

NEEV TIMES

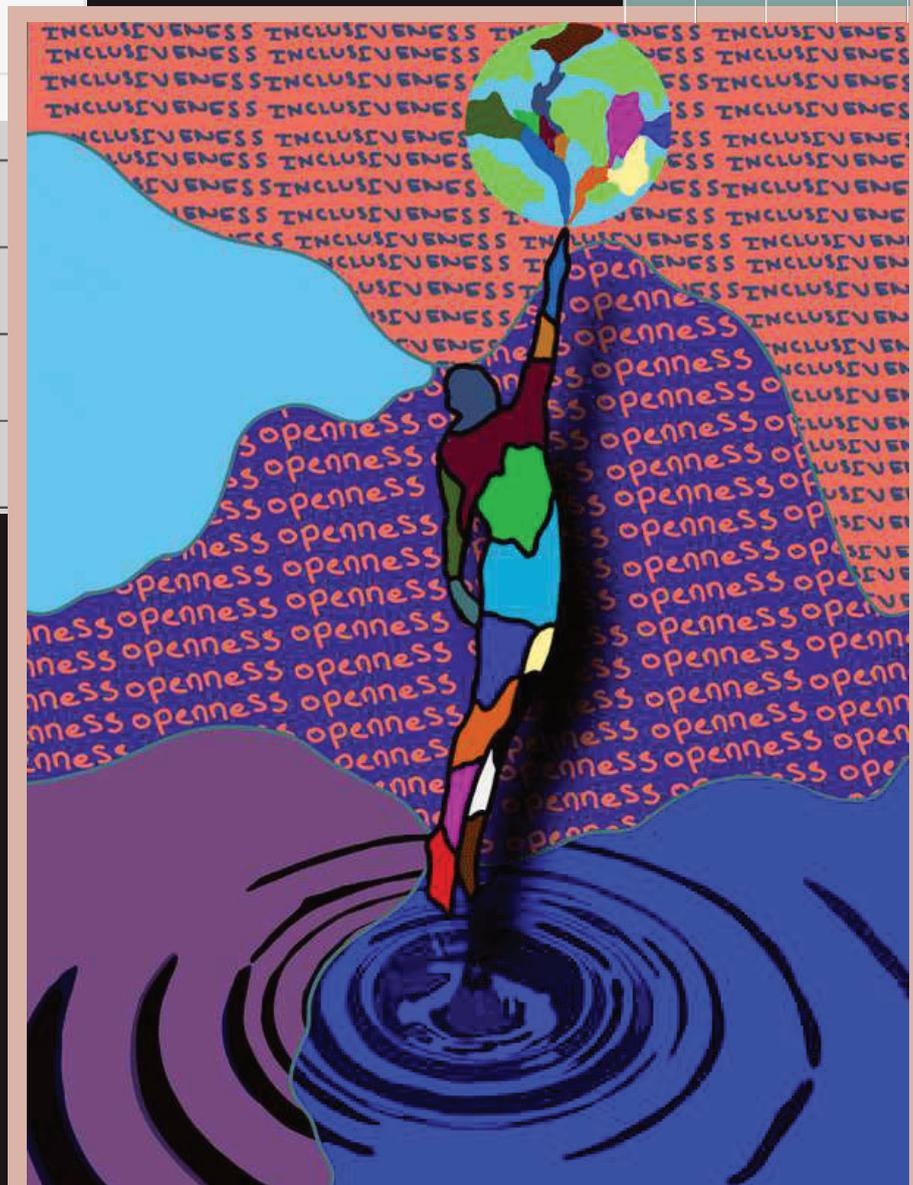
DECEMBER
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Inclusivity

COVER ART BY
ARYAN JUDE
SHANKAR, G10

This artwork shows a person leaping out of a pool of knowledge and trying to touch the world. Here, being inclusive and open-minded has opened up worlds of opportunity.



Openness

LEADERSHIP SPEAK

The Power of the Privileged

Merriam Webster defines privilege as a right or benefit that is given to some people and not others. You can have privilege because you are part of a particular identity—race, caste, gender, religion, ability, and wealth. The question thus arises, is privilege the antithesis of an inclusive society?



Ana Carolina Queiroz, a young Afro - Brazilian woman born in São Paulo took a gap year from her studies in 2018 to develop and co-coordinate *Ponciá*. Her initiative is designed to help local children and youth in Jequitinhonha, Brazil to reshape their realities such as designing and demanding access to public policy. Ana is currently an undergraduate in Economics at Stanford University, and she is particularly interested in the ways data can be used to tackle social issues. She is a participant of '16x16', a global initiative, implemented by UNDP's *Youth Global Programme*. Ana has the privilege of a stellar education. Being privileged is not necessarily disagreeable, as it gives one the power to use their privilege to make societal systems fairer and equity-driven.

If you are reading this issue of Neev Times, you are definitely privileged. Now the question arises, would you choose to ignore your privilege or leverage it to create lasting impact? This is a call to action for the students of Neev Academy, to awaken to the needs and crisis of your immediate surrounding and help create a society that reaffirms the values of inclusivity, equal opportunity, fairness, and justice. The month of December at Neev celebrates the spirit of giving. Reach out to your Student Government members and find out how you can help and make a difference.

- Gouri Kar, Head of Senior School

STUDENT GOVERNMENT SPEAK

Since its onset, the COVID-19 pandemic has spread to almost all countries of the world, disrupting many aspects of life including sports and physical activity. Be it local, within schools, or even global competition, many sporting events have either been postponed or cancelled. We recognize that this puts a strain on a child's mental and physical well-being. We also realise that the Sarvajeet Diwas is a major part of sports at Neev.

Sarvajeet Diwas and sports, in general, is not everyone's cup of tea. But including everyone in such an event is imperative in order to fulfil Neev's mission. Hence, the theme for this year's sports day is Inclusivity and Openness. With the help of the class and CAS representatives, house council, executive council and teachers, we came up with ideas to increase participation for the event.

