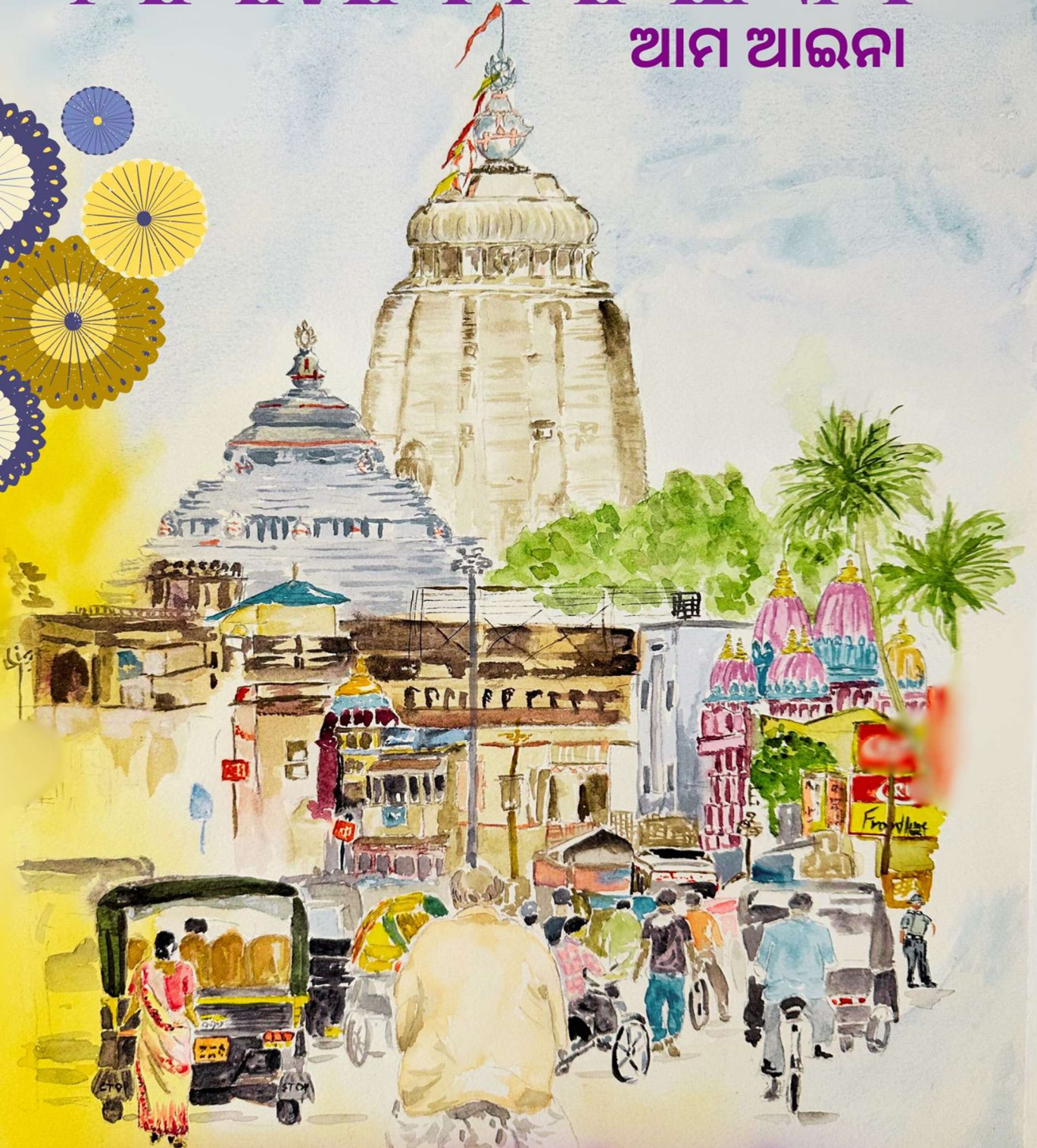
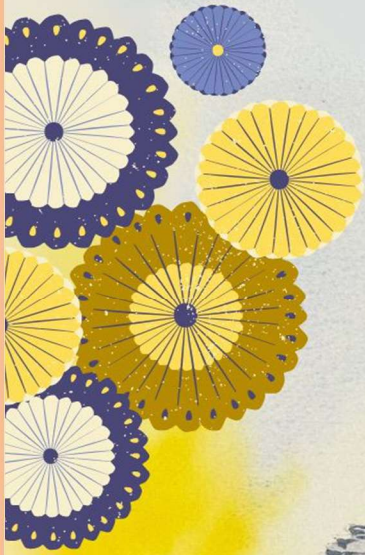


AAMA AAINA

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a sense of belonging ...

OSA NY/NJ/PA CHAPTER
APRIL 2024

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We thank the journal editors – Deepti
Paikray, Sudashima Naik,
Nilasundar Jena, Jigisha Biswal and
Prajnya Pradhan

Front Cover

Artist: Sukant Paikray

Editorial

A Sense of Belonging



Deepti Paikray

Human beings thrive on a feeling of connection, an innate desire to belong to the world and its people. It's this needs to bond, reach out and form relations that makes human life complete and fulfilling. By building meaningful relations we create a safe place for people to come together, contribute and form a community that is a resource not only to its people, but also a valid contributor to a society's economic progress and societal cohesion. Such is the community of OSA NYNJPA chapter in America comprising of 800 plus members.

If I were to use an allegory to further elaborate this abstract feeling of belonging, then what comes to mind is the short story *The Strategy* by eminent Odia writer Sri Manoj Das. In the story the protagonist an aging woman was a midwife. Not only did she help birth many children who are now well into their middle age, but many have been named by her at birth. Then one day she is overcome with a deep need to be acknowledged for her presence, whether she belongs to the community around her or not. Tragically she discovers that none would miss her if she is gone. The next day she passes away into that eternal space regarded as the panacea for all human problems.

Many of us when we first arrived in America were overcome by America's vast lands, its harsh winters, and the heavy silence inside our homes and our hearts, living in a country that is culturally very different from India, from homeland Odisha. Some countries believe that modern society has little need for traditions and the hoary past. But when we deny and disown our cultural heritage an essence that is vital and throbbing and humane dries up. We must not allow that to happen.

Thus, we remain indebted to our Jagannath culture that imbibes us with gratitude for the world we live in, for the lives we lead, many times difficult but always reclaimed with hope, faith, and righteous intentions. The cover painting of the magazine painted by Sri Sukant Kumar Paikray is steeped in this vital sense of belonging with humanity inching towards the lord of the universe as the irrefutable haven of grace and sublimity.

The OSA NYNJPA chapter too is a harbor of support and selfless service to all Odia immigrants. The chapter has remained true to the notion of the entire universe existing as a big family ever since its inception in 1969. The number of memberships, the contributions to the Christmas box, the charity picnic, Rath yatra, Kumar Purnima celebrations are all-time-honored traditions that reflect the vibrant and generous spirit of our organization, facilitated by a sense of belonging. A

belonging that happens only when the members of a community feel appreciated, heard, and acknowledged.

To that end, *Aama Aaina* is a testimony of the journey of our chapter and its people. The more we have belonged to each other in joy and need, the more our identity has shone on foreign lands be it through our earthy cuisine, the graceful Odissi dance or the numerous charitable drives to share with those less fortunate. I have always believed that writers write because of an irresistible pull of words, and a glimmer of an idea alighting upon the soul's meadow like a beautiful butterfly, bright and frail in appearance, yet with the soul power to fly miles, the way a writer's words must go the distance to traverse deep into the hearts of readers.

Between these pages you will read the stories and experiences of children and adults from our community, listen to their voices, hopes and remembrances as they live their life straddling the two cultures of their home country and their adopted country. As one member rightly pointed out that if Odisha is my birthplace, then America is my karma place. Our writers have carved out their stories through their words and rippling rivers of feelings. We believe that in reading their tales your day will be brightened, your soul uplifted, and you will feel the protective shade of OSA NYNJPA's vast awning to know that each one of us belongs and thrives under its aegis.

My heartfelt thanks to our president Sri Nilasundar Jena, Mrs. Jigisha Biswal, Mrs. Sudashima Naik, Mrs. Prajnya Pradhan, for their valuable efforts in the compilation of this magazine. May we continue to flourish together knowing that when we truly belong to each other and the world around us we begin to exist as one sacred oneness.

Jai Jagannath,

Mrs. Deepti Paikray

President's Message



Nilasundar Jena

Dear OSA Community Members,

Namaskar and Happy Utkal Dibas to all!

The new chapter officials took charge on Nov 19, 2023, after the Kumar Purnima event. During the remainder of 2023 the team worked to form the Management Team and prepare a plan for next two years. The vision for next two years is based on 5”S” pillars i.e. Sankalpa (ସଂକଳ୍ପ), Samparka (ସମ୍ପର୍କ), Sanskruti (ସଂସ୍କୃତି), Samrudhi (ସମୃଦ୍ଧି) and Suraksha (ସୁରକ୍ଷା). These are the transformation ideas initiated in the last few years and will be refined each year as we progress. Each of the boxes under the 5 pillars will be taken as an initiative with defined and measurable goals.

Sankalpa (ସଂକଳ୍ପ) (Pledge to continue the established initiatives and events)		Samparka (ସମ୍ପର୍କ) (Strengthen relationships and networking across our membership)		Sanskriti (ସଂସ୍କୃତି) (Preserve and Propagate Odia Culture and move it to the next level)		Samrudhi (ସମୃଦ୍ଧି) (Enhance OSA Impact - Prosperity for all)		Suraksha (ସୁରକ୍ଷା) (Create a Social Insurance Net for all members)
Saraswati Puja	Utkal Dibas Cookout	Senior Samparka	Graduate Day	RDF / NDF	Cross Cultural X-Change outside OSA	OSA Real Estate Facility	Charity & Community Service	Formal Inclusion of PA into Chapter
Annual Summer Picnic	Ganesh Puja	IT & Social Media	Awards & Recognition	Champu Chhanda Odissi (CCO)	Odia Language Class	Member Growth	Employer Match	Family Emergency Service
4H Fair	Annual Day and Kumar Purnima	Engage GeNext Organize Youth Seminars - "Meet the Masters"	Professional Group & Training Women's Empowerment	Book Publication - Member Authors		Policy and Processes	Fund Raising	

Sankalpa: These activities, mostly physical, are driven from OSA Constitution and form our core events as they are celebrated across all chapters. We have celebrated these events consistently for years and pledge to continue doing that. These activities vary from religious activities to performing cultural programs and enjoying delicious Odia foods together.

Samparka: During the Covid pandemic, we began an initiative to formally establish a mechanism to stay in touch with our OSA senior members. The objective was to continue

learning from them, keep them engaged in current OSA events as well as be a support system when needed. We have been successful in achieving this to some extent and will enhance on this objective further.

Similar to the above objective, we plan to establish and enhance our relationships and contacts at various other levels e.g. OSA Next Generation Members, Women's group, students graduating from High School and College in a particular year and various Professionals where we share knowledge and help each other grow in our career. Our IT & social media team will help us establish and enhance these connections and relationships. Lastly, we honor our relations with our volunteers by recognizing & appreciating them.as they are the key to success of the events and the organization itself.

Sanskriti: Sanskriti is the key pillar of OSA and that's why we have kept this as one of pillars for the next 2 years. Sanskriti or Culture is what Odisha is known for. As part of this pillar, we will propagate the following activities:

- Participate in National Drama Festival (NDF) and show the great talent of our chapter members in front of the entire OSA community.
- Host Regional Drama Festival (RDF) in 2024 and participate with full energy when hosted by other chapters.
- Our Chapter was the first in OSA to establish a virtual Lata Mishra Champu Chhanda & Odissi (CCO) academy by bringing all Odissi, Champu Chhanda dance Gurus in the Chapter together and promote our culture within and across OSA.
- We will promote Odia Language by aligning with National OSA's policy of establishing Odia Language schools.
- We will encourage our chapter members, especially the next generation, to show their creative writing skills and will help them publish their books.

Samrudhi: As one of the prominent chapters of OSA, we made significant progress over the past 50+ years and looking at enhancing the OSA impact and bringing prosperity for all. As part of Samrudhi pillar, we will focus on the following areas:

- Come up with a roadmap to have a real estate facility of our own which we can call our home. The future may be hazy, but we will start strong and with everyone's support, will make our dream come true.
- Continue our community services with Community Food Bank of NJ and establish our engagement with 1-2 similar additional organizations. This is in support of our goal of doing something for the local community where we live in.
- We will enhance fund raising activities supported by employer match to support our charity as well as other development activities.
- All of the Samrudhi and the wider chapter activities will be governed by proper processes and policies as that would increase the confidence of our members in the executive and management teams.

Suraksha: Suraksha is our social insurance pillar where we will work with National OSA to formally include PA into our NYNJ chapter even though some of the PA members are actively participating in our events and activities.

Reinforce the chapter emergency fund that was established a few years back to support any OSA member families in financial difficulties and need. This is the way to show the community that we are all here and together for anyone in need.

The vision and plan were presented to the Management team on January 15, 2024. Teams have been formed in most initiatives and work started in many initiatives, while others are in the process of taking off. If you want to contribute as a volunteer in any of the initiatives, please reach out to an EC member.

Sincere Regards,
Sri Nilasundar Jena
President, OSA NYNJPA chapter

Message from the Honorable Chief Minister

ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ
ପୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା



ଲୋକସେବା ଭବନ
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

ଆମେରିକାର ନିୟୁଟ୍ ସହରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟି ଅଫ ଆମେରିକା ପକ୍ଷରୁ ୨୦୨୪ ଅପ୍ରେଲ ୬ ତାରିଖରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦିବସ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଇଥିବା ଏବଂ ଏହି ଅବସରରେ ‘ଆମ ଆଇନା’ ନାମକ ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଥିବା ଜାଣି ମୁଁ ଆନନ୍ଦିତ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ସବୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦିବସ ଆମ ଅସ୍ମିତାର ଦିବସ । ପ୍ରତି ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ ଓ ଗୌରବର ଦିବସ । ବିଦେଶରେ ରହି ଆପଣମାନେ ଯେପରି ଭାବରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୌରବ ପାଇଁ କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ଆମ କଳା ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରସାର ପାଇଁ କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ତାହା ମୋତେ ବେଶ ଖୁସି ଦେଇଛି । ଆପଣମାନେ ବିଦେଶରେ ନିଜର ଦକ୍ଷତା ଯୋଗୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସୁନାମ ବୃଦ୍ଧି କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ପରମ୍ପରାର ପ୍ରଚାର ପ୍ରସାରରେ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ଯୋଗଦାନ ପାଇଁ ବହୁତ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।

ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାଟିର ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ଓ ଅସ୍ମିତାକୁ ବଜାୟ ରଖି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମା’ର ଗୌରବକୁ ଆହୁରି ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ କରିବା ପାଇଁ କାମ କରିବା ।

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୧୦୪/୩୦-୩-୨୦୨୪

Message from the Honorable Education Minister

धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान
ଧର୍ମେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଧାନ
Dharmendra Pradhan



ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

मंत्री
शिक्षा; कौशल विकास
और उद्यमशीलता
भारत सरकार
Minister
Education; Skill Development
& Entrepreneurship
Government of India

ଆମେରିକାର ନିୟୁଟ୍ ସହରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟି ଅଫ୍ ଆମେରିକା ଦ୍ୱାରା 'ଉତ୍କଳ ଦିବସ' ପାଳନ ହେବା ଓ ଏହି ଗୌରବମୟ ଅବସରରେ 'ଆମ ଆଇନା' ନାମକ ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରାଯିବା ଖୁସିର ବିଷୟ ।

୧୯୩୬ ମସିହା ଏପ୍ରିଲ ୧ ତାରିଖରେ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦେଶର ସର୍ବପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଷାଭିତ୍ତିକ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଉତ୍କଳ ଗୌରବ ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଦାସ, ମହାରାଜା ଶ୍ରୀରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜଦେଓ, ମହାରାଜା କୃଷ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଗଜପତି, ବ୍ୟାସକବି ଫକୀର ମୋହନ ସେନାପତି, କବିବର ରାଧାନାଥ ରାୟ, ସ୍ୱଭାବ କବି ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର ଓ ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଅନେକ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ତ୍ୟାଗ, ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ଓ ସଂଘର୍ଷ କାରଣରୁ ନୂଆ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅଭ୍ୟୁଦୟ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରେ ରହି 'ଉତ୍କଳ ଦିବସ' ପାଳନ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆଭର ପ୍ରଚାର ପ୍ରସାର କରୁଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗର୍ବିତ । ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର ଏଭଳି ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାକୁ ଅଶେଷ ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

୨୦୩୨ରେ ଭାଷାଭିତ୍ତିକ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଭାବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରଦେଶ ଗଠନର ଶତବାର୍ଷିକୀ ପାଳନ କରିବ । ୨୦୪୭ରେ ଭାରତକୁ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତାର ୧୦୦ ବର୍ଷ ପୂରଣ ହେବ । ଏହି ସମୟ ସବୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବେଶ୍ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏବଂ ସମ୍ଭାବନାମୟ ହେବ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଆମେ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ନେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଉନ୍ନତି କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଧ ପରିକର ହେବା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟି ଅଫ୍ ଆମେରିକାର ସଦସ୍ୟ ତଥା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍କଳ ଦିବସର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି । ଉଭୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ଓ ପତ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରକାଶନର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସଫଳତା କାମନା କରୁଛି । ବନ୍ଦେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ

ଧର୍ମେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଧାନ

सबको शिक्षा, अच्छी शिक्षा



कौशल भारत—कुशल भारत

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Chapter Report

Date From: April 2023

Date To: March 2024

Chapter Officials:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nilasundar Jena - President• Jigisha Biswal - Vice president• Sudashima Naik - General Secretary• Ashok Khandelwal - Treasurer• Rosy Biswal - EC Advisor• Prajnya Pradhan - EC Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hemant Pradhan - EC Advisor• Ardhendu Sarangi - EC Advisor• Rashmirekha Rajguru - EC Advisor• Arabindakshya Mishra - EC Advisor
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OSA Activities During the period:

1. Maa Saraswati Puja

The 2024 Saraswati Puja was organized at the Iskcon Temple of Central NJ, Plainfield, NJ and attended by approximately 200 people. It was a day of heavy snow shower overnight, still it couldn't stop the spirit of Odias to come together and celebrate Maa Saraswati Puja. The decoration team of Rashmi Rajaguru and Monalisa did a wonderful job decorating the Asthana of Maa and the stage for cultural programs. Like every year the puja was conducted by our own Pitambara Sarangi Bhaina where he chanted and explained the mantras for everyone's ease of understanding. The puja was followed by coconut breaking by our community kids and Khadi Chhuan ritual for our younger kids who were going to start their educational journey with Maa Saraswati's blessing. The Jajamans for this year were Subhashish Panda and Vani Mishra.

