

CHILDREN –HOSTS TO CHILDREN
Celebrating Children's Day with a difference

Came November and our excitement grew in leaps and bounds as the 4th dawned! The red letter day when we the members of our "NCC" [Neighbourhood Children's Council with children of all faiths] based at the Nazarene Society, Kharodi, Malad West, planned to celebrate 'Children's Day' with the children of 'Sneha Sagar' – an orphanage fairly close to us. Normally our elders plan a celebration for us in our community; this year we wanted to do something different: WE, CHILDREN would host a party for the less privileged. Through our monthly Council meetings we have come to realize how blessed we are in many ways: what security we enjoy in our families who provide all we need. We have so much while there are other children of our age who have so little. This called us to SHARE- of our time, our talents, our resources with them.

Our planning began in September. Our mentor, Sr. Manisha, guided us to reflect on more deeply what we had already verbalised and to chalk out an action plan to express our awareness. We decided that to host the Children's day celebration we would need money and this WE would provide by collecting our own pocket money from that day onwards. Of course we too would participate in the celebration! Joy shared would be Joy multiplied!

So, on Sunday, 4th November, 24 children of our neighbourhood and 12 children of Sneha Sagar accompanied by a couple of the Sisters of the Helpers of Jesus who look after them, assembled at the Infant Jesus Chapel ground ,next to our residence. Jolly music was played as we entered the decorated venue and were encouraged to sit with the 'guest' children to make them feel at home. Our able comperes- two girls of Std. VIII-led us through the day with confidence as they knew what was coming from several short preparatory meetings of the different committees we had formed for this day- covering the decor, food , entertainment, games, music system, photography . As one member recalled, everything was planned in detail-"a lot of hardwork and creative efforts involved."

The children of Sneha sagar stole the show with a surprise item for us – a lively dance performance guided by their Sisters. All our members were deeply touched by this as they recalled- "It left me in tears..." "so fabulous, amazing " "what great talent..." Our Entertainment committee did a good job, showcasing the talents of our members- a magic show by them, several dance performances, a poem composed by one member, a guitar duet, mono-acting by a Std. III student, solo singing and the like. A highlight of the day was an excellent dance display by our chief guest- Pravin, a professional youth dancer from our neighbourhood who also got all of us on the floor to follow his steps...we had the time of our lives! Our NYG representative, Justin who had also been invited as a guest of honour interacted with us and lent a helping hand wherever needed. The Games committee kept us on our toes with some traditional games but with new touches. Spot prizes in abundance made the day interesting and participative. It was amusing to be served the plate of snacks by our Food committee members while aunty Anita, our SCC coordinator and the Sisters kept filling the plates behind the scenes.

Great was our surprise when it was announced that not only had we sponsored the party but that some of our Mummies, our neighbouring aunties and uncles had also come forward with

“donations” of cash or kind to supplement our contribution. The result- yummy snacks, well-wrapped gifts and prizes, and much more! We are so grateful to them! Another special feature of this day was that we had decided at our meeting that we would not want party ‘takeaways’ for ourselves but requested our mentors to use our money mostly to buy good, wholesome and useful gifts as takeaways for our brothers and sisters of Sneha sagar. Here we experienced the joy of giving by making a small sacrifice. But much to our surprise, our mentors had also prepared small takeaways for us which delighted us as we realized that the ‘takeaway’ is not only in material things but in ALL that we had experienced in preparing and conducting this day.

Much more could be said... but we will summarize our impressions of that memorable morning well- spent together:

”a party full of fun and entertainment for all of us “

“all cooperated well”

”more than 20 spot prizes- that astounded me !”

”It was a lot of fun sharing our joy with children of all religions”

”All had a smile on their faces...we could display our talents.”

”I always like to be a guest at a party, but now I enjoyed being the host...a very good experience for me.”

”I would like to thank all the elders who sponsored food items and my friends too”

”I thank our NCC members for their generosity in contributing their pocket money honestly to make the party enjoyable for all.”

”We thank Sr. Manisha, aunty Anita and all who helped us organize this occasion.”

We left the party with very pleasant memories. We hope to do well in the near future as well.
[Cleon, Tia, Celeste, Mercia, Carissa, Tanishka, Cian - students of class V to VIII]