This event hopes to foster inclusivity and openness by extending the reach of Sarvajeet Diwas beyond athletics in allowing students with an interest in photography to also actively participate in the form of a photography competition, where students would take photographs during the event itself. Additionally, we will capture Student Voice by encouraging students who have a proclivity for using writing, art, or music as a medium of expression. Although they may choose not to participate in athletic events on Sarvajeet Diwas, they will be encouraged to submit their responses on a prompt given to them. These are some of the ways in which we aim to encourage the theme of Inclusivity and Openness. We hope to set a precedent for future Sarvajeet Diwas events at Neev in showing that it is the day that everyone—athletes, artists, writers—wins.

- Mudit Kohli, Sports Captain

REVIVING FIELD TRIPS

Grade 11 went to Gudalur between 29th Nov and 3rd Dec for a field trip that aimed to explore the theme of indigenous identity. Students interacted with the tribal communities in the area, learning about their traditions and hardships.

Gudalur is one of the six taluks in the Nilgiri region of Tamil Nadu that houses four distinct tribal communities. Our conversation and interaction with four distinct groups incited deep self-reflection. The Bettakurumbas have dominated the Mahout profession and believe deeply in animism, in this case, the attribution of a living soul to the forest. The Katanayakas are known for their expertise when it comes to honey collection. Their knowledge of bees and their produce has exceeded that of modern science. The Mullakurumbas are known to be expert hunters with an extreme proclivity for the bow and arrow. They are the only tribe who have settled for agriculture; this stability reflects in how integrated this tribe is in modern society. Lastly, the Paniyas, the most deprived tribe, are said to have descended from the hills. History has not been kind to this community with their name now being associated with bonded and exploitive labor.



There were huge disparities between tribes. Our tour guide, Mr. Subin, a member of the Mullakurumba tribe, explained that mindsets played a major role in the current state of the tribes.

The first Neev field trip in 20 months; Grade 11 to Gudalur



In the 1980s, as the Adivasi's began to make more frequent contact with the modern world, they were often swindled by greedy businessmen. Unable to grasp the concept of owning their own land, they were easily trapped into deals that allowed superficially engaged philistines to control their land and hence, their sustenance. The tight grasp many held onto the culture of animism, the balance between giving and receiving, and the notion of all land and resources belonging to the Earth, allowed the communities to be taken advantage of. On the trip, we asked ourselves, 'What did modernity bring to them?' The answers we came up with included disease, exploitation, and prejudice. But modernity doesn't have to be as negative. Balance is the word that comes to mind. How do we balance modernization that brings healthcare and access with culture that brings safety, security, and history? How do we balance knowing ourselves and allowing the world to mould us?



Elizabeth Brewster's poem, *Where I Come From*, suggests that we carry elements of our experiences within ourselves. This is not necessarily as positive as it sounds. As Adivasi communities slowly integrate into a modern society, where they come from changes. It is no longer the serene and isolated forests in which situational awareness is paramount. We must then question, what do we value? What does our society give weight to? The foundation to any life is education, and if children from indigenous communities are pushed into a world where education provides no emphasis on their home, they are conditioned to do the same. They fall into a homogenized narrative, and gradually culture deteriorates. What is the difference between being literate and numerate and educated? When speaking to Mr. Stan, the founder of the *Adivasi Munnetra Sangam*, a major organization working to procure and ensure rights for the communities, he used the interesting metaphor of the forest. He said that the diversity of the forest cannot be replicated unless you let it revive itself. It is meddling itself that causes the loss of this diversity. The definition of success has been narrowed to reject this diversity; how can we unlearn this?



Can we unlearn these notions caging the acceptance of our contradictory identities? Can we embrace modernity without its toxic side effects? Or do we have to accept Nobel Laureate Ronald Coase's advice that "every solution creates new problems?"

MEET YOUR HOUSE COUNCIL

SUNAV BAJAJ, HOUSE CAPTAIN



I enjoy playing badminton, speed-cubing, interacting with people, and learning about the sciences. This year, I hope to create a community of people in Narmada and the rest of the school who participate because of genuine will, by demonstrating how fun the competitions are!

ANIKET DEWANGAN, HOUSE VICE CAPTAIN



Hi! I'm Aniket, the house vice captain for Narmada, I like football, and support Man United in the Premier League. I also like comics, sketching, and physical fitness.

I want to ensure that Narmada has a strong passion for different sporting and extracurricular events. We hope to promote fun activities and arrange house meetings to keep you in track of the house announcements and other things we plan ahead. Go Narmada!

SAMITHA SRI BHASKARA, HOUSE CAPTAIN



Hi everyone! I'm the Kaveri house captain, I love singing and anything music related.

This year, I aim to bring my house together and create a friendly environment within my house and in the school community.

MEGHNA GANESH, HOUSE VICE CAPTAIN



If anyone is up for a good basketball match, I'll be the first to raise my hand, but be prepared for the loud music blaring in

my ears while I shoot. There isn't a single book in the library I haven't read, cuddled up in my blanket while sipping coffee. You can always ask me for book recommendations. This year, I hope to increase and launch more competitions based on what the students want, and what will raise house spirit.

MEHER BHUNIA, HOUSE CAPTAIN



Hi Neev, my name is Meher Bhunia and I am the house captain for Ganges. My interests are quite eclectic—from

running my own dessert business, to sports, maths, lego, and music. This year, I am most interested in getting to know my Ganges housemates and my goal is to find ways to showcase all their talents. By doing this, I hope that we can increase participation in house events; a goal which is common to all the house captains. If you ever need help with something, or just want to talk to someone, I'm always here.

URVI MEHROTRA, VICE CAPTAIN



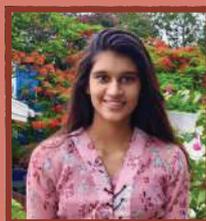
My goals for this year are to create platforms adhering to *all* of your interests, as well as getting to know all of you and what you have to offer. If you ever want to talk about indie rock music, why you hate capitalism, or how much you love styling yourself, you can always reach out to me!