After puja, attendees were served with Bhoga consisting of Chuda Ghasa, Bundi, Khaja, fruits and so any other items prepared by our community volunteers and coordinated by Rosy Biswal. The cultural program consisting of Bhajans, Instrumental, Odissi dances by our member kids were all well prepared and mesmerizing. It was almost more than an hour of cultural programs ending with an Odissi dance that took the expectations to the next level. Awesome kids!!

The cultural programs were followed by lunch for which the temple kitchen prepared tasty prasad which was enjoyed by all attendees. Below are some pictures from the event.



2. X-Mas Fund Raiser for Community Food Bank of New Jersey (CFBNJ)

For the past 10+ years volunteers from OSA NYNJPA families go to the CFBNJ center at Hillside, NJ to help them in various food packaging activities. At OSA, we pride ourselves on giving back to the community and every year before X-Mas volunteers organize a fund raising event to raise funds so that we can send X-MAs dinner boxes to at least 50 families through CFBNJ. During 2023 X-MAs our chapter volunteers generated a fund of \$5300 which was sent on time to the organization. Below are some pictures from the volunteering activities at the CFBNJ center.



3. OSA NYNJPA Celebrates Kumar Purnami (KP) and Annual Day Function

Kumar Purnami and the Chapter Annual Day event is always the most awaited day of the year. Last year we celebrated the event on Nov 19 at the Ukrainian Cultural Center, Somerset, NJ. As preparation to the event, we hosted the Annual Member meeting on Nov 15 to share the activities done in the whole year and share our plan for the next year including the financials. The Kumar Purnami and Annual Day was a packed day with events for all age groups. It started with a Science Fair by our budding scientists where we showcased more than 20 unique projects. While the Science Fair was going on, our Health and Wellness Volunteers conducted the CPR training under the guidance of OSA Health & Wellness Group (HWG) Leaders. We were fortunate to have Dr Devasis Ray, Chairman of OSA HWG and Dr Adnan Sadiq from CT join the CPR training sessions. Special thanks to Dr Basanta Mahapatra for coordinating the training and Ms Suchismita Swain for conducting the theory sessions. About 30 people got trained on the day!

Post lunch we had the Senior Samparka program meet where approximately 20 senior OSA members join to discuss their experience and expectations from OSA. This is again another unique program pioneered in OSA NYNJPA in last couple of years under the mentorship of Sh Brajendra Sahu where our volunteers stay in touch with senior members throughout the year and appraise them of various OSA activities. The session was attended by Sh Saradindu Mishra, Dr Uma B Mishra, Shanti Lata Mishra, Dr Akhileswar Patel, Sh Brajendra Sahu among others. Dr Annapurna Pandey and Dr Triloki Pandey from CA attended the event as special guests and appreciated the initiative.

Re-launch of the book, "Between Two Worlds: East and West" by Dr. J.N. Mohanty. Dr. JN Mohanty was an eminent Odia philosopher based out of Philadelphia. The book is published by Black Eagle Books and available online. Dr. Triloki Pandey shared intimate details of Dr. Mohanty's life as a philosopher - The conversation was enriched with experiences shared by Dr. Annapurna Pandey, Dr. Uma Mishra, Dr. Akhileswar Patel.

For the past 10+ years, children from our community have been volunteering at the Community Food Bank of NJ. In addition, our community also donates Christmas dinners to 50 families every year. Mr. Prabhat Mahapatra has coordinated and managed this volunteer

service by our community over 10 years. We presented him with a beautiful plaque and were joined by Ms. Traci Hendricks from the Community Food Bank of NJ.

4. OSA NYNJPA Celebrates Shri Ganesh Puja and Nuakhai

Our chapter has been celebrating Ganesh Puja for a long time and last year based on a proposal from Dr Akhileswar Patel and approved by Management Team, we added Nuakhai event to Ganesh Puja at the Wayne Temple. The day started with Ganesh Puja followed by Khadi Chhuan by kids and then we celebrated Nuakhai. It was truly a family environment for the Nabanna grahana ritual that everyone participated in so diligently. The cultural programs were of great quality performed by adults and children. The lunch was prepared at the temple kitchen by our enthusiastic volunteers and was enjoyed by all.





5. OSA NYNJPA ARTISTS MEET CHEF VIKAS KHANNA AND PERFORM IN TIMES SQUARE

In late August we experienced a once in a lifetime event when out of the blue, Chef Vikas Khanna reached out to OSA NYNJPA inviting us to participate in the unveiling of a 4000 Lb replica of the Konark Chakra and celebrate the Arts and Culture of Odisha.

We had no idea what to expect but were very pleasantly surprised with his love for Odisha and its Art & Culture. Artists from OSA NYNJPA performed the Odissi dance on Times Square and the social media posts are reaching a quarter million views. It was a fantastic experience for us – About 2 million people saw the stone carving of the Konark Chakra during the time it was on display.

We met hundreds of people when we were there who wanted to know about Odisha Konark and Odissi. What an opportunity to live out OSAs objective of promoting Odisha Art and Culture.

On our second visit, our artists performed Odissi for Guruji Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. The famous Kiku Sharada also did some steps with our artists. Truly a once in a lifetime experience for us.

6. OSA NYNJPA Participates in the 4H Fair of Somerset County

The 4H organization on New Jersey organizes a county fair every year that is attended by thousands of residents in the Somerset County.

4H offers a lot of fun things to children:

- they can pet animals - goats, sheep, chickens, horses, pigs, see dog shows.

- they can see large excavation vehicles, climb on fire trucks
- they can see robotics, toy trains etc. and so much more.

OSA NYNJPA sets up a food booth in the fair as a fund raiser for the chapter. This year we sold about 2000 meals and realized a strong profit for the chapter. More details on the activity can be seen in this video:

Visitors to the OSA Food Booth - <https://youtu.be/XmnEMF7sxlA>



7. Chapter Summer Picnic

The 2023 picnic was attended by 400+ people and we had organized a delicious and long menu of Odia dishes.

Apart from great food, we organized picnic games that were enjoyed by all.



8. Graduate Day Celebration:

OSA NYNJPA celebrates High School and College Graduates every year. All High Schools graduates received a \$100 Gift Card and all College Graduates received a Life membership for OSA. Our own OSA star Lisa Mishra was the Keynote speaker and shared valuable thoughts candidly. The complete discussion can be viewed at - <https://youtu.be/GeLA8wcluG8>.

9. Spring Cookout Utkal Dibas Charity Fund Raiser

The families of OSA NYNJPA dedicate Utkal Dibas to charity. Every year volunteers organize a food event to raise funds for charitable contributions in the USA and in Odisha. OSA members in the chapter may nominate organizations in the USA and in Odisha to receive charitable contributions.

10. OSA NYNJPA Event Calendar for 2024

Every year we do host some core events and additional events on need basis. Based on feedback, to better plan the events and to give enough lead time to members to join the events, we have created an Annual Event Calendar for 2024.

Please block the dates and plan to attend all the events. Lets us all make 2024 an eventful year!!



OSA NYNJPA 2024 Event Calendar

Festival / Event	Actual Date	Actual Day	OSA Celebration Date	OSA Celebration Day
Saraswati Puja	14-Feb	Wednesday	17-Feb	Saturday
Utkal Dibas	1-Apr	Monday	6-Apr	Saturday
Spring Cookout Fundraiser	1-Apr	Monday	21-Apr	Sunday
Regional Drama Festival (RDF)			11-May	Saturday
Annual Summer Picnic			2-Jun	Sunday
Graduate Day			8-Jun	Saturday
4H Fair			7-9 Aug	Wed, Thu, Fri
Ganesh Puja and Nua Khai	7-Sep	Saturday	14-Sep	Saturday
Annual Day and Kumar Purnima	16-Oct	Wednesday	9-Nov	Saturday

02/26/2024

OSA NYNJPA Executive Committee 2023-2025



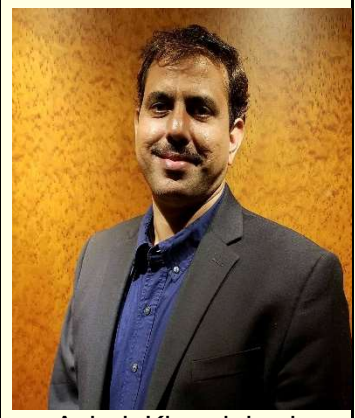
Nilasundar Jena
President



Jigisha Biswal
Vice President



Sudashima Naik
General Secretary



Ashok Khandelwal
Treasurer



Rosy Biswal
EC Advisor



Prajnya Pradhan
EC Advisor



Hemant Pradhan
EC Advisor



Ardhendu Sarengi
EC Advisor



Arabindakshya Mishra
EC Advisor



Rashmirekha Rajguru
EC Advisor

OSA NYNJPA Management Committee 2023-2025

Ashok Khandelwal	Arabindakshaya Mishra
Anita Patel	Ardhendu Sarangi
Chaitali Roy	Hemant Pradhan
Chandana Pradhan	Jyoti Biswal
Chayanika Das	Krushna Satpathy
Deepti Paikray	Krishna Kodukula
Eva Mohanty	Mahasweta Rath
Jigisha Biswal	Maniesh Mishra
Anshuman Panigrahi	Mitu Pati
Lisa Pradhan	Monalisa Panigrahi
Sushmita Pradhan	Pradeep Mohapatra
Nageswar Prusty	Robin Dash
Nilasundar Jena	Rosy Biswal
Anita Pradhan	Sarang Mahatwo
Prajnya Pradhan	Sarita Dehury
Rashmirekha Rajaguru	Satya Panigrahi
Brajendra Sahu	Subhashish Panda
Satish Mohapatra	Subhashish Tripathi
Somalina Samal	Swetluna Behera
Suresh Lenka	Yasaswini Mohapatra
Anish Mahakud	Swarupa Guru
Somna Pati	Sudashima Naik

English Stories & Poems



Life and Poetry of Upendra Bhanja: A Titan of Odisha Culture



Sri Pradyot Patnaik

Among all the men and women who have contributed most to the life and culture of Odisha, Upendra Bhanja shines at the apex. His position remains undoubtedly at the zenith of literature. He was not only the *Kabi Samrat*, that is, the king among the poets, but also the creator of most *ragas* in music, and architect of many classical styles of dances, including Odissi, Gotipua, Sakhi Nata, Radha Prema Leela, which are all based on his lyrical compositions. The *ragas* he composed include, *Bangalasri, Basanta, Chinta Bhiarava, Malaba, Kalahansa kedara, Ghantaraba, Ramakeri, Sankarabharana* and many others. His lyrics laid the foundation of many forms of music including *chhanda, champu* and *chautisa*. His compositions remain rhetorically excellent, unparalleled in their origin, and stand unique in world literature. They are not only supremely ornamental, but they too exhibit a unique fusion of simile, metaphor, alliterations, and homonyms, which in Sanskrit relate to *Upama, Anuprasa* and *Yamak alankars*. Some examples of Bhanja's poetry are cited below.

“Dekhare nalini nalini nalinire purita

Bhramanti bhramare bhramare bhramare e shovita.”

(From *Labanyabati*)

In the above stanza from *Labanyabati*, the word “nalini” is repeatedly used three times, and in the next line “bhrama-” is repeated four times, the same word having different meaning each time! It is just amazing how Bhanja could use such alliterations and homonyms (*anuprasa* and *yamak*) so profusely and so beautifully, rarely seen in any literature.

Another musical lyric abounding with such *alankar* is cited below:

*“Dekhi naba kalika bakalika malika ali kalika kanta suri
Rakhya kemante kari kariba matta kari gatiki emanta bichari / Sahachari”*

(From: *Labanyabati*)

Here words ending in “-lika” or containing “-kari” are used continually and rhythmically giving different meanings. Such *alankars* can be seen in most of his *kabyas*. This is rarely found in any literature. Sant Kabir has used such *yamak alankar* only in a few of his *dohas* in Hindi.

Upendra Bhanja composed about 52 *kabyas* during his lifetime, however only 22 could be retrieved, and unfortunately the rest are lost. The most notable *kabyas* among them are *Baidehisha Bilasa*, *Koti Bramhanda Sundari*, *Labanyabati*, *Prema Sudhanidhi*, *Kala Kautuka*, *Brajaleela*, *Rasika Harabali*, *Subhadra Parinaya*, *Abhisheka*, *Sarava*, *Satisha Bilas*, and *Damayanti Bilasa*. Among them the first three *kabyas* are the most acclaimed ones. *Baidehisha Bilasa* based on Ramayana illustrates the beautiful landscape magnificently, along with Rama's heart-touching separation during Sita's exile. Also, it depicts Sita's grace and beauty in equally exotic verses. Bhanja was a wizard of words. He contributed over 30,000 words to Odia language! He was such a genius in compositions of words that in many of his *kabyas* the first initial of the stanzas begin with the same letter of their titles. For example, "Ka" is the initial syllable in every line in *Koti Bramhanda Sundari*. And in *Baidehisha Bilasa* it is "Ba", in *Subhadra Parinaya* it is "Sa", in *Padmabati Parinaya*, "Pa", and in *Damayanti Bilasa*, every line starts with "Da".

Before Upendra Bhanja, Odia poetry was primarily confined to the Bhakti *rasha*, created by Sarala Das, Jagannath Das, Balaram Das, Jaydev, and others. However, Upendra Bhanja bequeathed a new dimension into it, a new lexis, with his lyrical style and gem of words. He imbued both the Bhakti and *Sringara rasha* in his distinctive style, that made him the marker of a century, an architect of a period known as the Bhanja Juga or the Riti Juga. However, in a later period known as Radhanath Juga, Bhanja's portrayal of women was perceived as lascivious and criticized by many poets of that era, including Radhanath Ray. During this period the 'modernists' of the Radhanath era confronted the Bhanja Juga traditionalists, or the 'conservationists', as they were called then. Also, during this period the poetry shifted from Bhanja-style 'bland ornamental beauty' into a new Radhanath-style 'soft romanticism' where nature played a pivotal setting. Although Odia literature reached its pinnacle during the Radhanath age, Bhanja's lyrical *kabyas* however, could not be dented. They had ingrained deep down into Odia life, into its art and culture, especially into the *ragas*, *chhandas* and music, that evolved classical dances. His writing had embedded so much deep into society that the literary criticisms of his poetry from the modernists were confined within the periphery of academic debates.

Upendra Bhanja was born in Kulalgada near Bhanjanagar, in Ganjam around 1670 into a royal family. His grandfather Dhananjay Bhanja was the king of Ghumusar, also a patron of music and literature. Dhananjaya himself was a poet. He invited many poets and musicians regularly into his court. At a very young age, Upendra Bhanja learned Sanskrit and started reading classical works, such as *Meghdoot*, *Raghuvansha*, *Kumarasambhav*, *Dasakumar Charit*, *Naishadh*, and *Panchatantra*. He started writing poetry from childhood, encouraged by his grandfather. He had an intense passion for ornamental language. Once when Dhananjay asked Upendra to read his *Raghunath Chalisa*, after reading it Upendra urged him to decorate his *kabya* with *alankars*.

Upendra's literary talent was noticed by a Vaishnavite poet and saint, Raghunath who advised him to learn Taraka mantra to enhance his skill. Accordingly, Upendra learned Taraka mantra and meditated remotely in a cave in the nearby forest to attain knowledge. He has stated this in one of his stanzas. According to another legend, he was blessed by Goddess Durga in the attainment of such erudition. Whatever may be the reason, he however was introduced and greatly motivated into poetry by his grandfather, Dhananjay.

After the death of Dhananjay, Upendra's father Nilakantha became the king. However, his reign was very short-lived. Nilakantha's cousin Ghana Bhanja soon attacked the kingdom and took over the reign. Nilakantha moved to Nayagada with his wife and son, Upendra. Life changed totally after that. Upendra was just 15-years old when his father died. After that his

uncle took care of him. At the age of 18 he married Labanyabati, sister of Nayagada king, a very beautiful woman of virtues. Labanyabati too loved poetry and inspired him in writing. There are many narratives on Upendra Bhanja's personal life. One relates to Shovabati, her sister-in-law, whose allure and charm Bhanja portrayed in one of his *kabyas*. This vexed Labanyabati who thought she was prettier than her sister-in-law. To soothe her indignation Upendra Bhanja promised to compose another *kabya*, this time on her. True to his words he soon composed *Labanyabati* as his next *kabya*, that catapulted him to the zenith of poetry. This also elated Labanyabati.

