devasena Desai.

Associate Director,

Kaveri Counseling,

Empowerment and Gifted Center

# THE JOURNEY BEGAN WITH A COLOURED PENCIL

I was clearing up some items one day and realised what a long journey it has been. I found a few artworks of my son that were done at different ages. The first picture is from pre-primary, the second is from grade three, and the last two are from grade nine. In pre-primary, a few weeks before the completion of PP2, I was called to school to view my son's empty worksheets and scribbled papers and how he behaved in class.

While the rest of the class was sitting facing the teacher, he was crawling behind a bug on the floor. When the teacher was doing a recap, she asked the past tense for a word that was done in class, and no one answered, but mine did from where he was while carefully picking up the bug on a leaf.

The Pre Primary head told me, "He does not know how to hold a crayon and colour, he does not try writing alphabets, he does not sit in class, but talks of evolution, ammonites and can give scientific names of any dinosaur. His spoken English is at a very high level, and we are not able to keep up. We have to pass him because it is a mandatory pass, but I have to show some of his work to the higher authorities during the review. It looks like you have made him a bookworm and fed too much data into him. His emotions are extreme, but logic can make him sit down and self-introspect. What should I do?"

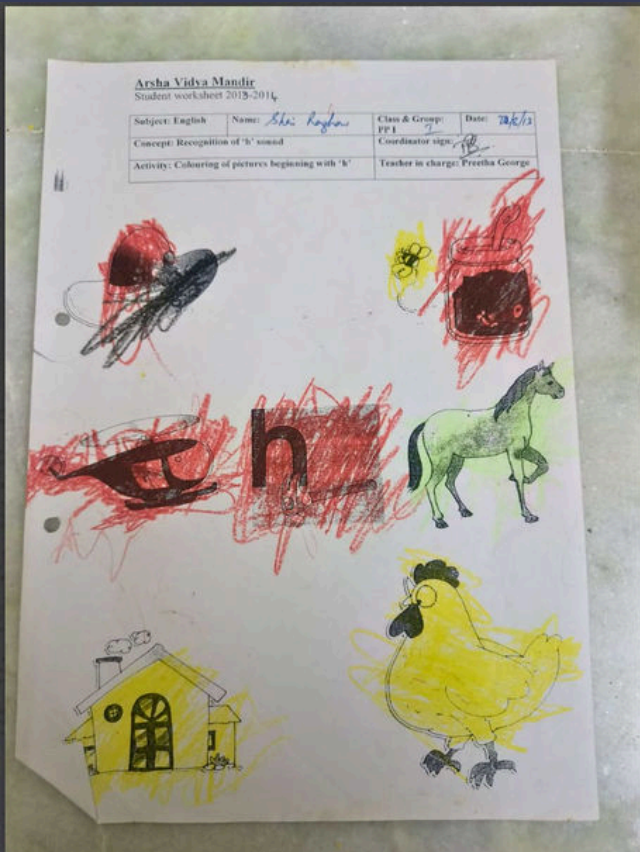
I knew my child was different, but I had no clue what giftedness was, which made me take up the challenge. I decided to deal with one issue at a time. The school needed worksheets to show the management immediately, so I took that first. My son has an aversion towards anything oily.

He would wash his hands a zillion times and keep it so dry that a small scratch could make it bleed. Hence, I convinced the school to permit him to use coloured pencils (This was against their rule, as they believed that pencils would damage a toddler's fingers). I showed them the samples of his work that he did at home, and they were surprised that he could colour and write! Within a week, he completed all the worksheets.