NARMADA



BRAHMAPUTRA

SIA GODIKA, HOUSE CAPTAIN



My hobbies range from painting to cycling. Although I want to achieve several things as house captain, our main focus is to create a comfortable environment amongst seniors and juniors to be able to learn from each other, especially within the Brahmaputra house.

VARUN NAIR, HOUSE VICE CAPTAIN



I'm Varun, and I'm in 9th grade. I like playing sports of all kinds, mostly Football. I like reading books and learning about different concepts in Physics. I hope to promote healthy competition in the Brahmaputra community, and let the students choose competitions that they find fun and exciting. I also hope to learn what it means to be a leader.

FAIRYTALE COMPETITION WINNERS

In the competition for this issue, students of Grades 1-5 re-created the ending of their favourite fairytales! Here are the winning submissions:

The ending of Goldilocks and the 3 bears

Goldilocks woke up and saw the three bears. Their teeth had the sharpest canines that she had ever seen. Silvia sneezed from the biggest bear and he had the sharpest claws. There was something odd about their faces. Then suddenly, his face changed into a wicked smile. "What brings you to our house?" he asked. Goldilocks was too frightened to answer. The elderly woman then said "Let's play a game, shall we? We don't get many visitors around here." "Oh no," Goldilocks thought. "I have to be home for lunch and mum won't be happy when she sees claw marks around my body. My little brother Joey will make fun of me."

Goldilocks then pointed to the door, she got out of bed, and walked one step when the bears blocked her. "You must leave only when we finish a game," the youngest bear said. He had a very hoarse voice and must have been around 5 years old, the same as her brother. Goldilocks thought that it would take less time and nodded. "The game is..." he pulled out a board game. "Ludo." Ludo takes too long. Goldilocks needed to get home by noon and it was already 11:55. She had to make it quick but the only way to get home is to finish the game. She sighed and chose the red color to begin with. She went on and on and it was already 11:50. The end was near and closer until the little bear exclaimed: "I won!" Goldilocks pointed to the door again. "No, the elderly woman said, "no, you can't go home because you are at your own house." Goldilocks was very confused. How can she already be home?

The bears nodded at each other and then held their heads. Underneath were 3 familiar faces. "Mum! Dad! Joey!" you all doing here?" "We wanted to test your character and responses and behavior to others," said Goldilocks' Dad. "We don't want to make fun of you."



Meghna Sethuraman,
Grade 5
Kaveri House

Jack and the beanstalk

Jack took the gold coins, grabbed chicken and the three and ran down the beanstalk. He climbed the giant sleeping in his bed. "I will turn the giant into a pig and eat him for 13 days we will get a lot of gold coins and chickens!" Jack said to himself. "Oh my god! I have the gold coins and the chicken and the three and the beanstalk. I'm going and going along the beanstalk which was really disgusting. He reached halfway and it was almost disappearing. He saw another and jumped down into the garden. He hid by the shed and started to dig. And then he saw 2 coins under the mat. He quickly hid his mother the silver coin. He started to dig again. "I have the gold coins!" and Jack exclaimed. "I already got 2 coins in the mat!" Jack dug the silver coins to the ground.

The day after Jack dug the spot with the beanstalk. He showed made a strong rope. He thought he was a hero. He passed down and saw 2 pigs. "The golden coins." Then he called his mother to help. "I got gold coins and I really like the piggy bank." Then he said to his mother to help. "I got gold coins and I really like the piggy bank. And opened it. They should be more due to the beanstalk gold coins and gold.

Mum, the chicken published "thank you!" The three melodiously sang "The beanstalk is gone!"

And flew away into the mountains.

They went to a farmer and asked "Give us a medium sized horse." Jack with his wife and piggy bank in a big house.

The mother and son finished the dinner and went inside their 300 houses. "Please help me clean up and cooking and washing." "Thank you!" I gave you the food using your technology house!"



Sreeved Reddy Kambalapally,
Grade 3

Back to School!



Click to watch!

Back to school (face to face) after months, PYP students are beyond excited to meet their friends and teachers, and enjoy the campus!

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA

Roughly 2.21% of the population of India live with some kind of disability. As a society, we often overlook their accomplishments. There is a lot of misinformation regarding people with disabilities, and many view them as lesser human beings, infantilizing and mistreating them. However, countless such people are making their mark through incredible feats, proving that people with disabilities shine when given the opportunity.

A notable example of an empowered individual with a disability is Dr Arunima Sinha who became the world's first female amputee to climb Mt Everest, the highest mountain on Earth. She also went on to climb Mount Vinson, which is the highest peak of Antarctica. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2015. Today, she is dedicated to social welfare and wants to open a sports academy for the poor and people with disabilities. She serves as an inspiration to many, motivating them to follow their dreams despite any physical ailments.

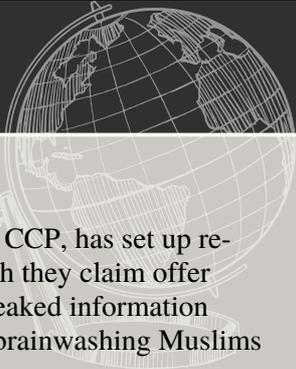
Another example is Sudha Chandran, a Bharatanatyam dancer and an actress. At a young age, the highly accomplished dancer met with a life-changing accident that caused her to lose part of her right leg. However, this unfortunate incident didn't stop her from following her dreams by wearing an artificial leg. She re-mastered all of her dance moves and was finally back on stage—thriving. She became the recipient of two prestigious awards and performed a ground-breaking performance in January of 1984. Because of this performance, the entire nation knew her name. She later ventured into acting and other projects. Sudha Chandran not only carved a niche for herself, but also set an example for countless people around India, not allowing her disability to stop her in any way.

