



# Education for life

WE ALL WANT OUR STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, TO LEARN TO THINK CRITICALLY AND WORK COLLABORATIVELY, BUT ALSO TO BECOME GOOD HUMAN BEINGS, AS PRAVEEN ROY EXPLAINS.

In contemporary schooling, our focus appears to be only on graduating students with academic capabilities. Of course, we want all of our students to develop competence in basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and technology since these are the foundation for further learning. We also want our students to develop more sophisticated skills and higher levels of knowledge.

At the end of the day, however, we want our students to graduate not only so that they can enter the economy in some form of productive employment, but so that they can create a good society.

To that end, the purpose of education is twofold: to educate each student in our care so that they are able to realise their potential; and in doing this to cultivate

socially aware and responsible global citizens who recognise that this Earth is precious not only as their home, but as the home of all earthly beings.

Samsara: The World Academy, in its own humble way, attempts to inculcate the values of global sensitivity and citizenship in its students. Our aim that when our students graduate, they become not only a resource for themselves and a benefit for the economy, but an asset for their society.

Samsara: The World Academy operates a variety of programs that support those aims.

## Friday collection

Every Friday, our student council members collect donations from students and other members of the school community, with everyone encouraged to contribute in order

to feed the hungry, sponsor the education of disadvantaged children and so on. From the age of three years, our students learn the value of sharing their resources with the less privileged and thus contribute to a better society. Because the Friday collection is routine and because everyone participates, the expectation that we share with others becomes second nature to all of our students.

## Seva Program

Students in Samsara's social service club have adopted a local school, Apna School, which is run by a non-government organisation in Gamma in Greater Noida for the children from disadvantaged families. Our students collect resources for the students of Apna School in the form of food, clothes,

stationery, books and domestic items like soap, toothbrushes and so on. Many times a year these resources are shared and given to these school children. Samsara students visit Apna School on working Saturdays to tutor in English, maths, music and so on.

### **Baithak**

Every month, senior Samsara students along with members of the student council have a baithak with the Principal, senior coordinators and teachers of the school. The baithak provides an open forum for all to discuss the concerns of students and collectively identify solutions and make plans to implement those solutions. The review of the effectiveness of solutions and any glitches are followed up on weekly basis. Students are absolutely free to discuss any concern, and with this open forum they are typically the ones who initiate workable and mutually agreeable solutions.

### **Thanksgiving**

Students at Samsara are taught to give genuine respect to every person irrespective of caste, colour or creed and to be thankful to all school staff for making a contribution in their life. On Diwali and Labour Day, all maintenance staff of the school are treated to a generous spread. Every student contributes, with each class allotted one maintenance staff member. Students bring extra tiffin to school to share with the staff member and give thanks for helping in keeping the school and busses neat and clean.

### **World peace**

Samsara works very closely working with the South Korean non-government organisation, Heavenly Culture World Peace, Restoration of Light. Students study the Peace Curriculum, attend Peace Seminars, sing Peace Songs, go on Peace Marches and so on. The focus in appreciating peace and spreading the message of peace and cessation of wars is on the family, neighbourhood and city level. In cultivating tolerance and understanding, students also meet people

from different cultures and communities, which helps to reinforce their acceptance of others, whatever their cultural and religious differences.

### **Dignity of labour**

Samsara students are encouraged to lend a hand by contributing in their household, taking responsibility for household chores on a daily basis. Parents are asked to motivate their children to take responsibility for things like laying the table, mopping the floor, folding clothes or doing dishes. This makes them hardworking and helps them to respect the labour of others as they learn that lots of effort goes in to the running of a household.

Our responsibility as educators is to help our students achieve to their full potential so that they graduate as people who are competent, adaptable, productive and able to continue to learn, think critically and work collaboratively, but beyond these somewhat individual and utilitarian outcomes, our responsibility is also a moral one, to help our students to grow into good human beings. This was the concept on which our gurukul system was based. Its aim was to educate students in the intellectual sense but also in the sense of wisdom and zeal for life that includes housekeeping, cooking, teamwork, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and service to others and themselves.

Put simply, our responsibility is to help our students to reach their full potential and become well-rounded humans who are at peace with themselves and the world. **T**

*Captain Praveen Roy is Principal of Samsara: The World Academy in Greater Noida, NCR.*

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