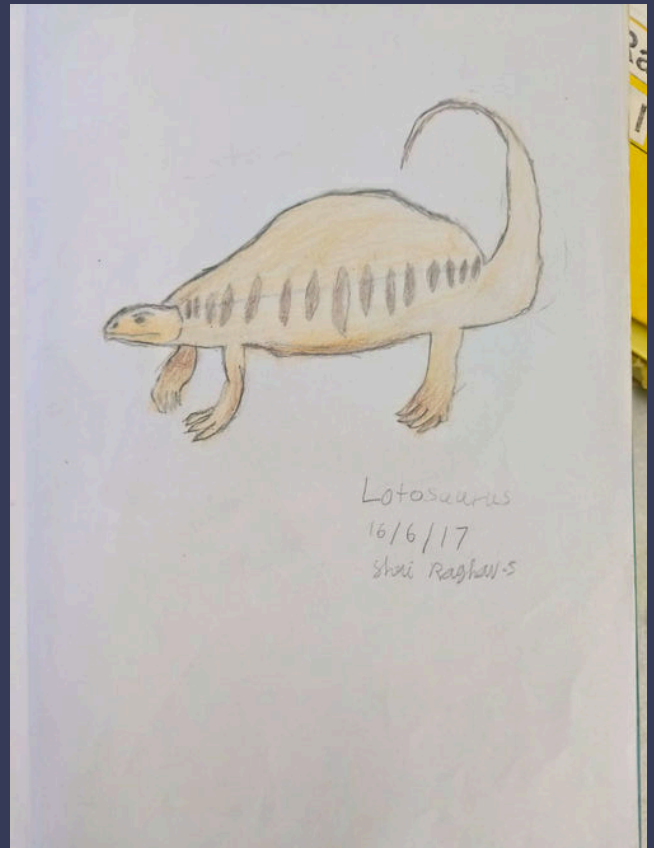
The next issue was his handwriting, which was too illegible (His brain works way too fast for his hands to catch up). My child is extremely strong-minded, and convincing him to practice handwriting notes was an impossible task. He already had a fracture and a dislocation near his elbow during this time, and he also became a right-hander from an Ambi Dexter.

He would not use his left hand, which underwent surgery. He was completely unmanageable during physiotherapy; he became aggressive, and therefore, I started doing roundabout work. I gave him dinosaur pictures from encyclopedias to draw and taught him to cook and make kolam and rangoli. We also worked on clay modeling and played tennis without letting him realise what we were up to. After all these years, the results have been overwhelming. His art teacher is very impressed, and his handwriting is a lot better now and my younger one's is wonderful, as I started much earlier for her.

**-By Sowmyalakshmi, Parent of a gifted child**



Pre-Primary



Grade 3



Grade 9



Grade 9



# MENTORING MOMENTS

Recently, I had the opportunity to peer mentor performing art prodigies from all over India in a residential workshop focused on their mental well-being as performers and people in general. I was very nervous going into this experience because I did not feel like a mentor at all. How was I supposed to guide anyone when I felt so lost? Yet I was very excited to meet all of them and be a part of the experience.

All of them were very bright and confident, they had the confidence that can only come from mastering something, failing and conquering your own mountains. This leads to an interesting dynamic for sure, friends over short periods like this really allow for authenticity in a surprising way, to have conversations where we genuinely talk for no reason or purpose at all.

I was the mentor, but I had no idea what I was supposed to do, and I worried that I was doing more harm than good. I noticed how my perfectionism was staining their experiences as I was guiding a group through one of the activities while they were updating me on their work so far. I had the urge to fix their work or push them more, but I failed to see that it was their best creative outcome. Most of the tasks are about the process, and I was just jumping on the end, not just for me, but for them too.

More than their talent and creativity, what stood out for me was their compassion for everyone, seeing them work through language barriers and age gaps, with the older kids trying to help the little ones while also avoiding taking advantage of their experience, and the younger ones attempting to stand taller on their tiptoes.

As a peer mentor, I was supposed to help them be comfortable and open up, but it was the other way around. They pulled me out of my shell with their awesome ideas, ridiculous compliments, smiles and brilliant jokes. The group had it all: a beautiful mosaic of different languages, cultures, ages and talents.

Then again all these differences don't mean much, my first impression was that the group was just like any other, with the quiet ones, the loud ones and the funny ones. By the end of the workshop, I found this narrating voice in my head silent, realising if only for a minute to stop thinking of everyone as labels or even lessons. I still think all those differences don't mean a lot, but in the sense that differences are inevitable and infinite and a little more of them doesn't change much.

After the first day, I decided to make friends, just trying to be there, have conversations, and hopefully help. Well, I had loads of fun when I gave up the idea of - "Oh, I have to be a mentor". I was actually able to fill the role for myself, which was to help the kids have someone closer to them, by age or experience, to whom they can hopefully relate and open up more. Just when I said "Hi!", as a friend and not "as someone who is going to help them", was I able to be in a position to guide and cheer them on. In the end, it doesn't matter how confident you are, just be there.

**BY VINAYA BHAT, KGERC ALUMNI**

# NURTURING GIFTED MINDS

Being a mother of a gifted child and a primary teacher by profession, I like to learn and know more about 'gifted' students. Every academic year brings a fresh batch of students and identifying their abilities, advocating for them and enrolling them in the 'gifted education course' in order to get appropriate education and utilize their abilities is quite a challenging process!