We as a society must uplift and include people with disabilities who are just as capable as those who are able-bodied. Uplifting starts with basic respect. Using Person First Language (PLF) by calling them “people with disabilities” rather than “disabled people” ensures that they aren’t reduced to their disability, and are seen for more than that. Another essential thing to remember is not to infantilize people with disabilities as it can often lead to low self-esteem. Doing simple things like not stooping down when speaking to someone in a wheelchair, respecting their individual desire for independence, communicating normally, and talking to them directly and not their companion (if any) can make a world of a difference in making them feel included and comfortable.

- Pihu Saraff, Grade 8



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD



Is The Omicron Variant Really a Threat?

As the Neev Community is finally approaching Face-to-Face classes after spending the better part of the last two years online, there is just one question on our minds: should we be scared about the Omicron variant?

For those of you who are unaware, the Omicron variant is a strand of the virus first reported in South Africa. On 26th November, it was designated as a new variant of Covid-19.

According to the official W.H.O. website, we do not have sufficient information to judge just how severe this variant is. W.H.O. stated that it is likely that our current vaccines can protect us against the variant, and the variant itself will not have effects that are any more serious than other variants. However, we must take into consideration that this information has not been backed up by sufficient scientific evidence. Epidemiological studies are underway to understand a bit more on the transmissibility and severity of the Omicron variant.

You may be asking what this means for our individual futures, as well as the futures of our community. For now, W.H.O. recommends that we continue to follow proven practices that help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in general. This means that we must maintain social distance, wear masks at all times, wash our hands regularly, and sanitize as often as possible. Most of the adults in our community would have already received their vaccine by now, and the children's vaccine is set to reach the public soon.

For now, it is best to be optimistic about the future while returning to our new normal. However, we must remain vigilant about safety if we are to ensure this continued optimism.

- Aditi Magesh, Grade 10

Re-Education Camps in Xinjiang

The People's Republic of China, ruled by the CCP, has set up re-education camps in the Xinjiang region, which they claim offer voluntary education and training. However, leaked information suggests that these camps are systematically brainwashing Muslims Uighurs in the lakhs.

One ex-inmate of these camps stated that they got hit by "an electric baton to the back of the head." Official documents leaked to the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* state that inmates are locked in the camps, indoctrinated, and punished without trial. A 2017 memo shows that Zhu Hailun, then deputy-secretary of Xinjiang's Communist Party, sent orders to the re-education camps to "increase discipline and punishment of behavioural violations."

Over 15,000 people from southern Xinjiang alone were sent to the camps in one week. Sophie Richards, the China director at *Human Rights Watch*, said, "I think it's fair to describe everyone being detained as being subject at least to psychological torture, because they literally don't know how long they're going to be there. This is an actionable piece of evidence, documenting a gross human rights violation." According to Ben Emmerson QC, a human rights lawyer, the camps are designed specifically to isolate the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang as a separate cultural group.

This violation of individuality and beliefs continues to this day, systematically targeting Muslim minorities and brainwashing them under the facade of a voluntary education camp.

- Aditya Braganza, Grade 9

Ensuring Education for Palestinian Children

Palestine and Israel have been fighting for decades. A major dispute occurred this May during Ramadan, where hundreds were killed and thousands were injured.



Now, 6 months later, an international NGO, *Humanity and Inclusion*, is providing education, psychosocial, and moral support to many children in Palestinian territories. They aim to aid 1,860 boys and girls, of which about 700 have disabilities. This project includes many inclusive and interactive summer activities such as sports, music, art, and life skills.

Lamar Zyra, aged 12, who has a hearing disability said, "I hope to spend more time in the summer activities and listen to more exciting stories, which I loved so much. When I was participating in the music activities, I grabbed the microphone and pretended to be singing! Sound came out at that time, and I hoped my voice would reach my mum, I missed her."

- Kabir Singh, Grade 5

BOOK, MOVIE REVIEWS

THE NIGHT DIARY by Veera Hiranandani

The Night Diary takes place in 1947. India, newly freed from British rule, has been divided into 2 countries: Pakistan and India. Hundreds and thousands of people are killed crossing the borders.

This story is told through 12-year-old Nisha's letters to her mother. Nisha's dad, who is a Hindu, decides that it's too dangerous to stay in Pakistan, so they have to travel by train and foot to reach their new home. The trek to their new home is dangerous, long, and difficult. After losing Nisha's Muslim mother as a baby, Nisha can not stand losing her homeland too. But she is capable and strongly believes that she can put herself back together.

- Iniya Babu, Grade 6

FISH IN A TREE by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Fish in a Tree is a unique book about a girl who overcomes her life-long challenge despite discouragement from her classmates. It is based on Albert Einstein's quote—"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." The girl in the book is like a fish told to climb a tree. Albert Einstein means that we shouldn't judge someone by their ability to do something they can't do. This book was greatly inspiring to me.

- Keerat Singh, Grade 6



THE JUNGLE STORYTELLING FESTIVAL (जंगल का कहानी उत्सव) by Janaki Sabesh

One day, there was a storytelling festival in the jungle. Every animal could come and tell a story on the stage. Shuturu the ostrich had a very interesting story to share. But Shuturu had a stammer. When he asked to come on stage, the animals were not open and did not let him. They even teased him. But there was one animal who accepted Shuturu with his stammer and encouraged him.

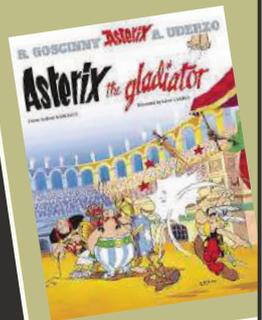
My parents read this story to me in Hindi. This book is also available in English and many other Indian languages. The illustrations are very appealing. It is also interesting because it contains 4 other small stories inside!

- Barkha Chandra, Grade 1

ASTERIX THE GLADIATOR

When Cacofonix, the Gaulish bard, is captured by the Romans to be sent to Rome as a gift to Caesar, he is thrown in a circus to be fed to the lions. It is up to Astrix and Obelix to free him. With plenty of comedy, this kept me busy during the summer holidays, laughing away!