Bhanja often went into the forest near his home to contemplate in solitude. On one occasion he disappeared for days. His wife Labanyabati panicked and sent a guard to the forest to look for him. When the guard noticed a dead body and the foot marks of a tiger nearby, he got scared, abandoned his search, and conveyed to her what he saw. Labanyabati fainted in shock after hearing this. She never recovered. Her demise was a heartbreaking loss to Bhanja. However, he married again, this time to Shovabati's sister Koti Bramhanda Sundari. She too was extremely beautiful and a connoisseur of poetry. She highly appreciated Upendra's literary work. However, fate was cruel to him. She didn't live long and died at a young age. Upendra Bhanja composed *Koti Bramhanda Sundari* in her name which became another renowned work of his.

The loss of both his wives completely devastated Upendra. To come out of the grief he now dedicated fully into poetry, composing many *kabyas* after that, may be for his inner solace, the subjects being God, nature, and the beautiful women, as manifestation of wondrous creation. Upendra Bhanja received many accolades during his lifetime. In those days literature and music were commonly patronized by kings. He becomes a household name, he was conferred titles and was invited by many kings all over Odisha. His uncle, Ghana Bhanja who deposed his father from the kingdom invited him back to Kulagada. The king of Puri invited him to his court. After the darshan of Lord Jagannath Bhanja visited the court where he mesmerized the gathering of poets and scholars with his narration of poetry and *chhandas*. The king was so enamored that he conferred the title, Birabara on him. It so happened that the great poet Dinakushna Das happened to be there in Puri. Dinakrushna wanted to meet Bhanja to show him his magnum opus *Rasakallor*. Bhanja highly appreciated *Rasakallol* but suggested him change the name from *Rasakallol* to *Krushnakallol* or *Kalakallol*. Dinakrushna however did not change the name. Upon his return from Puri Bhanja composed *Kala Kautuka*, another great *kabya* of devotional writing in which each stanza begins with the letter, "Ka". Bhanja lived in a realm of beauty, ornamental and in his own creation. He died as a celebrity at the age of 50 in the year 1720.

Upendra Bhanja's poetry and music is embedded deep into Odisha, as much as Tagore's image of Bengal, or that of Kalidas into Sanskrit literature. Offering his encomium Pandit Gopabandhu Das synopsisized in his verses in "*Abakasa Chinta*", (translation altered):

"Poets sing your songs, travelers hum your tune, farmers intone your melody.
Beauty reflects in mirror, dancer whirls to your harmony.
Into that rhythm of your lyrics, into that music"

Dr Pradyot Patnaik was the editor of the Journal of Odisha Society of Americas in 2003. He also served on the editorial board of OSA Souvenirs in 2009, and 2019. He has authored five books in his field in Chemical and Environmental Sciences. He has written a fiction, *Shadow of a Nymph*, an e-book (Amazon Kindle Fire, 2014) and is currently writing another fiction, *A Bouquet of Thorns*.

20 Days Around the End of the World



Shantilata Mishra

Since we closed our office seven years ago, we have been trying to manage a doable bucket list of activities and travel that we did not do when we were younger and actively working. During the COVID pandemic, we fell behind. So, when our Florida neighbor called us in August 2022 with the details for an Antarctica Cruise, we jumped on the opportunity and managed to get five more friends to come along with us.

Our journey started on January 17, 2024. We rented a big SUV from Ft. Myers Airport and loaded our luggage. Our neighbor volunteered to drive us to Miami Airport and that prepared us for a fun trip with our lifelong Newburgh friends and our newer Florida neighbors. We took a nonstop flight and reached Santiago, Chile early the next morning. Our tour leader met us at the airport, and we boarded a van to our hotel. Of course we were too early to get a room, but somehow sweetly talked the hotel manager to give us one room to store our luggage and freshen up. A tour bus picked us up around 11 AM for a panoramic tour of Santiago. In that half day city tour we saw gardens, capital buildings and monuments. We were back in the hotel by 4 PM to check in and unpack. On January 19, we all took the tour bus for a trip to Valparaiso. Valparaiso is a port city and is known for its street art and colorful cliff top homes. We had lunch in a seaside restaurant in Viña del Mar known for its gardens and beaches. On January 20 the same bus took us to the port of Valparaiso to board the cruise ship. We dropped off our tagged luggage and the bus took us to the pier to board the cruise ship.

We had booked ourselves on the top deck of the ship and we had a balcony. We were given a medallion to wear around our neck for all on board transactions instead of carrying cash or cards. We left the port around 5 PM and were excited to see the coast of Chile and the night lights. Soon, all we saw was water. For the next three days and four nights we spent our time on the ship. There were many restaurants and food services on board. The major buffet was on our deck, and we indulged.

On January 24 we stopped near Punta Arenas and took small boats to the pier. There we boarded tour buses to see the beautiful city. Founded in 1848 by Col. José de los Santos Mardones, Punta Arenas gained importance as a port of call and coaling station until the opening of the Panama Canal. We were amazed by this city and the museum. We saw the cemetery that is full of beautiful mausoleums and well-maintained gardens. At the end of the day, we came back to the ship and continued traveling towards the Atlantic Ocean.

On day 6 we arrived at the port of Ushuaia. Ushuaia is the southernmost tip of South America and is nicknamed the “End of the World”. We visited three attractions (Ensenada Bay, Roca Lake and Lapataia Bay) of the Tierra del Fuego National Park. That night we had a special dinner to celebrate Shanti’s 75th birthday.

For the next six days we cruised around the Antarctic Peninsula. We got a glimpse of the A23a iceberg that has detached from the mass of Antarctica. A23a is massive, almost 1500 square miles (or twice the size of Greater London) but the cloudy weather made it difficult to fathom the white shape in the distance. Approaching the 16th parallel, the days were very long, and the nights were short. We had to wear layered clothing to stave off the cold. As we traveled the vast ocean, the captain was announcing all the little islands and bays. We saw a few whales jumping out of the water at a distance. We also saw a few penguins. Eventually, the skies cleared up and we saw glistening icebergs and glaciers on mountain tops.

Finally, we got sight of the Falkland Islands (called Islas Malvinas by Argentina), and we were transported to Port Stanley by small boats. Then we got on small buses to visit the bluff to see penguins. The weather in that part of the world is quite unpredictable. The moment the bus drove away, we were facing directly into a rainstorm, and it was difficult to stand still or walk straight. Still, to see hundreds of penguins in their natural habitat was exciting.

From the Falkland Islands, we headed north and reached Montevideo, Uruguay on February 4. We took a taxi and toured the city. After staying on the ship for most of the last 15 days, walking on the ground was fun. We saw a church, many monuments, and beaches, and stopped at a market. Then we returned to board the ship one last time. Montevideo is near the estuary of the river Río de la Plata. Our cruise left the port of Montevideo around 8 PM and pulled into the port of Buenos Aires the next morning.

For sixteen days the Sapphire Princess was our home. It was like a floating village. There were over 2500 passengers and 1400 crew members. There were seven restaurants and many coffee shops and bars. There was a big theater, library, and casino. We could do laundry on board. Though we had been to the southern hemisphere before and we had also traveled on other cruises, this cruise was overwhelming. We had three very close friends with us and ate most of our meals with them. Many of the crew members were from India. Most of the passengers were American.

Our last two days were spent in Buenos Aires. It is a beautiful city with a rich history. Our tour leader had arranged for the tour of the city on February 5. Again, we dropped off our luggage at the hotel and took the bus. Our guide spoke English well. We saw the church where Pope Francis was once a cardinal and saw the palace balcony where Eva Peron addressed the crowds when she was first lady of Argentina. We also saw the mausoleum where her remains were interred. At night, we tried the food at an Indian restaurant, Bombay Grill. It was okay.

On the second day we hired the same tour guide to give a private tour to us and our three friends. We saw a beautiful garden and walked the streets in the art district. We went to a bookstore that used to be a theater. We went to the art museum and were amazed by the collection. Admission is free to all these places. We saw the memorial to the 1982 Falkland Islands war between Argentina and the UK. The two major countries we visited (Chile and

Argentina) have gone through political turmoil in our lifetime and seeing the effect of such upheaval on society is painful. At the same time, you must be in awe of the tenacity and ambition of the original European settlers. The architecture is jaw dropping.

All the years that we were working, we had little opportunity to go on a planned vacation. These 20 days will stay in our memory for a long time.

Literary Thematic Analysis



Joesa Biswal, 10th grade

There was a girl named Arshia, who lived in a beautiful village with mountains named Swat Valley. She was a persevering and determined girl who was going to advocate for girl's rights in education. She had seen what Malala Yousafzai had fought for the girls to get the right to have an education, but it was difficult due to the Taliban's oppressive restrictions. Arshia, who loved to learn how Malala Yousafzai had done so much to help girls get an education and wanted to do the same to help more girls.

There were a lot of setbacks due to these challenging circumstances, where Arshia had an extreme desire to acquire knowledge. Her father was like Malala, who had wanted to help her daughter and other girls to have the accessibility to an education to have a successful future. He had gone against a lot of regulations that the Taliban had created to reach that goal. Arshia was inspired by Malala Yousafzai's unique journey, she did not want to do this for her benefit but to help make a difference and to ensure that more people will support the cause for girls' education. It will be tough because a lot of girls go to school in Pakistan but face many challenges and obstacles. Their social and economic factors can be a huge factor in Pakistan, which restricts their access to education. Arshia did not want to let that happen and wanted to make sure girls were educated to ensure they did not face any future issues and became successful.

Arshia's father, who can handle the pain or hardship is determined also to make a change, for he had seen that spark in his daughter. The father wanted to make education a beneficial way for girls to learn and gain knowledge because he believed that this was the one thing that humans were gifted, which was knowledge. He decided to make a risky move and taught Arshia and other girls about literature and mathematics, though it was not permitted. Arshia wanted to gain the power of knowledge for her personal goals to make a significant impact on society. Arshia along with the other girls saw Malala's brave actions by sharing her experiences through various ways like blogs, news, videos, etc, they had also decided to do the same by starting to advocate using BBC Urdu.

Other people found out about the group of girls in their advocacy for education and the news spread throughout the village. The girls and Arshia were all nervous about the Taliban since they

could be anywhere at any time, but they knew their main purpose and had to maintain it throughout. They knew the Taliban had found out because the Taliban had come to confront them. Arshia's father, in distress, pleaded with the Taliban to end this and allow girls the right to education.

"Please let these children learn. They have the right to gain knowledge, it's their gift," he said. The Taliban were not going to listen to what the father had said, but instead, there would be major consequences if the secret school was going to continue.

Arshia and the others were not going to follow what the Taliban had told them, and they all looked at each other with smiles and determination. "The Taliban can't silence us, we want our education, and we want to learn for our empowerment to become successful," Arshia said.

The blog had gained more public attention giving some hope to the cause and Arshia rethought the words that Malala Yousafzai had said, "Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow."

Since their story had spread far and wide with supporters, the group was visited by educators who supported their cause and loved how they wanted to learn in a school with these difficult circumstances.

"Your bravery is very remarkable. Education should be accessible to everyone and cannot be a secret," an educator said. This gave Arshia even more hope to pursue through, no matter what happened.

Malala's impact globally, gave support to these groups of girls to help them gain education for other children in the villages. Arshia and her father were so proud of their efforts and were excited that people were starting to notice the importance and ensuring that girls' can be successful too, and should not be restricted to working in the household.

The villages' want for education had caught Malala to find out the actions they are pursuing to have an education. Malala was proud to see someone else follow the same path as she did and loved that they had the determination to do this. She gave a message with her support and wishes for the best by encouraging them to fight for the power of knowledge.

Malala's message was, "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."

The Taliban was enraged at the international attention that Arshia had and wanted to forcibly put an end to it.

Arshia declared, "You cannot silence us for wanting to know, we want to accomplish so much in the future, this is our time to shine as a person."

Arshia along with the other girls were determined and created a circle around the school shouting to have freedom for education.

"We find our strength through knowledge. This is our light, and you cannot stop us now!" the villagers shouted. The village was filled with shouting, defying the injustice being faced. Due to

the crowds of people in unity chanting about education rights, the Taliban had no choice but to retreat, where the villagers cheered on their success.

Arshia's father was so proud and had tears in his eyes he hugged his daughter and they both knew that they had achieved something bigger than what they had expected. After this, Arshia, who was inspired by Malala Yousafzai's actions became an advocate for everyone to have the right to gain the power of knowledge. The secret school had now become a public school for all students to come and learn, especially a lot of girls who had attended hoping to gain a brighter future.

The secret school which is now standing as a public school has been open to every student who wanted to have the gift of education. They were not allowed to, but now that they have fought the oppressive forces, children can learn. Parents of the children laughed and smiled because their children could get an education and were so excited to overcome the oppression.

Arshia became a huge symbol in her community. She was proud to read Malala's quote written on the school walls, "Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons." These words were important to keep the students motivated and were a reminder that all have the right to knowledge. The news of the village had spread, and it started to reach many global organizations and many renowned activists. The Malala Fund was sponsored and was displayed in Swat Valley to show their support and have more education opportunities to be expanded.

Arshia and Malala had come together to show their advocacy, where their village led by the Taliban who had their rights restricted is now able to achieve so much more.

Arshia alongside Malala shared both of their experiences about what they had done for their village and the journey they went through. Arshia was proud that she was able to make a lasting impact on others like Malala, showing that education is very important for someone's life, and was proud to change the world.

Arshia began to envision a world where she wanted every child to have the ability to learn. The impact that she made was significant to the village and global community because she became an inspiration to many people and hopes for others to follow the same because of the many opportunities that are offered for everyone to use.

Maa-Baaji



Vani Mishra

In the quiet hours of the night, I think of you, Maa Baaji,
Your laughter echoing in my memories, your love shining bright,
I miss the way you used to be, so full of life and joy,
Together you were a force to reckon with, a bond unbreakable,
But now I see Maa all alone, lost in her thoughts,
And my heart aches for the days when you were both here with me.

Maa, your eyes tell a story of longing and loss,
I see the pain etched in every line on your face,
You hold onto your memories of Baaji, trying to keep them close,
But the emptiness in your heart is a heavy burden to bear,
I wish I could take it away, bring back the happiness and joy,
But all I can do is be here for you, to listen and offer my support.

Baaji, your absence is a presence that lingers in every room,
Your wisdom and guidance still sought after, even in your absence,
I miss your jokes and your laughter, the way you lit up a room,
Your presence brought comfort and warmth, a sense of security,
But now all that remains are memories, precious and fleeting,
I hold onto them tightly, afraid to let them slip away.

The days stretch on endlessly, filled with silence and sorrow,
I long for the sound of your voices, for the touch of your hands,
But all I have are echoes of the past, haunting me in the darkness,
Maa, your soul aches for Baaji, for the togetherness you once shared,
I can see it in your eyes, the longing for a time long gone,
And I wish I could bring it back, make everything right again.

As the days turn into nights, the weight of our grief grows heavier,
I try to be strong for you, Maa, to be the support you need,
But inside I am crumbling, missing Baaji just as much as you do,

Our family feels so empty without him, his laughter and his wisdom,
I try to hold everyday with maa, I live in fear not to slip it away,
I will cherish the memories, the love that binds us together.

Maa Baaji, you were lifeline for us, the foundation on which we stand,
Your love and guidance have shaped us, made us who we are,
I miss you both being together, the way you complemented each other,
But Baaji in your absence, your presence is felt, your love shining through,
I will carry you in my heart always, grateful for the time we had together,
I will hug Maa more tighter than before to secure her loneliness,
And wait till eternity will reunite us again....

First Breath



Sumedha Jena

walls enclosing me like a warm blanket
wrapped in a cocoon filled with love
where a young soul, protected from above, rests
the universe opens up in the mother's embrace
life's gentle whispers, an undiscovered symphony,
within her home, a mysterious music echoes
shrouded in obscurity but wrapped by radiance,
a treasured soul geared to take off
every flicker, a countenance of expectation,
a divine illumination, a whispered exchange
a state of serenity where time is suspended,
the tempo of a heartbeat, steady but aware
a subtle cry that comes with every subtle push
sheltered in her mother's arms, dreaming peacefully
the wonder of this mysterious home draws me in
where destinies emerge and dreams come true
in the womb of all beginnings, the delicate blossom of love,
future memories she will make, lie ahead of her
in the spirit of all life, as she wakes to take her first breath

i

A Thinking Kind of Day



Gauri Paikray, 6th grade.

Imagine if you could visit all the countries in a single day! Not possible, you might say. Well, it is when you are a Girl Scout. You get to visit at least 150 countries and that too in a single day and it's only possible on Thinking Day. You might be thinking what on earth is Thinking Day? Is Thinking Day when you sit outside on a bench with your hat on, and just think about this and that? That's funny, but no. Thinking Day is when you meet new Scout troops that represent different countries. It's also called Friendship Day and every year each Girl Scout Troop is assigned a country. Thinking Day has been celebrated every February since 1926. For example, last year our troop was allocated Mauritius and this year it was Belgium. I am a proud girl scout. A girl Scout is a member of the Girl Scouts of America that helps society and, in the process, becomes independent and responsible.

Our troop leader instructed us to prepare for setting up the stall. We made a cardboard tripod and based on our country we wrote important topics about the country. Specifically, for Belgium we wrote about their currency, features, geographical location, famous foods, flag etc. We also decorated our table with bright Belgium flags in red, black, and yellow. For swaps we made mini flags using crafting sticks and glued paper, then colored in the colors of the Belgium flag. We also made colorful bracelets with twine or rubber bands. A swap is a small craft based on the country you are assigned to. You use the swap to trade with other countries and to also receive their swap. At the end of the day, I collected about 50 swaps.