People assume that gifted children are perfect in everything and anything they do. In reality, they do not. Don't be under the impression that they can do it as they are gifted. No, they cannot! Gifted children can be disorganized, scattered, and create a mess just like any other child. They do not excel in all areas. They may be ahead in some subjects but behind in others. Gifted students also face emotional issues like anger, boredom, bullying, isolation, perfectionism, arrogance, and mood swings. They are just like any other child in a classroom.

Take my son as an example. He has excellent communication skills but struggles with math. He takes his time to solve math problems and needs to use paper and pencil to work through them. As teachers, we must understand the strengths and weaknesses of every child, keeping in mind their individuality, and not have unrealistic expectations from them, pressurize or burden them. Instead, we need to establish a warm and receptive classroom.

Over the years, I have realised not to set too high or too low expectations from our students rather help them in creating their own realistic, measurable, and achievable goals within a given time frame. Giftedness means that you have the ability to do things in a different way.

Like a seed, it has potential but needs to be nourished, cared for, fertilized and requires sunlight in order to grow. It is the responsibility of the parents and educators to explain that being gifted is not a 'get out from working hard'. We must teach that 'smart' does not equal 'never study' or 'it will always come easy'. Gifted students must know that they have to work hard even if they are gifted.

As teachers, we should encourage a non-competitive, individualized, non-judgemental and open classroom which allows every student to learn at their own pace and create their unique learning curve. Implementing these strategies will help not only the gifted child but the entire classroom.

**-By Deepti Junagade, Teacher, KHS Baner**

**THOSE FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY SAY THAT, "THE FRUITS OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE EQUALLY AVAILABLE AND REACHABLE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY."**

**THOSE WHO ARE OF EXCELLENCE SAY THAT, "THE ROOTS OF ALL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ARE IN THE HIGH ABILITIES FOUND IN A FEW PEOPLE IN THE SOCIETY"**

**-DR. USHA KHIRE (2022)**

# ALUMNI UPDATES



## Saniya Pendhari

Saniya Pendhari is a final-year B.Tech student at VIT Vellore. After gaining some work experience, she plans to pursue a master's degree in data science. Currently, she is interning at Digital Wing, where she is involved in research, data management, and analysis. When asked about what it is like being gifted, she said, " Sometimes I tend to look at the situation from all perspectives and how others will be perceiving situations and dealing with it."

Saniya believes that gifted children require proper nurturing because they think differently and have a unique approach to life. If they don't receive the necessary attention, it could lead to adverse outcomes. She believes that gifted individuals should be given space to exist and express themselves without being suppressed.

When asked how the gifted nurturing program shaped her school journey, she said, " During 5th and 6th grade, I got to interact with different people of my age apart from my school, which made me think differently. One thing I appreciate is that meeting other kids who are more creative and expressive than I am, gave me a different approach to situations and solutions, making it a more fun journey."

This exposure broadened her perspectives and provided a fun learning experience through the sessions, workshops, overnight camps, and skits. The overnight camps, in particular, were memorable as having the privilege of staying up till late at night with an early rise the next day was more of an adventure and chaos on its own.

Lastly, Saniya hopes to work in the social domain in the future, analyzing people's behaviour patterns and understanding their mindsets and perceptions, which will help align with her true passion.



## Mihir Dixit

Mihir Dixit is a recent graduate who obtained a Bachelor of Technology in Rail Infrastructure Engineering from the National Rail and Transportation Institute in Vadodara, Gujarat. This institute is India's first and only college under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India. Soon, he will be joining a consulting company in the railway department in New Delhi. However, he plans to work for two years before pursuing his master's program.

When asked what it is like being gifted, he said, "The way you critically think, make decisions and look at things is different compared to others." He believes that gifted children require proper nurturing and support from others to understand their thought processes and believe in their abilities.

Mihir's visit to a tribal school in Konkan allowed him to explore himself through unfamiliar activities, broadening his horizons.



As a gifted child, he feels fortunate to have experienced more challenging tasks from teachers and parents, enabling him to solve organizational problems.

Mihir is delighted to embark on a railway career, as it aligns with his passion, which has transformed into a profession. Since childhood, his dedication to his dreams has culminated in an opportunity he will cherish forever.