- Ekambir Singh, Grade 4



THE INVISIBLE BOY by Patrice Barton

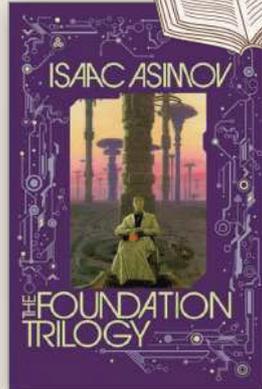
The Invisible Boy is a book by Trudy Ludwig and it was recommended to me by Ms Benazir, my Art teacher in the early years.

It is about a boy named Brian who was always left out of everything. He did not have a single friend in his class. Brian was invisible even to his teachers because there were other louder kids. Then, when a new boy named Justin joined the class, he was also left alone. This book talks about how Justin and Brian became friends and how everyone in the class started to include them. When I go to basketball and ballet class, I always make it a point to be inclusive and make friends with new students because they will feel left out. The most favorite part for me in this book is the illustrations. Patrice Barton's illustrations are astounding and I really loved how he showed Brian in the sketch where he was included by other students in the class. I recommend this book to all my friends in the 1st Grade because I learnt to be inclusive after reading this book. When I see someone left out, I think about Brian in this story and how he felt when he was left out. Also, the illustrations in this book taught me that I can use colours creatively in art.

- Venpa Senthamil, Grade 1

FOUNDATION SERIES - Book Review

The Galactic Empire had ruled the galaxy for 12,000 years as the sovereign and cardinal. But now, it is dying. Hari Seldon, the first and greatest psychohistorian in the galaxy, predicted the fall using mathematical formulae of his invention—The Seldon Plan.



Seldon predicted that after the Empire falls, 30,000 years of barbarism and warfare will begin. To bring the huge number of 30,000 years to a mere 1,000 years and to preserve human knowledge, Seldon set up a place of sanctuary where an Encyclopedia Galactica was under development to preserve the information of the Galactic Empire. He called this the Foundation.

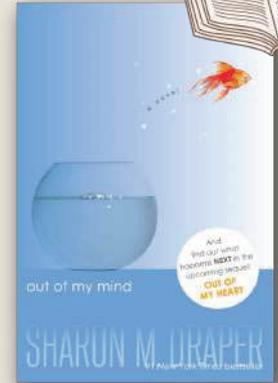
Written by the pioneer and father of science fiction, Issac Asimov, *Foundation* is a must-read for any bookworm. Sitting at a reasonable number of 200 pages, *Foundation* hooks the reader slowly, using long dialogue and small action sequences, until the reader realises that they cannot put the book down. One can resonate with the characters, crying with a few, laughing with some, and getting angry at others. *Foundation* addresses inclusivity and openness because The Galactic Empire did not listen to Hari Seldon, and was not open to his idea that their everlasting Empire was dying. Another example is the Mule, a character who become villainous as the world he was born in did not include him because of his mutant deformities. This led him to be irritated and agitated with everyone.

I wholeheartedly recommend *Foundation* to everyone. The series is addictive and I could not put it down.

- Siddhant Dravid, Grade 8

OUT OF MY MIND by Sharon M Draper - Book Review

Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. She is very smart, but no one knows that because she has a condition which limits her ability to talk and walk.



But when she discovers that there are inventions that allow the non-verbal to speak, her life changes.

As we go through the book, we see how Melody transforms from an outcast to a part of a group. Her appearance and what she does affects her "social status." Melody believes everyone should be included, no matter how they look or what they can or cannot do.

This book is written from Melody's perspective and has many descriptive words, making it easier to understand Melody's feelings.

Sharon M. Draper's *Out of my Mind* is captivating and kept my attention to the very end as the plot is interesting. I had many questions: What will Melody do to communicate her thoughts? How will she show that she is like everyone else? Will anyone ever see her inner nature?

For me, the ending of this book was very unexpected, but I enjoyed it. Apart from being a great novel, this book has also inspired me to be more open and tell others to include everyone. I am now learning not to make instant opinions about anyone. Overall, I loved the book!

- Arushi Chandra, Grade 6

WONDER - Movie Recommendation

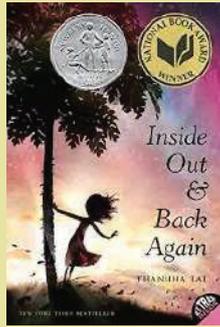
Wonder is about a boy, August, who has a rare facial abnormality/disfigurement. He first gets bullied and shunned by many people and isn't included in the activities the others do. In the end, he makes friends and becomes a hero at his school.

- Nikitha Chatterjee, Grade 7



BOOK SPOTLIGHT

Inside Out & Back Again is written entirely in free verse by Vietnamese-American author, Thanhha Lai. It deals with the horrifying concepts of refuge, familial separation, and national displacement—all through the eyes of ten-year-old, Kim Hà.



Hà has lived in Saigon her entire life. She adores the bustling marketplaces, bright green papayas, and her charismatic friends. But one dark night, her life changes forever. She is on a ship to the United States, the country of dreams, hopes and opportunities. She starts a new life in Alabama, armed with nothing but a broken image of what her past used to be. With a foreign language, and sceptical bullies at her new school, she struggles to understand the seemingly perfect “America.” Composed creatively entirely of short poems, *Inside Out & Back Again* is a provocative story suitable for readers above the age of 9, making it all the more powerful since the author is able to express complex ideas in such simple language.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Realistic fiction: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (Grades 8 and above)

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson (Grades 8 and above)

Historical Fiction: *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan (Grades 4 and above)

The Help by Kathryn Stockett (Grades 7 and above)

Classics: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (Grades 8 and above)

Dystopia: *The Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld (Grades 8 and above)

Lord of the Flies by William Golding (Grades 5 and above)

Contemporary: *Milk and honey* by Rupi Kaur

Adventure: *Heist Society* by Ally Carter

Memoir: *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi

Non-fiction: *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking

EDITORIAL

In the past couple of weeks, South Africa has erroneously been blamed for the outbreak of the new Omicron variant. While the media was quick to claim that the mutation originated in South Africa, the truth is that the country only reported the first case of Omicron. The origin is difficult, near impossible to trace. However, what experts can extrapolate from this situation is the growing **vaccine inequality** as a possible truth behind the origin.