Thinking Day took place at West Windsor High School. Inside a large hall were hundreds of stalls for each country. For some reason the place reminded me of a beehive, loud and buzzing. I was excited to taste delicious snacks from each country and to also collect lots of swaps. Near the door was a poster of Mahatma Gandhi that said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." I thought that was deep. Thinking Day kickstarted with a parade with 3 members of each troop carrying their country's flag, and all walked in a group around the whole school. They showed off their costumes, feeling proud of the flag they carried. My eyes dazzled to see the colorful costumes from kimonos, white and gold Egyptian robes, to checkered skirts. My favorite troop was Poland. Their costume was a green skirt with red and black flowers that they wore over frilly white blouses. Each girl in the troop had tied their hair in bright red ribbons and wore black tap shoes. Together they looked like a field of wildflowers. My troop's dress was a light-colored blouse and skirt with a coffee printed satin scarf covering our heads. I thought we looked like pretty milkmaids.

Every country prepared food that was associated with their country's cuisine. For our group we bought chocolate milk. We also served waffles, apples and strawberries dipped in chocolate, as Belgium is famous for chocolates. My mouth drooled but we could not eat our own

snacks as we needed to earn money for our troop. Each snack was priced from \$0.80 to \$1. Another interesting fact about Thinking Day is that we each get a passport and when we go visit a country or stall, we take our passport that is then stamped by that country.

As my mother had helped me in preparing swaps and waffles and was happy to see me enjoying the day, I purchased a beautiful swap for my mother. This swap was a quote from Rumi pasted on a tile. It read, "Everything in the universe is within you. Ask all of yourself." That's deep too, and I think I will take some time to truly understand that, but mom loved it as I knew she would. My troop sold all the snacks but there was plenty of chocolate milk left which we then distributed for free. I drank 3 glasses and felt if I drank anymore, I would turn into a chocolate fountain. So that was my day, my Thinking Day with my dear Girl Scout troop with lots of countries, swaps, too much chocolate milk and a feeling that all countries belong together to make our world brighter and more gorgeous.



Relocation



Ahana Mohanty, Grade 5

Ugh! Why'd my friends have to be so boring today? I get up from the staircase I'm sitting on, and I look at my friends, and how they are just mucking around on the sidewalk. I try to sound cheery, but what I say comes out in a monotone voice. "Hey," I try again to sound cheery. "I'm going to go home now, okay?" I slowly walk back to the apartment while the scorching summer heat beats down on me. Finally, after one of the longest walks I've ever had back to my apartment, I reached the main gate.

I think about how I ditched my friends, and honestly, I feel a little guilty. I mean, it wasn't their fault that they couldn't find something fun to play. I think about what I could do to make it up to them. I might as well find a fun game and propose the idea to them tomorrow, but that's for later. Now, my main concern is how I can get the main gate unlocked. I tried to open the latch. I don't know why, but every time I try to open the latch, it's always so high up! It's that, or I'm too short. Somehow, I get the gate to open. I slip inside before the door can close on me and lock it with difficulty.

I stared up at the stairs, and then the elevator. I wanted to take the elevator badly, but then I don't think that my parents would approve of that. With my stomach rumbling, and my feet growing heavier with each step, I go to the stairs. Since I need to go to the second floor, I take my own sweet time, and I go so slowly that a snail could beat me. After what seemed like 5 hours, I reached my apartment door. I tried it. No surprise, it's locked. With a heavy groan, I ring the doorbell, but my frustration gets the better of me. Instead of ringing it once, I end up ringing it 10 times, and by the way it sounded on the last try, I think that because of me, the doorbell might need some help.

The door finally opens, and I step inside. I go to my room and change. After I grabbed a snack from the kitchen, I skipped to the work room, and much to my surprise, I didn't see anyone. I searched all around, and finally, when I reached the cabinet, I saw both my parents crouching, and sorting through files. "Mama, Papa, what are you doing?" They look up so fast when I say this, it's almost like they didn't hear me rummaging through everything, trying to find them.

"What are you doing?" I repeat it since I seemed to have gotten neither a response nor an attempt to respond. "Well, the thing is," my dad trails off. "Uhm... well, you see, we're moving," I stare at my mom as if she just said that we were getting a dog.

"YAHOO!" I jump up and down on my bed, when suddenly, a worried sensation fills my chest. If we move, then that means I won't be able to visit any of my family or friends! I stopped jumping, and I landed with such a thud, that the world spinning off of its axis would probably

have been softer. I gingerly touched my head, which was spinning, and I could see lights popping in front of me. I couldn't help but see the world blurring around me. I reached out to grab a book and distract myself, but it's no use. Tears spilled down my face, it probably seemed that I was a human-water-faucet at that moment.

I could see the outline of my mom coming to sit next to me. "Hey, listen, it will be okay, you'll make friends, and we'll come back and visit every summer!" I look at her. Since words couldn't express what I was feeling then and there, all I did was sob into her shoulder.

"We'll miss you!" I looked at everybody waving at me and my parents. My eyes start to water, and before I know it, I am crying harder than I had ever cried before. I turn to look at my parents who, like me, are also crying, but not as hard. We turn around and go inside the elevator. I punch the ground floor button since I can't control myself, and I wave good-bye to everybody for one last time.

"Please buckle your seatbelts, and I hope you enjoy our flight with us. Thank You!" I stare at the ceiling of the airplane, and then I look at my parents. I get so excited that there is a T.V., that I forget that I carried 5 books in my bag, 5 books in my mom's carry on, 5 books in my dad's carry on. I have started figuring out how to work the T.V, so I can watch Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone. I miss India already, and just at the thought of the plane leaving, my eyes welled up with tears, but I forced myself to stay strong.

"We're almost in the USA! We're almost in the USA!" I look at my parents, jumping up and down in my seat. I was so excited that we were finally going to reach the USA, that I almost pushed the thought of not making any friends out of my mind. Before I could savor the moment of no worries out of my mind though, I started worrying again. If only I could see my future, then perhaps I wouldn't be worrying so much anymore.

"This is amazing." I looked at how big our house is, dumbfounded. After living in an apartment all my life, this house seemed so big. The moment we step inside, I explore every inch of it, and even though there are many fascinating things in here, what catches my attention the most is the basement. I never had one of these back in India, and it was cool how they were underground here in my new community. I guessed that I would have to 'buckle up and get comfy,' because this was going to be a *long* ride.

"Are you excited? It's your first day of school! You'll make new friends, and you'll have so much fun!" I look at my mom and my dad. The fact that they could be happy and didn't have to worry about not making any friends made me extremely jealous, but as I stared out into the wide, open, blue, sky, I thought, 'I have nothing to lose, so I probably shouldn't be scared'. With that I take my first step towards my new school.

"Everyone, please welcome our new student. She has just moved here, so I am expecting," I didn't hear what Ms. Alexanders was expecting from them, because one girl was waving enthusiastically at me, and as I searched for her name tag, I found out that her name was Amaya.

"Hey, guess what?" I ask my mom, "School wasn't so bad after all," I sit there, recalling every scene to my parents as I peeled an orange and put it in my mouth.

"Mama!! Papa!! Hurry!! You need to come fast! IT'S SNOWING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" I sing the last 2 words, unable to contain my excitement. "Can-we-go-skiing-can-we-go-skiing-can-we-go-skiing?????" I pleaded in front of my parents, desperately trying to convince them that if I go skiing, I'll be able to enjoy the snow more.

I climbed up the hill to the store with my parents. Every time I glanced over at the people skiing by the top hill, a jolt of excitement passed through me like electricity. It was all I could do not to run over there and try to ski down the hill without any skiing shoes.

When we reached the checkout for ski shoes, I saw a counter with food. I was indeed hungry, but I couldn't bring myself to detach myself from the waiting line. "Are you hungry?" my mom asked me. I was about to say no, when, my stomach betrayed me and grumbled loudly. "It's okay, you know," She says, "We're here to enjoy, and frankly, you need to eat to enjoy" She walks over to the food counter, and I follow her, not wanting to get lost in the crowd.

"Thishlishpsuh" I say through a mouth full of food. I swallow, and then, try again. "This is delicious," I say. I look around, and my feet are itching to put on those ski shoes, so I finish my food quickly, and slip them on.

"LOOK OUT!!!!!!!!!!!!!" It was all I managed to yell before making a sharp turn and crashing into a pile of snow. I get up, clutching my stomach as my face fills with tears of laughter. That was one of the most amazing turns I would ever make, and it was just my first! I had a fleeting thought of how nervous I was when I was first moving here. I guess that if I look into the positive of a change, things won't be so bad!

Oh' Life!

Oh, life! I don't know.
What is your goal or way?
Is weal and woe your ever show?
Is death your golden pay?

About life anyone tells.
It is worthy and full of meanings.
As a lover's rose or honey cells.
Then why all the killings and fighting?

We live for short.
Just like the first moon in the sky.
Just like a bubble or morning mist.
Or as a bauble near the baby.

We come to earth.
We will go away one day.
Leaving some footprints to wash away.
Doing our duty to be self-satisfy.

-X-



Chandra Sekhar Singha Babu

A story from a mother to her child growing up in America



Chandra Misra

It has been many years, but I still picture my son Sanjay playing goalkeeper every time I drive past our local High school soccer field. I recall how at the crucial time the entire team had faith in his ability to keep the ball secure. I have kept all the cuttings from the newspaper article. One example from the newspaper reporter that made a lot of noise in our community was like this:

“Misra helps save North Penn from Penridge.

By: Phel Gianficaro (Thu, 10/11/2007), phillyburbs.com

How reassuring it must be to know that in the event defeat breaks down the front door and tries to steal away victory.

A growling dog is forever on guard to make sure it gets no further.

Such was the comforting life of the North Penn boys' soccer team that season.

The Knights' snarling sentry? Goalkeeper extraordinaire Sanjay Misra.

'Sanjay is amazing,' said North Penn senior midfielder Steve Franks, whose late first-half goal proved to be the eventual game-winner in a 2-1 victory over Penridge in a Suburban One League National Conference match on Wednesday night.

'You just know that if we need him, he's always going to be there. Once we get a lead Sanjay will keep it for us ' “

I had the pleasure of going through many incidents like this when my son played the position as the goalkeeper in his high school team. I recall how I told him about the story of Lord Hanuman to help him in such moments. It sure was a gift to give birth to Sanjay here (in the USA) after a long gap of 16 years since last giving birth. We had two children born in India and then we emigrated to the USA. I was only 22 yr. old in 1973 and already had my first two children. When I became pregnant and gave birth to my third child, I was mature enough to know what motherhood meant and how much work is involved in being a mom without the

support of my extended family. I made sure to eat healthy food and get enough rest as per the advice from my OB/GYN (obstetrician and gynecologist) for the sake of my and baby's wellbeing.

I loved and was proud of having my son Sanjay born in the USA. At the same time, I was fearful of my children growing up here as brown children, and I wondered how their life would be here. As a first-generation immigrant mother, I struggled with the thought of just how much he will face the ugliness and unfairness that is encountered by many young children because of their color. I was also joyful thinking of the opportunity he would have by growing up here. In public school, he can play any sports and take music lessons for free as a student, provided he has the ability to make it to the team. That was not the same in India from where I came at that time. One needs to take class privately which needs extra money for parents to pay. Sometimes one needs to know someone who can get you inside those classes.

So, I hoped for the best and kept exposing my son to various activities like playing sports and taking part in orchestra, etc. even as he focused on his education. I trusted that everything would be O.K if I could just do my best and tell him about his heritage. We tried to keep an intact, loving family around him. Sanjay grew up nicely with his brother and sister's love and having friends around in our neighborhood. As he grew older, I tried to tell him the reason why we emigrated. I have always used the art of storytelling to pass on information, knowledge, and wisdom in creative ways. Through stories, I shared our heritage and culture. I also used stories to pass on knowledge and advice on how to live a better life from our religious book Geeta, Mahabharat and Ramayan.

The soccer field always reminds me of a story I used to tell him when he played the position of goalkeeper in soccer from the age of six till, he graduated from high school. When little Sanjay started playing, he often used to ask me who else played the goalkeeper position as an example in our family and community. I never played or saw many sports growing up back home. So, I decided to pull out the names from our mythology, the monkey God "Hanuman from Ramayan" and the mighty "Bhimsen from Mahabharat." Hanuman is the supreme keeper in our Hindu scripture and always remains steadily focused with his strong hands, just as the goalkeeper must be in the soccer games. Somehow Sanjay liked my story and always prayed to Lord Hanuman before he started at the goal post in the game.

Arjun was one character in our scripture Mahabharata. He was famous for his skillful archery. With his keen eye and determination, he was able to see the eye of the fish in the water from a moving wheel and inserted the arrow into the fish's eye.

Bhimsen is another strong person in our scripture Mahabharat who is well known for his passion. He was huge in size and was strong as a child. He loved to eat food. He often found a way to get food even in difficult situations. I told Sanjay the story of how Lord Bhimsen could find food in a situation without light in the dark kitchen. So, the key for him was to find a way to do things that he loves to do. The story about Arjun and Bhimsen caught Sanjay's eye and he wanted to be determined, strong for the game which he loved to play. The strategy worked. Sanjay remained calm and used to jump to catch the soccer ball like our monkey god Hanuman. As a mother it felt good that I was able to answer his questions from my resources.

Sanjay was born in March, and it was nice to take the baby outside and have fresh air. I sang a lullaby to him and talked about our extended family. Often, I described where we are from and told him about our big family. How we all lived together in an extended family that allowed us to enjoy the company of aunts and uncles, not just the parents like in the USA. One popular lullaby was, "Oh, moon uncle, you come and play ball with my son here since he has no

uncle, aunt in this, our migrated country to play with.” He believed that the moon was his uncle for many years. This used to be my way to make my children know our culture and beliefs and give assurance that we too have examples of God, Goddess to look as examples.

Sanjay grew up attending Ganesh puja, Goddess Saraswati pooja praying to do good in his study. In Durga puja we prayed for strength and to do good for all the people. Holi and Diwali were celebrated to welcome the seasons and have fun.

I enjoyed writing this story from my memory and wish my son good luck with whatever he opts to do in his life. My writing is from my scattered thoughts from his childhood, but often comes accompanied by my experience about who we are. This is about how a mother feels when her son is young and grows older and tries to make things better for her child and our place in a new land.



Sanjay at the goal post.

The Effect of Music on Humans



Rishabh Das
Grade 6

Music. From the diverse rhythms to the smooth beats, music is a great way to express yourself. With all kinds of instruments, we possess the ability to play a variety of music types. Music can even help you in a way human interaction cannot. Different types of music can help you in your day-to-day life. It can even improve your brainpower! Music can positively affect people's lives in various ways. Music can help you heal, get in touch with your emotions, and also positively affect your brain.

To kick off, a way music can positively affect us humans is by helping heal ill people, for example, the ancient Greeks. More than 2,500 years ago in Ancient Greece, Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, used forms of music to treat his ill patients. Another Greek philosopher, mathematician, and musician believed that listening to music daily was valuable for our lives (Staff). Additionally, after World War 2, many musicians healed injured U.S. officers. Right after the terribly injured officers returned from the war, doctors needed to immediately find a way to heal patients quickly. Fortunately, they discovered that musicians made officers feel better physically and emotionally. They hired musicians to play for the wounded daily, and music therapy was created (Staff). Furthermore, children who have also suffered from trauma benefit from music. When children learn to play instruments and create music, they develop greater communication and listening skills. The teachers show them how to express their anger through the use of music and songwriting (Staff). This all indicates that music can help heal ailing and suffering people.

Another reason why music can positively affect people's lives is by helping you get in touch with your emotions. In fact, a researcher at the University of California used a study to see how people felt about different songs, and the results were successful. In the explicit study, everyone had pretty much the same emotional response to the music. For example, "The Star-Spangled Banner" made people feel pride, while Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You" made them feel joyful. Every song has a soul that is filled with emotions (Staff). Along with that, a 10-year-old girl named Denise, hopeful of becoming a famous violinist, explained that her composer's music "expresses my feelings. Sometimes it's sad, sometimes it's happy. I can feel how the composers felt." As a musician myself, I can relate to this. From classical to smooth jazz, when I play my saxophone, I connect with the music in a special way. Based on the music selection, I hold a different feeling towards it. For instance, a fast classical piece provides a joyful feeling. On the other hand, a jazz piece with a steady beat provides a more relaxed and calm feeling (McCann). Finally, Cowen's study of music identified many emotions from all the different people. He discovered that different people interpret sounds differently, so he decided to see how people felt towards music. The exact number of emotions were 13: amusement, joy, desire, beauty, relaxation, sadness, dreaminess, triumph, anxiety, scariness, annoyance, defiance, and

feeling pumped up (Staff). Undeniably, music can make you experience numerous emotions.

Finally, a reason why music positively affects people's lives is by helping parts of your brain. First, Harvard's Medical school found out that the people who listen to music more have healthier brains. According to Andrew Budson, an American professor and neurologist, "Of survey respondents who currently go to musical performances, 69% rated their brain health as "excellent" or "very good," compared to 58% for those who went in the past and 52% for those who never attended." When you listen to music, you experience different emotions. When you feel these emotions, your brain activity rises, and you understand others better (Budson). Fabio Quesada, a 10-year-old musician, explains about how playing music helps his brain function in other subjects as well. He says that being part of his orchestra as a trombone player has surprisingly also helped him do better in school. Fabio compares solving math, his favorite subject, to reading music.

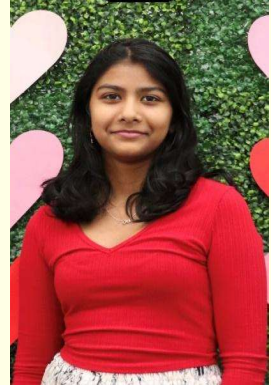
From my experience, I remember that the reason why music coincides with math is the time measures and beats. When you play your instrument, you are required to count the beat and calculate the rhythms to stay in time. "I feel like I'm more ready to learn," Fabio explains. 'Playing the trombone teaches me to pay attention and listen. I always think about that in class' "(McCann). Ultimately, Anthony Carboni, creator of the Seeker Youtube channel also states that listening to music is helpful for different parts of your brain. As a matter of fact, the hippocampus is the part of your brain that handles your long-term memory storage. This is why when you listen to older songs, it sometimes brings back more memories. Surprisingly, people with Alzheimers and Dementia might recover their lost memory from listening to songs. Also, the channel explains that people who listen to music more frequently tend to use both hemispheres of their brain more. Therefore, this makes them superior at complex thinking and creative problem solving (Carboni). As you can see, listening to music or playing music can help your brain effectively.