### Kaanksha Gadgil

Kaanksha Gadgil, a second-year media and communication student at MIT World Peace University, is pursuing a major in journalism. She aims to pursue a master's degree in International Relations, with a focus on geopolitics. Being a part of the gifted nurturing program in 2015 has given her valuable insights into her personality.

When asked about the sessions at the gifted program, she said, "I now realise how important those sessions were. The program was like a life jacket; it provided me with a different perspective through the guidance of my mentor, which had a profound impact on me as I was previously a blank slate." The sessions helped her delve deeper into her emotions, discover her innermost soft side and develop her emotional intelligence considerably.

She believes that gifted children require proper nurturing as intervention is necessary at the right time and age, which helps with their overall development. When asked about her memories at the gifted nurturing program, she said, "It helped me to develop significant bonds, and the biggest takeaway that I still hold close to my heart to date is about a long conversation with a woman during the Panchgani trip who told me that, you do not need to be ashamed of having emotions."

Another memory that she holds is about watching the movie *Inside Out*, which at first she thought was baseless, but later understood the mechanism of emotions through discussing the movie. On being asked about the challenges she faced as being labeled as gifted, she expressed, "I still do not know what is so special about being gifted. I was always out there, and my classmates have always been supportive and did not treat me differently, which made me go through a normal schooling experience." Kaanksha's journalism career aligned with her interests after a session on the book "Ikigai", which helped her find solutions for her future pursuits. Lastly, she takes life as it comes and emerges dynamically by spreading her social wings in the world around her.

**I'M A NUMBER THAT'S SPECIAL, NOT AVERAGE YOU SEE,  
ABOVE 130 IS WHERE I TEND TO BE.  
MEASURED BY TESTS, I HINT AT POTENTIAL,  
WHAT SCORE AM I, DEEMED CONSEQUENTIAL?**

- INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

# MY JOURNEY AS A FACILITATOR OF GIFTED CHILDREN

A Working with gifted children has been a rewarding journey filled with moments of awe and inspiration. Each day brings new challenges and opportunities to nurture their exceptional abilities and support their unique needs. When I first started as a facilitator, I was struck by the intensity of their curiosity and the depth of their insights.

These children often think beyond their years, asking profound questions and connecting ideas in ways that surprised me. It's sheer joy to witness their enthusiasm for learning and to provide them with challenges that stretch their intellect.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my role was to create a learning environment where gifted children felt understood and valued. Many of them struggle with feeling different from their peers.

By fostering a supportive community and celebrating their achievements, big and small, I've seen them grow in confidence and resilience. Collaborating with their families is also crucial.

Understanding their backgrounds, aspirations, and concerns helps me tailor my approach to meet each child's unique needs. Whether it's designing personalized projects or recommending resources, working together ensures we provide the best possible support.

Of course, it's not without its challenges. Balancing their academic needs with their emotional well-being requires sensitivity. Helping them manage stress, navigate social dynamics, and embrace mistakes as part of learning is a continuous effort that requires patience and understanding.

Yet, despite the challenges, the progress and growth I witness in these children are incredibly fulfilling. Seeing them blossom into self-assured individuals who embrace their gifts and contribute meaningfully to their communities reinforces my belief in the importance of nurturing their potential.

Working with gifted children is a privilege that continually inspires me. It's about creating an environment where they can thrive intellectually, emotionally, and socially, paving the way for a future where their talents can make a positive impact on the world. It is a fulfilling journey that has also widened my horizons.

- BY PRATEEKSHA KHATRI

**“ GIFTED STUDENTS NEED ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING CURRICULUM THAT IS BOTH ACCELERATED AND ENRICHED.”**



# Bridging Brilliance: Meeting Ministry of Education & International Conference



## KGERC Meeting with the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education invited KGERC to a consultation meeting on the PMILP Dhruv project, attended by Dr. Devasena Desai and Dr. Sameena Manasawala on June 10th. Experts in gifted education across India joined, highlighting the government's commitment to establishing policies and centers of excellence for nurturing gifted students. This initiative is promising for the future of gifted education in India.



## 2024 International Conference Gifted Education

We are thrilled to announce the 2024 International Conference on Gifted Education, hosted by the Kaveri Gifted Education and Research Center (KGERC). We warmly invite all researchers, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to join us on October 18th-19th for "Illuminate India: Creating Connections Among Gifted Education Stakeholders." Let's come together to nurture brilliance in India.

**"THE MORE THAT YOU READ,  
THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW.  
THE MORE THAT YOU LEARN,  
THE MORE PLACES YOU'LL GO."**