At the onset of the pandemic, on the day of India’s first lockdown, Bill Gates spoke about responding to the coronavirus pandemic on the TED Connect series. During a period of confusion, fear, and ambiguity about what has happened and what will happen, Gates had already started thinking about vaccine development and the duty of rich countries to fund vaccines for the entire world—minimising the damage in developing countries. Unfortunately, this vision failed to manifest into reality. Today, the power-hungry nations are stockpiling vaccines and initiating booster shots, while the hungry are still waiting for their first dose. With only 0.8% of doses administered to low-income nations, the W.H.O. fears the vaccine equity is threatened.

Powerful countries work quickly when it comes to protecting themselves, as can be seen in the current travel ban on several southern African countries. These bans, according to the W.H.O., do little other than “place a heavy burden on lives and livelihoods.” A *New Yorker* interview with Tulio de Oliveria, the director of the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation at Stellenbosch University, reveals that some wrongly blame the variant on vaccine hesitancy in South Africa. These accusations are unfair and unsubstantiated; especially as some of the accusers are the ones engaging in vaccine nationalism and securing Africa's position in “the back of the queue of the vaccine,” creating the space for potential coronavirus breeding grounds.

The question that remains unanswered, or perhaps unanswerable—why do countries capable of improving outcomes for millions fail to realise that tackling the pandemic is a global effort?

In the big scheme of things, being open and inclusive as a person, community, or country is more than accepting diversity, cultures, and opinions. The sooner we realise it also means acknowledging that we live in a shared world where respecting and protecting each other go hand in hand, the better prepared we will be for future crises.

Agree? Disagree? Write a letter to the editor:

<https://www.neevtimes.com/write-to-us>

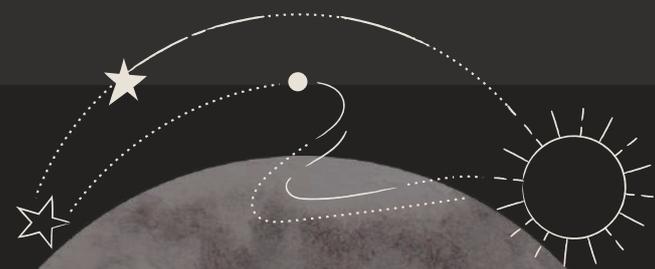
OPINION WRITING

Would you go to space with a one-way ticket?

In space, I wouldn't have any company and would be lonely without my family, friends, teachers, and people I love. I would also be floating around, worrying about accidentally floating towards the sun. When my food supplies get over, I won't be able to find food and water. I would not be able to call my loved ones because there is no internet in space. I would never get to experience the fun I have here in Bangalore because there are no entertaining malls and toys to play with in space. I would not have a single person to comfort me when I feel disheartened or cross. No one would ever include me in their conversations or games because I would be a million miles away. Space is eerie and dark, so I would be scared without anybody to protect me. When asteroids and meteoroids come crashing down, I wouldn't be able to move quickly to avoid them. I wouldn't be able to have a bath so I'd be stinking like a rotten egg for the rest of my life.

This is why I would never take a one-way ticket to space.

- Anezka Iris Sequeira, Grade 2



The idea of a ticket to space does sound exciting to me. However, definitely not a one-way ticket. I would like to be in space for a short time to explore, research, and record my findings. But I don't want to be there forever. I know it is difficult up there as one has to have a lot of equipment to breathe and live. One also has to exercise to be fit and to be able to wear and carry those dresses astronauts wear. If I stay stuck in space, I would miss my friends, family, and most importantly my favourite food!

- Pranati Promod, Grade 2

Did you know that I'm planning to move to space? This world is at risk of catastrophic changes. Before that happens, I would like to change my address from Earth to outer space I am curious by nature and have always been fascinated by what lies beyond Earth. We have studied the planets and galaxies, and now I want to go to explore them myself. Sitting on a spaceship and travelling to another galaxy would be a privilege and a dream come true. It would be something truly magical! I would definitely buy a one-way ticket to leave Earth.

But there is one problem...I am still too young to go on my own. I would have to ask my parents for permission, and I highly doubt that they would let me stay in space forever. Hmm...so I guess I will just have to wait it out till either I convince them, or till I am old enough to sneak out without their knowledge.

Avaan Gupta, Grade 2

In light of Language Day, please share with us your favourite word from any language and tell us why this word is important to you.

My favorite word is "mogh." It means love or affection in Konkani. This word means a lot to me because as a kid, my aunt would ask me "you want mogh?" when she wanted to cuddle me. I would nod and she would hug me tight. As I grew up, I started to ask my mother for hugs by saying "Mogh de!" To this day, I still say this when I want hugs.

- Saisha Chatterjee, Grade 4

Nizhal (நிழல்) is a Tamil word which means shade. This is the name of my house. When a tree gives shade, it gives for all the living things - humans, animals, birds. Like that, my house is open for all my friends all the time. Boys and girls, children from different places and different cultures and who speak different languages are all welcome.

- Venpa Senthamil, Grade 1



Would you like 2 extra years of school to make up for distance learning during the pandemic?

My answer is clear and loud—NO!

Not because school isn't fun, or I don't miss my friends, or I am satisfied seeing teachers virtually, but because this period gave me a lot of family and 'ME' time. All those hours of thinking, reflecting, reading, and sometimes doing nothing taught me a lot about myself. I discovered that I could get lonely sometimes, but I learnt how to entertain myself. I found time to save many baby birds by putting them back in their nests. I noticed how many shades of greens one tree can have. I saw my father working endless hours for our family and my mother working like an elf the whole day. I watched my puppy grow up into a fierce, mighty, tiger-looking dog. I would have never been able to do all this otherwise.