To sum it up, music can heal you, help you get in touch with your emotions, and it can positively affect your brain. Moreover, music can help in a child's academics. The sweet-sounding melodies cause children to improve their focus span. In addition, music can also make you experience various emotions. The tunes can even match up with our own heartbeat in a matter of seconds. The big effect of music on our lives is not only surprising, but also life-changing for some. Furthermore, music can heal certain illnesses as well! With no doubt, I can easily say music is an essential part of our lives. Therefore, you should pick up that instrument and start practicing; you might become the next Mozart!

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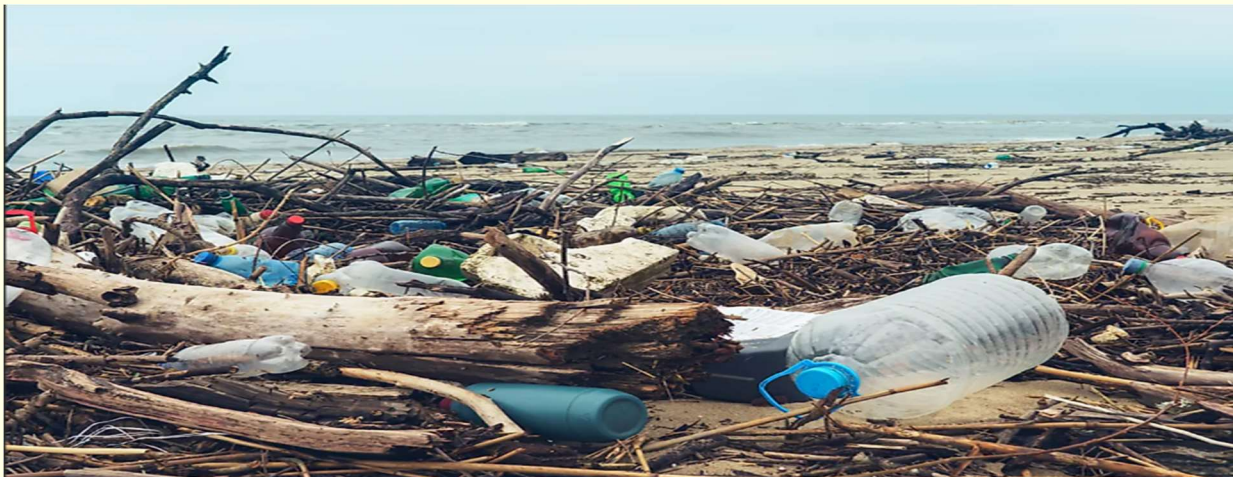
Plastic, Environment Destroyer



Aarna Mallick, 6th grade

One sunny day you go to the beach, and as you step into the water you feel something. It's hard but soft at the same time and doesn't seem like an ordinary plant. When you look you see its plastic. Then you notice the beautiful beach that is full of plastic.

Plastic waste is a prevalent issue that has polluted our environment and killed sea life, our animals, and unfortunately, tons of this plastic has been thrown on our land. Lots of plastic is used daily and barely any of it has been recycled. Fortunately, many people, companies, and our government have worked towards cleaning up and reducing the production of plastic waste.



Loads of plastic are used daily but barely any of the plastic has been recycled. One reason is that people are too lazy to throw their trash away and because we've become very dependent on one-use plastic and are unable to choose and find alternatives. For example, the

video, “Kids Take Action Against Plastic”, states that 5.3 trillion pieces of plastic float in the ocean. This is terrible as unfortunately fish, turtles, and birds end up eating this and then die. We need to make a choice between our marine life and plastic, many people might say save marine life, but their actions say otherwise. The beautiful beaches might get filled up with plastic before you know it. We use a ton of plastic per day and then throw it away, but we don’t recycle it. According to an article, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, and Nestle were named top plastic polluters. Up to 91% of plastic waste has not been recycled according to 2017 studies. Why? Why can’t people throw that piece of plastic in the recycling bin. One simple answer: because they are lazy. But when someone does recycle, they are contributing to the environment.

Fortunately, many people have worked towards picking up plastic, and companies and the government banned and replaced plastic. The video provided by NJ Spotlight News states “New Jersey banned single-use plastic bags in stores”. This is wonderful and probably had a great impact on our environment for the better. It has probably improved our way of living in a great way. In the article “Giving Plastic a Second Chance “given by PBS NewsHour it mentions “John Williams company spent 15 years developing Hydro pol, an alternative for plastic that’s easier to recycle.” If everyone starts using Hydro pol then our environment might improve greatly, and plastic might become a problem of the past. A world without plastic just seems unbelievable for people, but it might just be a change for the better. Need more ideas? Here are more individual actions you can take daily to help solve this problem:

- Refuse plastic whenever possible.
- Say no to straws, lids, plastic bags, and plastic takeaway containers.
- Carry your utensils or a wooden spork and avoid using plastic utensils.
- Review restaurants and cafes and recognize them when they avoid straws and plastic packaging – and let them know you want them to do better when they don’t.
- Use reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, and bags. Some retailers will even give you a discount for doing so!
- If you forget your reusable coffee mug at a coffee shop, ask to have your coffee “for here” in a real mug and drink it there.
- Many coffee shops have ceramic mugs for customers, but they only use them upon request.
- Tell your local supermarket that you won’t buy produce wrapped in plastic.
- Purchase loose fruits and vegetables or shop at the farmer’s market.
- Bring your glass container or mesh baggies and buy grains, nuts, and other items in the bulk section.
- Avoid items wrapped in excess plastic.

- Replace plastic items at home with alternatives made from natural materials (bamboo toothbrushes, glass jars, wooden toys).
- Whenever you see plastic in nature, collect it and recycle it if possible, or put it in the trash can.

All in all, plastic is used daily, but people, companies, and the government are contributing to resolving this issue. No matter what age you are, you can help. To contribute to the solution we can recycle, carry reusable bottles, and reduce our personal plastic usage. You can also shop in bulk; this helps reduce plastic usage. You can also teach others and yourself about recycling and how it deeply helps our environment. It's crucial to be aware of the harm materials like plastic inflict on the environment. **YOU BE THE CHANGE!** Like Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Don't wait on others, start the change now!

Whitewash



Suryanshu Mishra

Blue drops of wake-eyed rivers,
Leaping jesters deck the bends of which,
Aye Man Fridays of Boolean worth!
Roll the carpets for the nectar rich.

The bulbous oozing of the sunlit night,
Washes your skin in toxic flow,
Hours canter by in reckless tune,
A googol flickers, all aglow.

You sleepwalk in earnest faith,
Sonic entrails n' burnt horizons,
Like the masthead of the Grandfather Sun,
Lanterned lines to hold the visions.

Zilched by the reins of silence,
Scamper over the mercury waves,
Bounce, swing and flourish the wands
Beckon the wind to alarm the slaves.


Bugles veiled as falling debris,
Trigger off some distant quakes,
Those maidens vanish, while canyons yawn,
Plummeting into those inky lakes.

Shudder and shake, and run amok,
That last breath you ever take,
Will rip apart this fabric fake,
From sleep then, will you awake!

For Maa



Dr. Jayasmita Mishra Ph.D

Dear God, 

I miss my MAA, but let her go...
Maa is with you, I know!!
Bless, love and hug her tight;
Please keep her safe under your sight.

'Cause, I swear by thy name.....
She was so amazing, joyful, gentle, and unique
Selfless, dutiful, strong, smart and full of life!
A bundle of patience, always with positive vibes.

--She lived a contented life; well accomplished...
While the path she stepped on, wasn't a crystal trail
Silently she endured all the storms, without a cry!
Maa is indeed; a beautiful star in the sky.

Bereft the walls of time, volume and space
The gap in between us has faded away!
Within my mind and heart; she dwells forever...
The bonding has become stronger than before.

From far and near, I can see her lovely face
Listen to her voice, feel the warmth of her presence....
Pushing me to reach higher goals, uplifting my spirit!
It's only for my MOTHER, I stand proud and bright.

I am, indeed, a part of my MOTHER: her legacy.
Filled with love, she is the maker of my pathway!
Strewn with a rainbow of vibrant lights so strong;
--That for sure will last me all my life.....

Fast Fashion

Its environmental impact and our role



Sanskrit Jee
6th Grade

Ever wondered how clothes get to your doorstep with just a click? How do stores always have so many of them? How do online stores always have what you want at an insane discount? Three good questions, one sad answer. Fast. Fashion.

Why is fast fashion sad? The short answer, exploitation, pollution, and egregious amounts of waste. The long answer? That's what I'm sharing with you today.

- An average American purchases clothes every 5 days
- Shein and Asos drop almost 1000 new styles per DAY
- A building in Bangladesh (Rana Plaza) was evacuated in 2013 b/c of cracks but the next day, the owners of the textile factories in the plaza made workers go back only to be killed by a building collapse an hour later. More than 1000 dead, 2500 injured.
- Imagine the pressure to produce !!
- Behind the smoke and mirrors of the ads and internet, there lies brutal hours, dismal wages, pollution, injuries and death.
- As per Clean-clothes campaign, average maker of textile only gets 0.6% of the retail price
- As per Fashion agenda, there are 40 million workers, and 1.4 million injuries per year

First, what even is fashion? Before the 1700s, clothing was more personal, you knew who made your clothes or you made your own clothes. People of the upper class did have trends and status symbols, but the middle and lower class always wore the same type of garments as was culturally viable. However, with the turning cog of the industrial revolution, slavery e.g., in cotton farming, and an influx of cheap labor into cities, fashion was given a new life, fed by the cage of capitalism. Today, fashionable clothes are dirt cheap, available in all sizes and an accessible commodity for everyone.

The fashion accessories market also grew radically in the past couple decades, with cheap cosmetics, shoes, handbags, all the way up to 14k gold and even Lab grown diamonds. I will give credit to the technological marvels in fast fashion, like recycling Plastic bottles to make t-shirts, and mass production of the same designs making fashion available to all classes. However, lack of regulation in the fashion industry, gave rise to smuggling, Fake brands, carbon

emissions, water wastage, and non-sustainable and bad quality clothing, resulting in landfills of clothing that will take 200 years to degenerate.

The planetary cost of fast fashion:

- Textile industry is responsible for 10% of the world's carbon emissions
- The fashion industry makes 92 mil metric tons of waste and uses 79 trillion liters of water a year
- A river in China, by a denim factory, has turned blue like a toxic vat of chemicals!
- Fashion network reports brands like Zara, H&M, and Asos - are all buying from polluting manufacturers.

How we end the tyranny of fast fashion:

- Mindful consumption at individual level - Get away from having, focus on BEING
- Workers have the power, they can disrupt industry and end the suffering, and go on strikes. Uprising of 20,000 women(1909), Lawrence textile strike(1912), U.S. textile workers strike of 400,000 across America in 1934, post-rana plaza strikes (2013-present day)
- Companies forced into legally binding accords, I would recommend the government ask every clothing to have a mandatory label of environmental impact, carbon emission
- Governments charge the brands, a fee for each ton of CO2 produced to make product

For future fashion, there are:

- Many paths toward ethical and environmentally sound clothing practices
- No worker exploitation, pollution, or waste is a future in which workers in textile factories communally own the factory and democratically operate it
- Designer = worker worker = designer
- Production should not be based on selling possibility, but on usage
- Less wasteful production
- End over production - End waste, pollution and exploitation
- To reduce harm to the world and people we can maybe use hemp fibers, not synthetic materials, raising wages, making and buying more durable clothes, or finding ways to use fabric after they have ripped or torn.

We can't do this right here and now, but we can do it soon if we work toward it.

Siblings can always share clothes, and I will leave you with a radical thought.. Let's make sustainable clothing, a fashion. If Kim Kardashian can wear Marilyn Monroe's clothes, and we can use second hand towels and bed-sheets in hotels, let's define the future of fashion with sustainable, reusable and repeatable clothing that gives one a unique identity.

Achievements In Scouting



Swarnab Roy, 8th grade.

As I look back on the past 12 months, I can't help but feel amazed at all the incredible things I've achieved.

Let's take a moment to reflect on these accomplishments together. One of my proudest moments was when I received several awards for my work with the scout troop. Looking back to October - 2023, my friend who was supposed to lead our camping trip unfortunately tore his ACL and knee ligament. With less than 24 hours until the trip, our scoutmaster asked if anyone was willing to step up and lead. I volunteered, despite not feeling prepared for the task. Our meeting point before reaching the campsite was the church. I checked everyone attending there. I heard the scouts bickering and battering wherever I went. Once we said bye to everyone, we left for the camping trip. During the car ride, all were silent. But once we started to talk, we began to argue about some small little details.

As the sun disappeared below the horizon, we finally arrived at our campsite at around 9:30 in the night. After picking up our tent buddies, I heard some grumbling and bumbling, and a bit of mumbling from the other scouts. Despite their complaints, everyone eventually went to sleep. When I went inside of our tent, I saw the small drops of rain and the trickle of small raindrops pattering and pattering on the roof. The morning dawned all beautiful and fresh, and I woke up renewed after a deep sleep as well as seeing the dew touching gentle swaying grass. We had a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs, which our grub master had prepared for us. During the trip, we ate many different types of food such as pasta, pizza, as well as tacos, which kept us energized and ready for the activities ahead. Before we started our day, I gave all the scouts a breakdown of what was going to happen on the trip. I provided them with a scorecard and a ring for each of the patrol leaders. However, there was a lot of squabbling in each of the groups, as everyone wanted to take the lead. After we dispersed, I took my group to the easiest station. We were trying to tie the knots, then we had to avoid all the ropes to get to the final goal.

I gave the younger scouts in my troop and patrol the proper instructions to win the relay. With their focus and dedication, we gave it a shot and won the points for that station. Overall, it was a great day full of adventure and teamwork.

After finishing all the stations, our group returned to the campsite to have lunch. While we were eating, I asked everyone to check their scorecards to see how we did. To my surprise, it turned out that the other patrols on this trip did not receive any points at all. Curious about what went wrong, I approached the patrol leader and asked them why they didn't receive any points. They told me that it was due to their morals - I wasn't exactly sure what they meant by that, but I didn't want to pry further. After lunch, our grubmaster who was responsible for cooking all the food for the different patrols and troops handed us our meal. Despite the disappointment of the other patrols, our own group was grateful for the delicious food and the points we had earned.

A momentous speech was made that started with "Approximately twenty-four hours prior, I was presented with a task that requires my undivided attention. As such, I am respectfully requesting the assistance of my peers to ensure the preservation of the esteemed reputation of Troop 759. We must collaborate as a cohesive unit to achieve our objectives. Our collective efforts will ultimately decide the outcome of this endeavor. I am fully committed to this task, and I appeal to each of you to join me in this endeavor. As a team, we possess the required aptitudes to fulfill our obligations and accomplish our intended goals. In conclusion, I implore you to join me in this venture, as our combined efforts will guarantee success. I sincerely appreciate any support that you may offer and am confident that together, we will triumph."

The room was filled with an air of anticipation as the speaker finished their presentation. After a moment of silence, the stunned crowd released a wonderful long round of applause, expressing their appreciation and enthusiasm for what they had just witnessed. The energy in the room was palpable as everyone rushed back to their designated activities, eager to start racking up points and having lots of fun. As the night wore on, we continued to bond as a team and share in each other's successes. We laughed, cheered, and high-fived each other as we completed one challenge after another. And when the activities were finally over, we spent the night reminiscing about the wonderful things we did as a team over dinner, basking in the warm glow of camaraderie and achievement. We had a long campfire and played many card games before going to sleep. The next day, all the senior patrol leaders who led the trip were called down to receive badges and rings representing the camp's motto, "One Ring to Rule Them All." As we rode back in the car, we were a tight-knit team, patting each other on the back for a job well done. Our scoutmaster was beaming with pride, thrilled about how we tackled every challenge together.

Looking Through the Window



Kshyamasagar Das

When I sit in the apartment,
when I look through the window,
the sun rays kissing the green grass,
the cool breeze touching the senses,
it gives a heaven satisfaction,
it tells you to submit to the feel of sensation.

I ponder over my situation,
why I am sitting ideally with frustration,
suddenly I have got leisure,
but no wish of enjoying this time,
I want to keep my self busy,
I want to race ahead in the rat race.

I do not want to bug down with the slowness,
this is the time to fight the battle,
this is the time to win and enjoy,
I do not want to slow my pace,
I am ready to fly as I have wings,
I want to see the world and see the beauties.

Just counting the days when I will run to the window,
may be the days are not far away,
may be the break is much needed one,
but I can't keep sync, my mind and my heart,
I try to relax but I can't,
may be restless I am,
just counting the days to fly again by looking through the window.....

Do (Smart)phones Lead to Smarter Kids?



Anya Mahakud
8th Grade

When I first began the school year in 8th grade, my dad gave me a Nokia. It was a flip phone that had many amenities. I could call, message, use the internet, have YouTube, play games, and a lot more. But it still wasn't an actual phone, like the smartphone that I really wanted. I was disappointed because I had expected an actual phone like my brother's, but no, my parents didn't think that they could trust me. They had given my elder brother a smartphone when he was in middle school, but since he wasn't using it properly, they took it back. Even now, my brother keeps getting his phone taken away, but he gets it back, which isn't fair to me, as I never even got the chance to experiment with a real phone, as he had.