So my answer is still NO. Academically, we have hardly missed anything. But on a personal front, we have bonded deeply with our families, explored more peaceful sides of ourselves, and developed a respect for the all-powerful nature that can bring everything to a stop.

Also, I am ready to leave for college in the next 9 years. I don't want to be 19 when I join my higher studies.

Having said that, I don't wish for another pandemic either!

- Guneeva Kalkat, Grade 3

Do the Indian armed forces need to be more gender inclusive?

There is gender discrimination everywhere. "Women belong in the kitchen!" "We don't want female bosses!" In the army, people have made up their mind that men are the only ones who can serve & protect our country; but not many have wondered if women could protect the country better than men. Before the law was amended, critics said having more female recruits would reduce operational effectiveness.

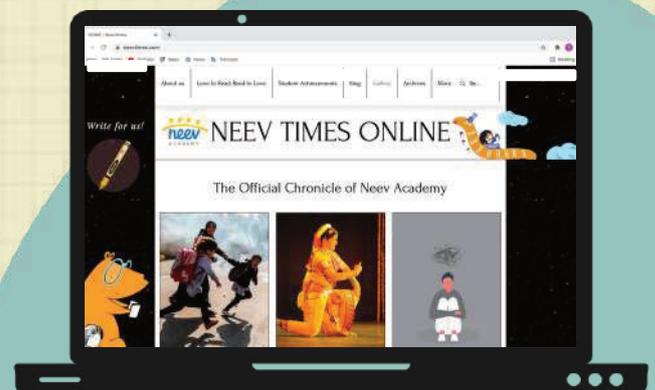
- Nirvaan Daga, Grade 7

NEEV TIMES ONLINE

This year's team has been working together with the school leadership and student government to think about the next phase and we jointly identified a new *Neev Times Online* to complement the bimonthly newsletter.

The online format allows the team and students to produce a dial tone of content and also allows for more diverse formats (video, pictures, podcasts, etc). *Neev Times Online* features content produced purely for online publishing.

On the 10th of December, Ms. Asha Rai, Resident Editor of the Times of India, launched *Neev Times Online*. This marked the start of an online platform that allows the team to produce a dial tone of content in more diverse formats (video, pictures, podcasts, etc).



Watch
the
webinar
recording



Access
the
website

<https://www.neevtimes.com/>



ARTS

You Could be a White Swan Too

Ballet, an art form that has strong roots in tradition and is often deemed 'highbrow', has a reputation for being less than welcoming towards the marginalized. In its approximately 60-year history, Australia's national ballet company has had no recorded dancer of Aboriginal origin before Ella Havelka, a descendant of the Wiradjuri people.



Like many aspiring ballerinas, Ella's journey to the stage ignited as a dream. At 13, she attended a performance by the Australian Ballet at the Sydney Opera House and couldn't take her eyes away from the ballerinas' bodies, impersonating the classic curvature of swans. A sea of white dancers in a perfect concert consumed the stage, telling the story of Swan Lake. It was at that moment that she knew she wanted to become just like them.

The physical and mental strength needed to train long hours, find the ideal balance of athleticism and elegance, and adhere to nearly unattainable beauty standards calls for unmatched resilience and passion. With discriminative practices, racial differences, and financial difficulties added to the mix, there are very few dancers with thick enough skin to pursue this career. To this day, Ella, alongside Evie Ferris, are the only two women of Aboriginal descent at the Australian Ballet and are paving the way for forthcoming generations. By succeeding in a world-class classical ballet company, these two dancers give budding marginalized dancers hope.

Recently, Evie was announced as the inaugural Aboriginal Wiggle. She explains that Ella's leadership and mentorship played a key role in developing her self-confidence and shaping her future as a ballerina. While there is a long journey ahead to untangle all the knots that exist in the world of ballet, each ballet dancer deserves to dream of being on a stage with the confidence of knowing that one day, they could be a white swan too.

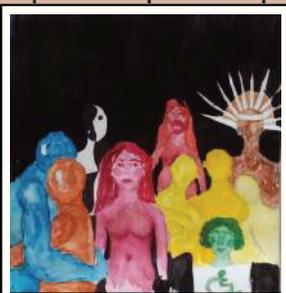
- Kriti Sarawgi, Grade 12

Keith Allan Haring, born in 1958, died in 1990 at the age of 31 due to AIDS-related complications. Keith Haring was an openly gay man and an artist who included themes of sexuality, openness and inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community, and activism for broadening the conversation about AIDS. He was gay even though he was born during a time where it was illegal. Keith used art to express himself in a funky, pop style. The artist supported himself and didn't listen to those who didn't like his style and his lifestyle choices. He was bold to be open about his sexuality during a difficult time for the LGBTQ+ community.

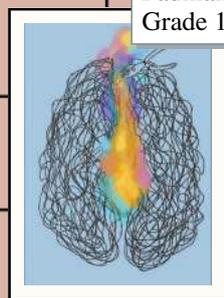


- Rhea Sinha, Grade 4

Art on the
theme of
Inclusivity
&
Openness



Urvi Mehrotra,
Grade 9



Gauri
Padmanabhan,
Grade 11



Jayadrithi
Varchus,
Grade 8

A one stop forum
for simple
economics based
videos



What is it?

- A youtube channel where videos simplifying complex economics topics are posted.
- No more pausing the video and searching up complicated terms ever 2 seconds.
- These videos are for beginners into finance.
- Anyone interested can join in and learn!

Hi! I am Sia Godika from 10th grade. You may know me for my interest in helping people but another interest I have is economics. My interest comes from listening to my parents speaking about economic drops, stock trading, etc. I began browsing the internet to understand certain terminology. However, it was challenging to find videos and websites targeted at beginners. Every video I watched used complex terms I had to continually lookup.

Hence, I decided to create the Money Tox YouTube channel. It is a place where complex finance-related topics are explained in simple words. I, myself, am no expert, so I can assure you that you will understand the topic easily. My videos also use fun examples so that you can remember the information easily!