My parents decided it would be better for me if I didn't get a smartphone, and that I am not ready for the responsibility, which isn't true. They think that I would play games and stay on my phone for 15 hours a day, which is so inaccurate. I do believe that I'm not like other people, and I could use a smartphone responsibly, contrary to my parent's beliefs.

Here are some reasons why kids in middle school deserve a smartphone:

- **Kids can learn more educationally.** Many apps on a smartphone can help kids with math, English, science, history, or even a different language. Apps such as Duolingo, Study Blue, and Khan Academy are recommended for kids and can help them a lot. Sometimes, when we kids are stuck in places without a computer or books, phones can help us do something, other than sit around and mope. We can learn different things while still being away from home.
- **Kids could have more social interaction.** When kids have cell phones, they obtain the ability to keep in touch with friends in and out of school, which means that they can meet up and plan events together, which increases happiness and lowers stress. When children can communicate with others virtually, it can help relationships and build deeper connections. Social media apps, when used for a certain time frame, could also help with strengthening similar interests with others.
- **Kids can learn to have more responsibility.** When kids get a smartphone, they have to learn how to use an expensive piece of technology properly and take care of it well. Having a

phone can teach kids how to deal with money, budgeting, and overspending, which are very valuable life lessons everyone has to learn for the future.

- **Kids can get safety and security.** When kids have a smartphone, parents have a tracking device so that they can figure out where their child is and when they got there. Whenever the child goes somewhere, they could send a message or call the parent to tell them about their whereabouts. It is very useful in the dangerous world we live in today.

Anyway, these are some of the benefits of kids having a smartphone. While I am sure there are drawbacks as well, I think the benefits outweigh the drawbacks by a fair bit. Kids will really be able to progress socially and educationally as well as learn to be more responsible and also stay secure if they have a smartphone. We have to understand that it is a privilege, not a right and we have to make the right choices if we do get a smartphone.

Including Sports in your Routine



Aahan Mahakud
10th Grade

I believe that from a young age, participating in sports or other physical activities, often with peers, can have a lasting positive impact on children. It has definitely impacted me, as I have grown stronger and have learned to enjoy the outdoors more. But there are other reasons why physical activity is useful. It builds good characteristics and lets kids explore their interests.

Discipline, leadership, and communication are key aspects of team sports. Whether it's being able to practice hard every day, keep your head up after a loss, or give commands to your team, these values will stick, even outside of sports. Coaches are a big part of this. I remember my freshman year of sports, where we were expected to practice as best as we could, or else we would be dropped from a game or a meet. Showing up to morning practice late would get you benched for a half. As we worked together, leaders began popping up. They would help cheer each other on, whether it be motivating us to finish a workout, or supporting us during a race. Lastly, communication. This skill can be taught anywhere, but having to talk to teammates and coaches, and learning how to keep your emotions from getting to your tongue in a stressful match was hard. But we all learned. Sports gives these opportunities to master these techniques because of the different situations athletes are placed in, forcing them to have to think harder about different decisions.

But perhaps the main reason for playing sports is the exploration part. There's almost an infinite amount of games out there, whether it be football, archery, or even chess. Sports provide an outlet for self-expression and creativity. Beyond the physical benefits, engaging in sports promotes positivity by reducing stress, boosting self-confidence, and fostering a sense of accomplishment. After playing sports, I felt much better about myself, as it gave me the opportunity to go outside and exercise while having fun. Not only will you be able to find something you like, but you will definitely find people who share your interests. A team sport will connect you with dozens of new people, each of which have a passion for the same sport. Larger-scale sports, like track, could help you meet even more people. In addition to this, you will also receive the opportunity to connect with coaches, who will definitely aid you in becoming better at your chosen sport. Guidance and mentorship provided by coaches can have a profound impact on a student's personal and athletic growth, instilling values such as leadership, sportsmanship, and respect.

In conclusion, the impact sports can have on a child is significant. From instilling principles of sportsmanship and strength to providing an avenue of enjoyment, sports are one of the most diverse activities. You will be able to connect with many people through your sporting journey, even after high school and college. Sports remain a cornerstone of personal growth and character development, enriching the lives of athletes, young and old, in profound ways.

Thinking of You



Rashmirekha Rajaguru

When i sleep i see your face
as if you are calling to give me a kiss.
I became restless to be with you.
i do not know when i will meet you
time is running fast and furious
i have to make quick success
just waiting for the day to be with you
i know i can never live without you
even if i am among the crowds
i always think about you
i do not care what people say
i know that i am made for you and you are for me
life will be happier than never with you
let's pray for us to be united
make life enjoyable and healthier again
Now it's time to enjoy your warmth
the face and the smell of you
it will make me eagerly wait for you again..
Thinking about you...

Regrets in the past, happiness in the future.



Aditi Penumetch,

10th grade

This piece of literature depicts parts of the life of a woman named Maya and how her values about family changes after her adolescence.

Maya in Freshman year of high school :

In a small town called River Creek, in a house at the end of Grover street lived Maya. Maya was a normal girl who just started highschool and while her family was downstairs getting the dinner ready, she was watching TV upstairs. When her mom asked her to come downstairs and eat dinner, Maya had just gotten a call from her best friend with whom she had just talked to in the morning.

“ The dinner is getting cold, come downstairs, let's eat together! I made your favorite!!”.

“I am not hungry” Maya yelled, “I am talking to someone!, pack it up! I will eat tomorrow”.

Her mom made eye contact with Maya's dad with a sort of negative look. Maya's dad took the hint and made his way up the stairs to knock on Maya's room. He noticed the door was locked when he tried to open it, so he knocked again. “I haven't seen you in a while, I came back from work just a few minutes ago” he said in a soft gentle voice.

“Maya?!” he said with worry in his voice “MAYA?!!!” he got really worried and burst open the door.

“OMG DAD!!!” Maya yells “are you OK?” Maya's dad sighs in relief.

“I thought something happened, you weren't answering and didn't open the door, in fact it was locked” he panted.

“Ughh, I just had my headphones on and I was changing earlier so I locked the door,”she said. Her dad instantly feels down hearted as he notices she is annoyed by him and attempts at leaving through the door. “

“Can you go? I was talking to Amy about something!” Maya says rudely even though she doesnt mean to. Her dads out the door before she gets to finish her sentence.

Maya in Junior year of college:

It's the halfway through junior year of college and Maya's brother Anish wanted to talk to Maya since it's been a while and she had spent her birthday away from the family with her friends.

“Hey bro, I love you but I need to study. Sorry I will call you later.” Maya hurriedly says, like she needs to cut the call urgently. “oh...ok but we only talked for like a min-.” The call has ended.

Anish is disturbed by how distant he feels with Maya and how he is always the one to reach for her and try to spend time together. The very minute in Maya’s dorm, Maya yells “Let’s go Party!!!” to her friends as they make their way out the dorm after taking a shot of vodka. A few hours later, Anish gets a call from Maya’s friend at college.

“Hey is this Anish, umm Maya is drunk and she told me to call someone from her phone. Is there any way you can come pick her up? She can’t drive in this state.”

Anish is utterly stunned. “Yeah sure, where are you guys? I’ll be there.” he says then gets in his car and drives as fast as he can to the bar that she snuck into, and takes her back into her dorm. Once she is slightly more sober, he decides to be cool about the episode and be a good brother. He attempts at cracking a joke “quite a study group session, huh!” he smiles.

“Can you not!!!” she said as soon as he ended his sentence. He put her to bed and turned off the lights and looked at her. “Sweet dreams,” he whispered before leaving and closing the door. As he made his way to his car he felt nothing but sadness in his heart about how things were between them.

Maya at the age of 27:

“Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep...” Maya wakes up annoyed and leans over to turn the alarm off. She gets herself to the bathroom with a struggle and starts getting ready for work. She is soon at her workplace and starts looking through some files. Her stomach rumbles, she realizes that she forgot to eat breakfast. She sighs remembering how her mother used to make her favorite breakfasts on Monday and had everything ready for her as she brushed her teeth and came downstairs.

“Maya, you have to finish these before leaving”- her higher official said while dropping a stack of files on her desk. She waits until he leaves and arrogantly impersonates him, because she is annoyed at her life. She reaches home at 5:30. All she had for lunch was an apple and half a stale sandwich. She proceeds to take a shower and settle down to read a book. She tries to focus but can’t seem to comprehend anything, looking out the window of her dull apartment. She can’t help but feel lonely and out of touch. She remembers how her family and her would sit and laugh while watching movies together. Now all she can do is sit and loath the silence. She tries to remember the last time she called her parents, starting to feel embarrassed at how she can’t remember when. She turns on her phone and goes to her dad’s contact. She freezes deep in thought. What will I say? She has never felt this disconnected from her family. She hesitantly taps her phone and it starts to ring. He picks up.

“Hi dad”- she says, waiting for his response.

“Hey sweetie” there it was, she thought of the soft, warm, but raspy voice that clearly comes from happiness. She feels teary- eyed but shakes her head determined to push back those tears and says “sorry it’s been a while hasn’t it?”

“It sure has, how are you, have you been eating?” he asks. She smiles. A month later she was at her family’s house with her brother and his new girlfriend, eating dinner that she and her mother made together.

“In every conceivable manner, the family is a link to our past, a bridge to our future.”

The Shark Attack



Rishaan Jena, 4th grade

PLOP!!! Justin dropped onto his bed. "Ugh," said Justin. "I am so tired. Why did I have to work a double shift, just because Max wasn't here?"

"I know he was watching tv all day," said Justin, "Max is as lazy as a cow eating grass." Justin pulled the blanket over him. He was tossing and turning in his bed. Then Justin suddenly woke up.

"I think I had a dream, but I can't remember anything." He ignored it and went to sleep.
7:30 am.

He woke up and went downstairs in his black and white robe. He looked at his father's picture and remembered how his father was. Tough, strong, and confident. He felt like he could never be those things. He tried to be like him but he always had a gentle and calm side. Suddenly he remembered part of his dream, but it was just him going to Dunkin to get his daily coffee. Which was weird because that was what he was about to do. So he went to Dunkin to get his coffee, then he went to work at the beach. He ran to his chair as fast as he could because the peach white sand was piping hot. When he got to his seat a lady came over.

"Can't I relax for a little while?" asked Justin.

The woman said, "I think there is something in the water." Justin got out of his chair and went into the water. There was nothing there so he decided to go back. Then something stopped him in his tracks. There it was, the monster with 3 spikes sticking out of it. Except they weren't spikes, they were fins. Its eyes were black and stared into his soul. He was petrified and numbed. There were three slashes on each side of its body. It was a shark!! He looked up and saw a boy still in the water.

"I need to save that boy and that shark isn't going to stop me."

He swam as fast as he could. His bones quaked, his legs were thin sticks, and his arms were sore. "I can't do this, I am nothing, I am useless". That thought repeated in his brain, constantly discouraging and disheartening him. Then something clicked inside his mind, suddenly he remembered that in the dream he tried to swim away but the shark killed him. He stared at the boy's mom, he was her only choice, he had to save him. He wanted to be afraid, he wanted to run, he wanted to live. He realized something. " All of the things that are

happening in my dreams are happening in real life, I didn't have a dream, I had a hallucination. I know what is going to happen so I am going to make the best of it. If I am going to die, I don't want to die in vain. I want to be a hero not a villain, I want to be respected."

He remembered his dad who got stung by a jellyfish to save someone. He remembered that he had this job to honor him. If my dad can do it then I can too."This is to honor my dad." Then the shark came closer from under the boy. "Come on please, I have to do this or else the kid will die.". And at the last second he blocked the shark from biting his leg but it bit him. He told the kid to swim back. Then he looked at the shark. It wasn't a normal regular shark, it was the great white shark!! He remembered what to do if a shark bit you. Justin said," This shark is about to have bad blood". He took his fingers and poked the shark's eyes. Then he pricked his gills. The shark swam away. He did it, he beat it. Justin tried to swim back but he couldn't because his leg was too injured and torn apart. The people on the shore waited for him. Their hope sank low like Justin. As Justin sank low he realized something. It doesn't matter if he had a gentle side because that gentle and calm side was more important than being tough. "The only reason my dad was so brave was because he had a gentle side."

Someone went to get him but they found nothing. Tears filled their eyes. They kneeled down. They barely knew him but their hearts were filled with sorrow. They couldn't do anything. They felt bad. A few days later the mayor decided to put up a memorial of Justin so that when anyone looked at it they would feel courage, they would feel fearless, they would feel bold. Even though he lived a short life, it was an important one. Justin was a normal lifeguard but in one day he became a hero. He inspired and stimulated everyone in the town. He died a hero on the day he became one. He was a very important person.

His last words were, "Never let fear catch you in its trap, because you can always escape." That was the story about the lifeguard who saved me.

" I promise you dad, I will become like that lifeguard, I am not going to be afraid of the dark anymore."

Computer Espionage



Ricky Rath
6th Grade

The train made its way through the curved path. Its' carriages danced to the rhythm of the tracks, while the train tooted its horn to declare its presence. It demonstrated its' spectacular speed by racing against the mighty winds.

Mr. Wu preferred taking the train instead of a car so he could admire the astonishing views. He was looking at the beautiful nature outside, but he could not bring himself to appreciate anything. He was still shocked by his boss's words, and they were playing in his head on repeat.

Mr. Wu was one of the most intelligent, loyal, and hard-working employees in his workplace, a computer store. He was a good salesman and excellent manager and was highly recognized and well-respected. He was also rewarded for it. His boss, Mr. Lapontes, subtly hinted to him of the possibility of a promotion. Everybody in his office expected Mr. Wu to be promoted, but things didn't go quite as he had expected.

It was just another day for Mr. Wu, where he would follow his usual routine. He would check his emails, attend his daily meetings, and get on top of his to-do list. Right before lunch, his boss announced who won the promotion. "The promotion has been given to John Allen! A round of applause for Mr. Allen!" Mr. Wu was confused at first, but then quickly filled with anger when he realised that John Allen was a new employee, and it was only his first year!

Mr. Wu walked home disappointed. When he got home, his wife had already received the news. She had brought him a cake, and she was going to take him to the movies to cheer him up. No matter what she did, Mr. Wu would not brighten up. After Ms. Wu went to sleep, Mr. Wu went outside for a walk to clear his head.

Mr. Wu roamed the dimly lit city streets, wondering what to do. He thought about all of the years of hard work he had devoted to the company, and was enraged that this was how his boss repaid him. He wanted to get back at his boss and John Allen. He thought about several ways to hurt their careers. Mr. Wu ruled out extreme options and boiled it down to two options: protest or start a new business. He was a good manager and had a passion for computers. He

could sell any type of tech product to anybody. He thought that he could use his skills to start a business.

Mr. Wu started on his plan. He stayed up all night and sometimes went without eating. He brought books from the library to learn how to start a business and sustain it. He looked for places to rent for his business. Everything was finally coming together. Soon after, he opened his shop. Business was slow at first. Not many people knew him, so he did not have much credibility. Then, an idea struck Mr. Wu. He saw the popularity of social media and how everybody used it. He created a page and posted his prices and services. The store quickly got the exposure it needed and business boomed.

Things were going amazing for Mr. Wu for a while, but then the unexpected happened. During the night, a fire started in the computer store. The authorities were immediately alerted and got to the scene on time before anything valuable was destroyed. Mr. Wu was called down to the store and was asked questions. The cameras were damaged, but Mr. Wu had one camera hidden away from plain sight, just in case anything like this happened.

When the police checked the tapes, they identified the man as John Allen. John had realised how successful Mr. Wu was, and became jealous. He wanted to destroy Mr. Wu's business completely. Thankfully, Mr. Allen wasn't so bright. He did not even attempt to hide his face. Mr. Wu was shocked to see that someone so dull had gotten the promotion at his old company. Mr. Wu decided not to press charges, but the police still had to arrest John for damaging property.

After further investigation, it was revealed that John Allen was not the only offender. The other computer store, Mr. Wu's old workplace, was also behind this. They wanted to get rid of the competition but had failed. Their business was shut down, and Mr. Wu's store went on to become one of the largest computer stores in the city.

Growing Up



Alisha Nayak
Grade 4

With age, comes ups and downs
As the years go by, responsibility is required
As the years go by, work gets harder
As the years go by, freedom is acquired
As the years go by, free time is lost
As the years go by, new hobbies are discovered
As the years go by, lessons are learned
As the years go by, people come and go
As the years go by, you learn new things
As the years go by, opportunities are offered
But, after all, age is just a number
And what matters most are the people you meet along the way

The Empty Road



Aditi Paschimiray, 9th grade

Every day, I walk with thousands.
Every day, I'm part of a crowd.
I'm lost there, amongst so many others.

Can't see past their perfect faces.
All their makeup, all their latest crazes.
I definitely can't see past their facades.
Can't really see
The devils, the angels, and those like me.
They're all fighting, competing to be set free.

The plastic smiles, the placid lies,
and mostly, the unheard cries.
They haunt me.
They haunt my distorted dreams.
So many thoughts,
So many identities,
So much happiness, just lost.

Everyone's walking, running, tumbling down their own paths.
Am I the only one who feels like just turning back?
Just take a break, just breathe for a moment.
But it seems like one minute
Is equal to a thousand deaths.

I'm afraid to close my eyes.
I'm afraid I'll lose sight and become blind.
I'm afraid of what will happen when
I am no longer alert.
I'm afraid that I'll close my eyes and realize
That all this time I was living a complete lie
And that I was so busy dwelling in my sorrows
That I didn't notice I was all alone
Running on that empty road.

Beauty



Roma Das, 7th grade

You're beautiful, you're beautiful, you're beautiful inside and out.

You have a special beauty that is unique, one of a kind.
Your beauty makes you, you. That's the reason people like you.

Be yourself, crazy or not, be yourself because your beauty is your everything.
Look up, look down, look side to side, everyone has a special spark whether inside or out.
Some may sing, some may dance, some may understand people from the first glance.

Everyone has flaws, but that shouldn't stop you from trying to accomplish something. Those
flaws can be defeated with time.

You're not an object, which cannot think or cannot feel anything: it may be beautiful but there *is*
no inside to it.
Objects are defined by the way they look and so do humans, but humans should also be
defined for the within.

Your hair, your eyes, your skin color, and more doesn't define who you are.
The person you are is on the inside.
But no one can get through unless you show them.

The beauty on the outside is easy to find.
Find out who you are on the inside: it may be hard but it's worth the while.
Accept the challenge, you will see you're divine.

The sky is blue, the grass is green, you are you and I am me. Beauty has nothing to do with if
you're popular or not, it's only if you know who you are and aren't ashamed of.

A lion is big, a cat is small, you are you and I am me.

After all, beauty is strong inside and out, an object has no feelings, but humans have.
And you are you, and I am me, without a doubt.

Never Truly Free



Puneeta Choudhary, 10th grade

The smoke from the chambers reminded others of the ones lost.
These truly were the chambers of death.
Smoke was not the only source of pollution,
As the evil from the enemy was the true impurity.

Bodies covered the grounds.
The grounds that contain the suffering of many, and once caused distress.
Withered bodies were passed around like dice,
Traveling from one camp to another.

The once fresh air was tainted with trauma.
The shrilling screams of those young and old,
The pain of those feeble and strong,
The agony seemingly gone will always remain.

Some may praise those who survived the terror.
Even those who were able to persevere after loss.
They all put forth an endeavor,
And the ones who have yet to overcome the remorse may have outlasted the others,
But have they truly survived?

Some have attained liberation,
But they are faced with the everlasting memories of their degradation.
Although many were freed,
They were not released from the perpetual guilt of being the few not left to bleed.

What was luck?
Everyone faced the same horror that was struck.
Even though some were able to stay alive, they were all deprived.
Everyone had lost a part of themselves,
While some just lived long enough to be consumed by guilt.

This poem delves into the distressing depths of the human experience during the Holocaust, a period marked by unspeakable atrocities and profound suffering. This poem serves as a testament to the intrepid spirit that perseveres even in the face of unimaginable darkness, and it offers a glimpse into the anguish and resilience endured by survivors and victims alike. It beckons us to remember and reflect upon the collective tragedy that forever echoes through history. It reminds us of the power of words to illuminate the darkest corners of the human experience and to bear witness to the truths that shape our collective history. Through storytelling, we are reminded that storytelling is not merely an act of creation, but also of preservation—a sacred duty to preserve the truths of the past for future generations and ensure that voices are never silenced.

A Day at The Beach



Rohan Sarangi
5th Grade

Hi. My name is Rohan and I'm here to talk about cleaning up and helping sea animals trapped in litter. Did you know that there are tons of litter that washes up on our beaches?

The ocean, our ocean, is in desperate need of our help. With over 100 million tons of plastic currently estimated to be polluting the world's oceans, sea animals are dying at an alarming rate. Over one million marine animals, including sea mammals, fish, sharks, turtles, and birds, die every year due to plastic debris. This is a crisis that needs immediate attention and action.

There are many people who are committed to cleaning up the ocean and saving sea animals. Some people dedicate their time to going to the beach and help clean the shore where tons of litter washes up. But they can't do it alone. We need over one billion people to join him in this fight. Only 120 engineers, researchers, scientists, computational modelers, and supporting roles work together daily to rid the world's oceans of plastic. This is not enough.

Water pollution is a pressing issue that poses a serious threat to our planet. Every day, human activity contaminates bodies of water with harmful substances, including chemicals, pathogens, and other pollutants. The consequences of water pollution are far-reaching and can have a devastating impact on our environment, economy, and health. Industrial waste, agricultural activities, and household waste are some of the primary sources of water pollution. Chemicals and toxins that are released into nearby bodies of water can harm aquatic life and make the water unsafe for human consumption.

The spread of diseases and infections is also a significant concern, as contaminated water can have a negative impact on human health. The effects of water pollution are not limited to the environment and human health. It can also lead to a loss of income for businesses that rely on clean water and reduced tourism.

The economy is also affected in the long run, as we have to spend more resources on cleaning up and restoring bodies of water that have been contaminated. It is important to take action and address water pollution before it's too late. Governments can enact laws and regulations to limit industrial waste, monitor the use of chemicals in agriculture, and enforce penalties on those who violate these regulations. Individuals can also take action by being

mindful of their own waste disposal practices, reducing their use of plastic, and supporting organizations that work to clean up and protect bodies of water.

Water pollution is a serious threat that requires urgent attention and action. We must take responsibility for our actions and work together to reduce water pollution and protect the world's bodies of water. By taking action now, we can create a cleaner and safer environment for ourselves and future generations.

The good news is that you can help. By joining the largest plastic cleanup in all of history, the Ocean Cleanup, you can make a difference. Every year, tens of millions of pieces of plastic are dumped into the ocean and we need to develop skills and technology to get rid of this plastic. A portion of this plastic travels to ocean garbage patches, getting caught in a vortex of circulating currents.

If no action is taken, plastic will increasingly impact our ecosystems, health, and economies. It's time to take action before it's too late. Sea animals are counting on us. Over 700 marine species are affected by plastic pollution and at least 100 million marine mammals are killed each year. The numbers are staggering. In 2021 alone, there were at least 363,762,732,605 pounds of plastic pollution in the world's oceans.

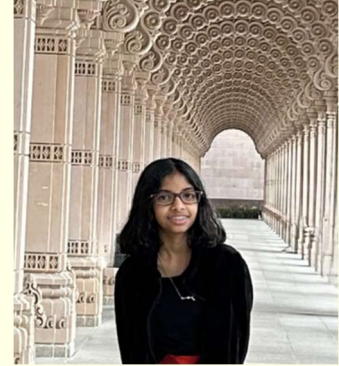
Globally, approximately 8 million pieces of plastic enter the ocean every single day. That's equivalent in weight to more than 26,000 Boeings and 747 Jumbo Jets. I know what you're thinking, as of 2021, the world's oceans contain 3.63 billion pieces of plastic, weighing approximately 269,000 tons, and 8 million pieces of plastic enter the ocean every single day. Yes, it is true and I know because it was online on Google. I'm not joking. So now at least you might come to help, which would be great.

Let's make a difference together. We can't afford to wait any longer. Join The Ocean Cleanup, the place where most of this information came from. The link to The Ocean Cleanup is : <https://theoceancleanup.com>

Save the Ocean, Save Future Generations!

**Thank you,
Rohan Sarangi**

Beyond the TV Screen



Prisha Patra, 7th Grade

This winter break was interesting. It was different. Rather than being stuck at home, glued to the TV screen, I went out during my winter break and visited a few destinations.

One of my visits was to the Liberty Science Center. There were a variety of attractions, and a schedule providing events that would go on through the day. One of the few things I got to experience was a few people doing some large and slightly dangerous experiments. There was an experiment involving a balloon's reaction to different types of liquid and a volcanic experiment. Above the center of the first floor was an "infinity circle," where one could loop through a mini obstacle course with platforms hanging from the top. This circle was quite high in the air, and there was a large view of the inside of the center down below. There was also a dolphin shaped - tube structure that was a simulator for a game. The player gets to pick an adventure, and the stimulator makes the course seem real.

In addition, another experience was an animal exhibit. There were many different types of animals there, like snakes, birds, insects, turtles, fish, raccoons, and some other animals. The time of my visit was near Christmas, and the center had a light show, which took place in an enormous planetarium, illuminated by a dazzling array of lasers. The Christmas light show featured a Mariah Carey light show, where they played a couple of her songs, and, on the planetarium screen, there were lights moving everywhere in sync with the music.

I also went to the new BAPS Swaminarayan temple in New Jersey, which had some new structures. Just walking to the temple and seeing the outside was spectacular. There was so much to see on the outside itself. I probably spent around 1 hour walking around, observing all the decorations. There was a small structure showing the journey of the child yogi, Nilkhanth Varni. He traveled 8000 miles across the Indian Subcontinent for 7 years when he was a child. A statue of him stood outside, in the center. There was also a large pond, with other idols of gods and goddesses pouring water out onto the body of water. The first temple from a few years ago was still there, but there was a new entrance building. The inside was gorgeous; it was like a tourist attraction. There was a mini theater for newcomers, and they presented a video presentation to them, showing a great orientation of the process of the creation. The ceiling and walls were decorated with various, traditional paintings. The temple grounds were astounding, with many small, intricate details lining every part of the temple. Outside, there was another building, and although it was still under construction, it looked fascinating. The original, first temple was also pleasant, and all the marble structures were very delicate. Back at the end of

the temple, there was a new cafe. The cafe was clean and luxurious. There was a long line with everyone waiting to order their food. When my family finally went to order on a computer screen, there were so many food options, from ordering pizzas and paninis, to getting South Indian food, chaat, Indian street foods, and authentic *thalis*. There were two floors of seating, decorated elegantly. In the center of the cafe was an opening with a railing covered in vines and leaves. There was also a large, fake tree standing in the center, and on the second floor, you could sit below the tree and eat peacefully.

Overall, this was one unique winter break for me. My Christmas break was filled with exciting experiences and memorable visits that will stay with me for years to come.

A Short History of Music



Rishi Patnaik
Grade 8

Music, the core of the arts. When you just compile thousands of notes into clusters, you create a masterpiece. But most of us might've thought, when did music start? or how did we even discover music? There are a lot of theories out there: half of them are myths and half of them are truthful. Throughout the journey of music, there were a few interesting discoveries some of us didn't know.

To begin, music started in the year 40,000 BP (Before Present). According to the Smithsonian Institution, archaeologists discovered debris of bone flutes, though it is unclear whether or not it is in the Upper Paleolithic Period (300000 - 50000 BP). The National Museum of China says that bone flutes are made of long bones of wading birds with seven round holes on each side. The holes are what give out the sound. Archaeologists also say that humans in the early ages created music by pounding their hands onto objects and making random noises. Imagine you are growing some crops and you tap your feet on the ground in a catchy rhythm. Then, everyone starts to catch on to what you are doing. This is very interesting because it is like you are starting a chant. Given this evidence, the start of music has been intriguing and still is now.

Continuing on by fast forwarding to 3000 BCE to the mid-1700s, we can see that string, woodwind, and brass instruments have been made. These include harp, violin, tuba, french horn, and more. All of these instruments combined have started the Baroque Era. According to V&A, it says, "An important feature of Baroque art and design is its use of human figures. Represented as allegorical, sacred or mythological, these figures helped turn the work into a drama to convey particular messages and to engage the emotions of the viewer." To summarize, composers like Antonio Vivaldi, George Frideric Handel, and J.S. Bach composed beautiful pieces that have an Italian or French feel. Given this information, the Baroque Era made music a big difference by adding sheet music and more instruments.

The style of music has evolved over the centuries. It all started when a bone flute was made and it made some noise. There were also humans tapping their feet, clapping, and making some random noises like yodeling. Fast forward to the Baroque Era, when a lot of musical instruments were found. There was also the sheet music system, where you could compose or play. Nowadays, we have percussion, electronic synthesizers, and more. This is also known as pop. Given all of this information, music evolved over a time frame of 67,000 years and will live on forever and forever.

Technology Vs Human Intelligence



Mihika Mohanty
8th Grade

Technology surrounds us everywhere we go. In school, at home, and even during social hours, technology can be found. Technology has different definitions including the application of scientific knowledge or the machinery developed from said application. In a world where modern technology is common, a doubt still stands. Does the evolution of technology make humans less smart or more intelligent? Despite what the general population believes in, advanced technology makes humans smarter due to the required application of science and engineering and how they can be used as tools to aid future discoveries.

New equipment, machinery, and other technology would only have come to be with humans. People can use their knowledge of science and engineering to put together new items that would make lives easier. The work isn't over yet. Technology continues to grow and improve based on past inventions. The need for new development of devices to assist us keeps us, humans, on our toes and using our knowledge. Technology can also be created based on past experience, forcing the person to interpret what needs to be done to change the negative side effects. Therefore, the creation of new technology requires humans to analyze past knowledge and experience, further raising their IQ.

Technology is our strongest tool since it covers all variations of tools, machinery, and automation. We have many tools for many subjects for many purposes. Some might argue that having such advanced tools and so many of its kind makes us lazy and short-sighted. Quite the contrary, new technology leads to intuitive and resourceful people. Having devices to assist us when needed by our side helps us become our best versions and enhance our skills. For example, if someone were to write an essay, they have many tools at hand. Primarily, they can use a computer to type their essay which helps them write it more efficiently and quickly. They also can use the internet to increase the quality of their word choice. Even though it seems like the tech at their hands is doing all the work, it's not. The tech is simply advancing what's already there because, ultimately, it's the person's ideas, thoughts, or opinions that are being expressed. Their tools just help with making their final product their best product whilst helping them learn new elements along the way, like their vocabulary.

The concept of technology and what comes to mind when we mention modern technology doesn't always have to be an enemy. Technology is meant to create the best versions of ourselves and of what we create. This happens due to how we use the application of science and past knowledge and how we use any tech as a guide or assistance. Thus, technology does not make humans less intelligent but does the opposite. So, the next time you look at any piece of tech, think about how it makes you become the best version of yourself.

Jagannatha Ratha Yatra – My Experience at Puri



Riya Sarangi
9th Grade

Last summer, during my visit to India, my family and I went to visit Puri and see the Ratha Yatra. This is an annual festival, which is held mostly in July to celebrate the divine journey of Lord Jagannath, along with his siblings Balabhadra and Subhadra, from the main temple (Sri Mandira) to the Gundicha Temple and back. Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra are revered as the divine siblings in Hindu mythology. Lord Jagannath, an incarnation of Vishnu, represents the universe and its all-encompassing nature. Balabhadra, his elder brother, embodies strength and protection, while Subhadra, their sister, represents purity and auspiciousness.

During Rath Yatra, the deities are mounted on towering chariots, known as Rathas, and pulled by thousands of devotees through the streets of Puri. The main chariot, called Nandighosa, carries Lord Jagannath and is the tallest among the three. Balabhadra's chariot, named Taladhwaja, is slightly shorter, while Subhadra's chariot, known as Devadalana, is the smallest. As the chariots make their way through the streets of Puri, devotees throng the roadsides, eager to catch a glimpse of the gods and seek their blessings. The atmosphere is charged with devotion and fervor, as hymns and chants fill the air, invoking the divine presence of Jagannath and his siblings.

Upon reaching the Gundicha Temple, the deities are installed in their temporary abode for a period of nine days, during which elaborate rituals and ceremonies are conducted. The return journey, known as Bahuda Yatra, takes place nine days later, as the chariots carry the gods back to Sri Mandira amidst much fanfare and celebration. However, by the time we reached Bhubaneswar from the USA, the main Ratha Yatra festival was already over and Suna Besha had just finished a day earlier. We woke up early in the morning, took a bath, and got ready by 5:00 AM to start driving to Puri. It took us about an hour and a half to reach Puri and we drove past some historic places like Dhauli Shanti Stupa and Daya River which is associated with the Kalinga war with Ashoka. Driving there was pretty cool—we passed by lots of interesting towns like Pipli and Sakhigopala and drove along the coastline, which was awesome.

When we reached Puri, the driver took us as close as he could to the temple but then we had to get out of our car and walk a bit more. As we got closer, I could see the crowds getting bigger and bigger. But my dad said it was not as bad as during the actual Ratha Yatra which attracts millions of devotees every year.

As we got close, I noticed that the chariots were massive and we were lucky enough to get up close to see everything. It was amazing seeing the three deities—Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra—up close on those chariots. We stood in front of the chariots and took a lot of pictures. There was a huge crowd at this early time but it was still manageable. We stayed there for about an hour embracing the divinity and feeling energized by the chants from the devotees praying to Lord Jagannath. My dad guided us to the shoe stand center where we had to leave our shoes and also our cell phones too. Because electronics are not allowed into the temple.

My dad explained that there are four gates to enter the temple, each with a special meaning. The East Gate – Singha Dwara or Lion's Gate is for devotion, the West Gate - Vyaghra Dwara or Tiger Gate is for desire, the Northern Gate - Hasti Dwara or Elephant Gate is for wealth, and the Southern Gate - Aswa Dwara or Horse Gate is for victory. Each gate has an interesting story behind it. Because of the Ratha Yatra, the Singha Dwara was closed so we had to enter from the Aswa Dwara (South Gate). Inside the temple, it was so peaceful and serene. We started by visiting the Ganesh temple and then lit some diyas. Since the main gods were still on the chariots, we couldn't go to the main sanctum, but we still did a pradakshina around the temple and offered prayers at the Goddess Lakshmi temple.

Afterward, we grabbed our shoes and phones and headed back to our car. The driver was waiting for us at the designated spot - thank goodness, because traffic was crazy! It was also 9:30 AM and I was super hungry. We went to a restaurant and had a delicious breakfast of hot pooris with aloo curry and then some jalebis. Finally, it was time to hit the beach which my dad said was quite famous in Puri. The sand was really soft and even at midday the beach was crowded. We enjoyed dipping our feet in the water and then headed back home. Overall, it was such a humbling and divine experience to see the three gods on the colorful Ratha. Being part of such a sacred tradition was truly special, and it's something I'll never forget.

Odia poems



ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ



Surjya Narayana Panda

ଦୁଇ ମନ ଏକ ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଗଢି ଉଠେ ପ୍ରେମ ମନ୍ଦିର
ଦୁଇ ହୃଦୟ ମିଳନରେ
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ସେ ନଦୀ ତୀରେ ସଂପର୍କର ନୁଆଁର ଘାଟ
ଯୋଗ ବିୟୋଗ ଚଳା ପଥରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଅନୁକୂଳରେ ସୀମା ନ ଲଘି ପ୍ରତିକୂଳରେ ମନକୁ ବାନ୍ଧି
ଶରୀର ବସି ଦେଖୁଛି ତୀରେ ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ମାନ ଅଭିମାନର ଖେଳ ଲୁଚକାଳି ସେ ନଦୀ ତୀରେ ବୃକ୍ଷ ଗହଳି
ତା ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବ ଦିଶେ ଜଳରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଜ୍ଞାନର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବିଦ୍ୟା ଉଦ୍‌ହାତେ ସୂଚନା ଦିଏ ପ୍ରେମ ଅମର
ତୀର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଇର୍ଷାର ବୁଦ୍ଧା ତୁଣ୍ଡ ବାଇଦ ନଦୀର ତୀରେ ଜଗି ବସିଛି
ନିରସ ଆଶା ବୁଡ଼ ନିଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ମନରେ ପାପ ରତ୍ନ ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ଅସହ୍ୟ ଯଜ୍ଞଣା ବହି
ନଦୀକୁ ଶୁଖାଇ ଦିଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଯେବେ ପ୍ରେମର ଶ୍ରୀବଣ ଧାରା ମନର ପାପକୁ ଧୁଏ
ପୁଣି ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ବହିଯାଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ତ୍ୟାଗର ଡଙ୍ଗା ବିବେକ ନାଉରି ସମୟ କାତ ଆଗକୁ ମାରି
ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖର ଗୀତ ଗାଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ମନର ମଳ ନଦୀର ତଳ ସ୍ଵଚ୍ଛ ଧାରା ତୀରରେ ବୋହି
ପ୍ରେମର ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ଯାଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଦେଖୁ ହୁଅଇ ମନ ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବ ଶୁଣି ହୁଅଇ ହୃଦୟ କାବ୍ୟ
ସ୍ଵମୃତିର ଡଙ୍ଗା ଭାସି ଯାଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ସକାଳୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ଦିନରୁ ରାତି ମାସ ବରଷ ଋତୁ ରୁ ଋତୁ
ଯୋଡ଼ି ପାଦ ଚିହ୍ନ ଦିଶିଯାଏରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଅଭୁଲ୍ଲା ସ୍ଵମୃତି ସ୍ଵମୃତି ଚାରଣ। ସଂପର୍କ ସ୍ଵମୃତିର ଜ୍ୟୋତିକୁ ନେଇ
ଆଶା ସେ ଜ୍ୟୋତିରୁ ଧାରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଝରଣା ଦିନେ ନଦୀ ହୋଇଲା ସଂପର୍କର କୂଳକୁ ଭରି
ସଂପର୍କ ମୁହାଁ ଏବେ ସାଗରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ପ୍ରେମ ସାଗର ବିଭୁ ସଂପର୍କ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଶାଶ୍ଵତ ଲକ୍ଷ
ମନେ ଐଶ୍ଵରୀୟ ଶାନ୍ତି ଭରେ।
ସଂପର୍କର ନଦୀ ତୀରେ।

ଡଃ. ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାରାୟଣ ପଣ୍ଡା
ଜେ କେ କାଗଜ କଳା।
ଜେ କେ ପୁର।
୯୪୩୭୨୧୮୦୮୯

ବିଧାତାଙ୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟି



Susama Tripathy

ବିଧାତାଙ୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର କି ବଇଚିତ୍ର ଆହା
ଗଢ଼ିଲେ ଜନନୀ ସିଏ ଜୀବଚିର ସାହା
ପରାଣେ ତା ଭରିଦେଲେ ଏତିକି ଶକତି
ନାଶିଚି ପାରଇ ଯିଏ ଜୀବର ଦୁର୍ଗତି

ଧରିତ୍ରୀ ରୂପରେ ପୁଣି ଧରଇ ଜଠରେ
ଦଶମାସ ଗର୍ଭକଷ୍ଟ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଆଦରେ
ପ୍ରସବ ବେଦନା ଆଉ ଯାତନା କୁ ଭୁଲି
ଭିଡ଼ିନିଏ କୋଳେ କେତେ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ବୋଲି

ସ୍ୱନ୍ଦନେ ସ୍ୱନ୍ଦନେ ତାର ଆଶିଷର ଧାରା
ସନ୍ତାନର ପାପରାଶି ଧୋଇନିଏ ପରା
ତା ବକ୍ଷର ଦୁଗ୍ଧ ସେତ ଅମୃତ ସମାନ
ଶକତିରେ ଭରିଦିଏ ଜୀବର ପରାଣ

କ୍ଷୀର ବାହାନାରେ ତହିଁ ମିଶାଇ ଜହର
ପୁତନା ଯେ କରିଥିଲା ଅପମାନ ତାର
କ୍ଷୀରପାନ ବାହାନାରେ ଜଗତର ସାଇଁ
ଶୋଷି ନେଇଥିଲେ ତା'ର ପରାଣ ସେପାଇଁ

ଶିଶୁ ତାର ଅଛି ଆହା କ୍ଷୁଧା କି ଆତୁର
ସେ ସବୁର ହିସାବ ତ ମୁଖଛୁ ଡାହାର
ମନର ଆବେଗ କେବେ କେଉଁ ରୂପେ ଥାଏ
ସେ ଆବେଗ ଭାବାବେଗ ପରଖୁ ସେ ନିଏ

ଲୋଡ଼ା ହୋଇଥାଏ ଯେବେ ଶାସନ ଦଣ୍ଡର
ଦଣ୍ଡିବାକୁ ପଛାଏନି କଠୋର ଚିତ୍ତର

ତାହାର କଠୋର ଚିତ୍ତ ମମତା ପ୍ରଣୟ
ବୁଝିବା ସହଜ ନୁହଁ କି ନିୟମ ହାୟ

ସେ ନିୟମ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣାୟକ ସେ ନିଜେ ଅଟଇ
ଗଣିତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସେଠି କାମ ନ କରଇ
ନିଜେ ଦଣ୍ଡି ନିଜେ ପୁଣି କରଇ ରୋଦନ
ଆହା ଦେଖ ବାସ୍ତବ୍ୟ ମମତା ନିଦର୍ଶନ

ଦଣ୍ଡିସାରି ଭିଡ଼ିନେଇ କୋଳକୁ ନିଜର
ବକ୍ଷେ ଚାପିଧରି ଢାଳେ ଲୋଡ଼କର ଧାର
ବୋକ ପରେ ବୋକ ଦେଇ ଭରେ ସେହି କ୍ଷତ
ସତେ ଅବା ଅପରାଧ କରିଛି ସିଏତ

ସନ୍ତାନର ଲାଗି କେବେ ଯୁଝିବାକୁ ହେଲେ
ସାରା ସଂସାରଟା କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପଡ଼େ ତାର ତୁଲେ
ଶୟନରେ ହେଉ ଅବା ହେଉ ଜାଗ୍ରତରେ
କାୟମନୋବାକ୍ୟେ ସଦା ଥାଏ ନିରନ୍ତରେ

ମଥା ରଖି ଲୋଟିଗଲେ ସେହି କୋଳ ପରେ
ସତେକି ଭଣ୍ଡାସ ମିଳେ ସଂସାର ସାଗରେ
ତା ହାତ ପରଶ ଆହା ଯାଦୁର ସରସ
ସରଗ ର ସୁଖ କିବା ସମ ତାର ପାଶ

ଲଭିବାର ପାଇଁ ଥରେ ସେହି କୋଳ ସୁଖ
ଜଗତର ଇଶ ନିଜେ ହେଲେ ପରାଡ଼ମୁଖ
କେତେ ମାଡ଼ ଗାଳି ଆଉ ଦଣ୍ଡ ଅବକାଶେ
ଅଝଟ ଯେ ହେଉଥିଲେ କଳାକାହ୍ନୁ ବେଶେ

ଯାହାଙ୍କର ଆଦେଶରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡର ମାଳ
ଆତଯାତ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି ନକରିଣ ଗୋଳ
ସିଏ ପୁଣି ନିଜେ ଦେଖ ସେ କୋଳ ଆଶାରେ
ହରକତ କରୁଥିଲେ ମାତାଙ୍କ ପାଶରେ

ଯାହାଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ୱରୂପ ଜଗତେ ଦୁର୍ଲଭ
ତାହାପାଇଁ ଲୋଡ଼ା ପୁଣି କେତେ ଜପ ତପ
କପଟିଆ କାହ୍ନୁ ଦେଖ କାନମୋଡ଼ା ଖାଇ
ଖେଳରେ ଖେଳରେ ଦେଲେ ମାତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାଇ

ହୋଇଥାଉ ଶିଶୁ ତା'ର ଦେବତା ସମାନ
ସିଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ଯଶୋଦା ମା' ଭୂମା ତୁ ମହାନ
ଆଶିଷରେ ଭରା ପରା ତା' କୋଳର ଛାୟା

ଏହି ଭବ ସାଗରରେ ପାଇବାକୁ ରାହା

ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ମହେଶ୍ୱର କରିଲେ ବିଚାର
ପରଶୁବେ ମହାତଳେ ସତୀଙ୍କ ଭାବର
ସ୍ୱର୍ଗପୁର ତେଜି ଦେବେ ମାନବ ରୂପରେ
ଉଭାହେଲେ ଆସି ଅନସୂୟାଙ୍କ କୁଟୀରେ

ଜନନୀର କୋଳେ ଯେବେ ମିଳିଲା ସୌହାର୍ଦ୍ଦ୍ୟ
ନିଜର ଲୀଳାରେ ନିଜେ ହେଲେ ଆତ୍ମପୁନୁତ
ସରଗ ଭୁବନ ଦେବେ ପାଶୋରିଣ ଗଲେ
ମାତାଙ୍କର କୋଳେ ମଗ୍ନ ଖେଳି ଲୋଚୁଥିଲେ

ସୁଷମା ତ୍ରିପାଠୀ
ନିଉୟାର୍କ

ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖିବା, ଆମେ ଜିତିବା



ଲେଖିକା : କ୍ରୀଷ୍ଣା ସାହୁ

ଚୁଆଁ ଚୁଇଁ ହୋଇ ରହୁଥିବା
କଥା କଟା କାଟି ହେଉଥିବା ।

ସମାଜକୁ ଆମେ ଦେଖାଇବା
କହିଆ କଲେଭି ମିଶୁଥିବା ।

ପଛ କଥା ସବୁ ଭୁଲିଯିବା
ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ କଥା ଶିଖୁଥିବା ।

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ କଥା ଭାବୁଥିବା
ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କଥା ଏଡେଇବା ।

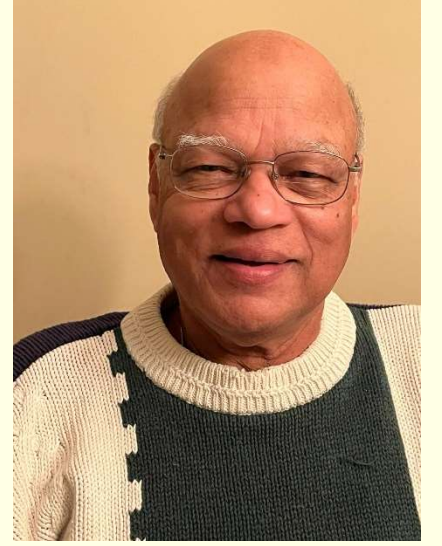
ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ କଥାକୁ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦେବା
ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିତ୍ର ହୋଇବା ।

ହାରିବା ଜିତିବା ନ ଭାବିବା
ସଂଘର୍ଷ ଜୀବନ ମଜ୍ଜା ନେବା ।

ଧର୍ମର ବାଟ କୁ ଖୋଜୁଥିବା
ଆପେ ଆପେ ପଥ ପାଇଯିବା ।

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ଉତ୍କଳ ଦିବସ ॥



ଦିଲ୍ଲୀଶ୍ଵର ସାହୁ

ପନ୍ଦରଶ ଅଠ- ଷଠି ମସିହାରେ ଆସିଲେ ମୁସଲମାନ ।
ବଂଗଳା ଶାସକ ଛଳ କରି କଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ପରାଧିନ ॥
ବିଶ୍ଵାସଘାତକ ସିନ୍ଧି ଓ ମଣେଇ ରଘୁଭଂଜ ଛୋଟରାୟ ।
ଲାନ୍ଦୁ ଖାଇ କଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନାଶ କରିଲେ ବଡ଼ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ ॥
ଡିନିଶହ ଅଣା- ଅସି ବର୍ଷକାଳ ହେଲୁ ଆମେ ପରାଧିନ ।
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବୁଡ଼ିଗଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆକାଶୁ ରାଜା ହେଲେ ସୁଲେମାନ ॥ ***
ମୋଗଲ ରାଜତ୍ଵ ମରାଠା ଶାସନ ପୁଣି ଫିରିଂଗି ଶାସନ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାତାକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଖଣ୍ଡ କରି ବିଦେଶି କଲେ ଶାସନ ॥
“ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏକତା ଭାଷା ନଏ”ବୋଲି କହିଲେ କେତେକ ଲୋକ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିରେ ବଂଗାଳି ଭାଷାରେ ପଢ଼ିବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକ ॥
ଉତ୍କଳ ଗୌରବ ଶ୍ରୀମଧୁସୂଦନ ସଂଗେ ଫକୀର ମୋହନ ।
କରୁଷ୍ଟଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଗଜ- ପତି ମହାରାଜା ସର୍ବେ ହେଲେ ଏକମନ ॥
ଅନେକ ବିଷୟ ଲୋକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସର୍ବେ ହେଲେ ଏକତ୍ରୁତ ।
ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶ ଗଠନ କରିବାକୁ ଏକମତ ॥

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ କରାଇବେ ଶିକ୍ଷାଦାନ ।
ଏକାଠି କରିବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ସର୍ବେ ମିଶି କଲେ ପଣ ॥
ଉଣେଇଶ ଶହ- ଛତିଶ ମସିହା ଆସିଲା ସେ ଶୁଭ ଦିନ ।
ଅପ୍ରେଲ ପହିଲା “ଉତ୍କଳ ଦିବସ” ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପୁନର୍ଗଠନ ॥
ଏହି ମୋର ଗର୍ବ ମୋ ଜାତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମହାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାତ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର କୁଳ ଦେବତା ସେ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ॥
ବନ୍ଧେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ ॥
ବଂଧେ ମାତରମ୍ ॥
ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ॥

*** ସୁଲେମାନୁ କରାନି ॥

Art Section



Prajnya Pradhan

Raaviya Patnaik



SubhaSakala-Prasanta Patel



Sudashima Naik

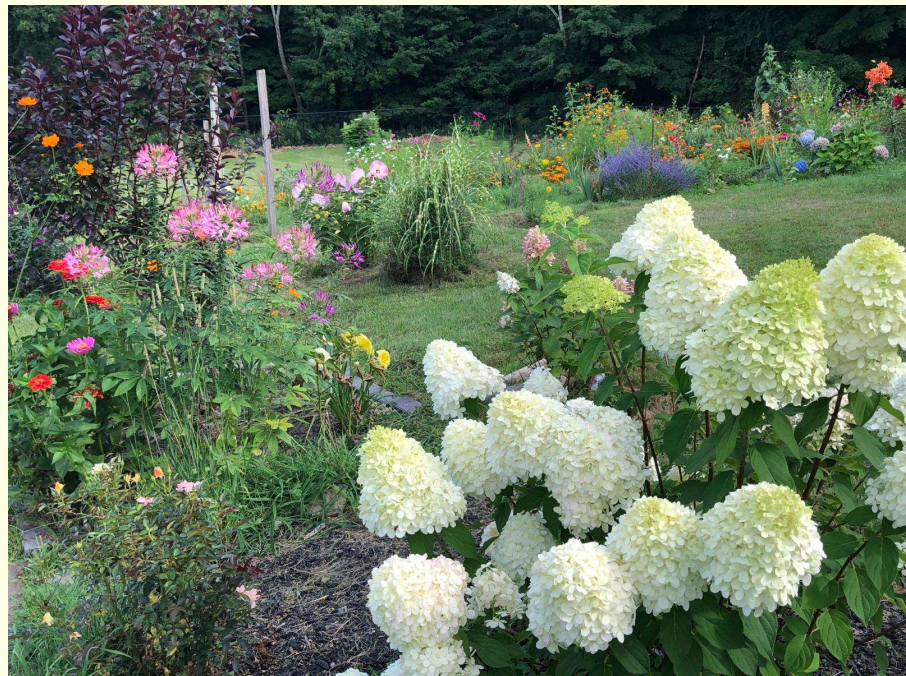


Sudashima Naik





Sudashima Naik



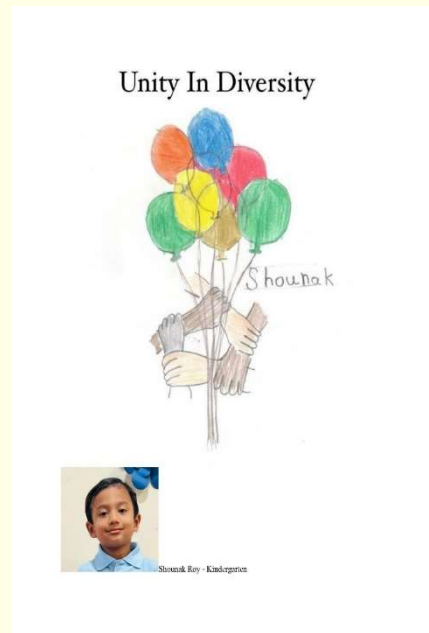
Shashwat Patel



Ishaa Arya



Saanvi Jena



Shounak Roy

Thank you for your help.



Misha Das



Rohini Routray



Abhilash Patel



Sumedha Jena



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