Being financially literate is very important. Yet few people are prepared as financial decision-making grows more complex. Money Tox will equip you with knowledge and critical skills. So learn and be prepared

- Sia Godika, Grade 10



My BF: Books & Films

<https://bookfilm.wixsite.com/mybfbooksandfilms>

A WEBSITE FEATURING DISCUSSIONS ON
BOOKS, FILMS AND MORE!

Started by a few Grade
12 Students

We (Navya, Anika, Sanjana, Rhea & Samah) created this website in the hopes of starting a dialogue on favorite books, films, and shows. Please do take part in our online forum or comment on our reviews! You can even write a review of your own by mailing your piece to navya.sahay@neevacademy.org!

<https://bookfilm.wixsite.com/mybfbooksandfilms>



Kodaikanal Gandhi Prize 2021

Noor Sabharwal - 2nd Prize



"Dinyar Patel's recent biography of Dadabhai Naoroji suggests that Gandhi ji considered Naoroji the father of the nation. The biography also interestingly describes Naoroji as too moderate for the radicals and too radical for the moderates, something that could be used to describe Gandhi ji as well. His ability to balance practicality and idealism was his genius, his enduring legacy, and my inspiration."



Pranvi Khare - Honourable mention

"I write this essay, almost two months before the 152nd Gandhi Jayanti, when a pandemic of both, a deadly virus and misinformation exists, Gandhi's principles of "Satyameva Jayate" remains increasingly important. It shows that truth is the only way to win, it is a key way, too, for a country to reduce inequality and the spread of pandemics."



WALL OF FAME

My interest in poetry writing started informally at the age of 14 when I wrote diary entries in verse. Later, I decided to share and publish what had earlier been merely a cathartic exercise for me, because these experiences were common for all teenagers. I created a collection of around 50 poems and titled it, *Inside the Tumultuous Mind of a Teenager*. Some of the topics my poems dealt with were sensitive such as stress, anxiety, insecurities, and even romance. The aim of the confessional style of the poems was to portray an unrestricted view of a teenager's mind—true to the collection's title.

This poem, I think, best exhibits what the collection is all about.

THE UNSAID THINGS

Deep in the corners of my mind
Several unworlidy beings reside.
Untainted by the external,
Pure, sorrowful and eternal.

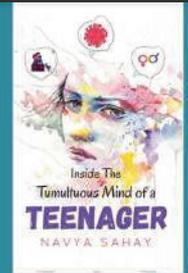
They will never take flight off my tongue!
They will never be uttered in a rush...
These are the treasured secrets of mine,
that will never see the light of sunshine.

I pet them, tame them, change them,
perfecting their hidden, complex gems.
But they cannot ever be seen or heard;
They were not made for this world.

Some force surreptitiously prevents me,
From letting these thoughts go free.

I dream of a world where no one must hide
The deepest corners of their minds...

Deep in the corners of my mind,
Cherish and guard what you find...



A POETRY COLLECTION
BY NAVYA SAHAY

-Navya Sahay,
Grade 12



View a small clip
of the event [here](#)



This Durga Puja, I published my first graphic novel *Dogman vs Petey and Introducing Fidget Monster*. The book has 3 parts with lots of fun and new adventures of Dogman and Petey with Fidget Monster. Fidget Monster is my own creation and he is a bad guy! He spins and shoots out harmful lasers from his legs. My inspiration was Dav Pilkey who wrote the Dogman book series and taught his readers how to draw comic characters. My book got released in an event in Kolkata where I also got the opportunity to meet and interact with lots of Bengali authors and their work. They all inspired and encouraged me to continue writing.

- Ryan Banerjee, Grade 3



Sarah from Grade 3A, Elizabeth from Grade 4B and Parthavi from Grade 5B, along with a neighborhood friend (Carolina), made a sign on the road with chalk saying, "wear your mask to serve your country." We did it to spread awareness and to tell others to wear a mask. It worked! A woman who was walking by without a mask read our sign and then put it on. We felt so good after doing this.

Dhruv and Akhilesh **won a science competition**, Project Salus, held by Christ Junior College. They participated in the *Technica Humanitus* category against 13 other teams. The competition involved two rounds: coding solutions for science-related problems using Python, and reflecting on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (specifically SDG11). They presented their work to the judges and also spoke about how modern technology can be used in today's world; such as AI for autonomous waste segregation centers. Dhruv and Akhilesh enjoyed this event and are grateful for their physics teacher, Ms. Kavya, who was helpful in guiding them throughout the competition.



Akhilesh Balaji,
Grade 9



Dhruv Suresh
Ramu, Grade 9

Eleven students participated in the TISB Model United Nations Junior event that was conducted online by TISB for students of grades 6-8 on the 30th and 31st of October 2021. This learning experience pushed the group of students to learn about current affairs, foreign policy, and differing perspectives. All the students excelled and **Vedant Divarkla (Grade 7A) was recognized as the Outstanding Delegate.**

..... A TORCH HELD BY ALL

Science is a torch used to shine light upon the mysteries of this world. A torch that is held by not one, not two, but the collective hands of humankind. And perhaps the best reflection of this are the people who have contributed to this field. There have been various people with differing abilities who have increased our knowledge of the world around us, three of whom I will elaborate on in this article.

One of the most famous scientific thinkers of all time, Albert Einstein needs no introduction. Acknowledged as the greatest physicist of his time, Einstein is known for his theory of relativity as well as his work in quantum mechanics. From a young age, he suffered from Asperger's Syndrome, which caused difficulty in communicating clearly and made him socially awkward. Einstein could also have had dyscalculia, a learning disorder which makes one visualize mathematics differently from others. However, this could have been what allowed him to formulate theories that are still relevant today. Einstein is an example of how different ways of thinking can lead to progress.

He's not the only one. Sir John Cornforth was an Australian chemist who suffered from otosclerosis, a condition that causes the bones of the middle ear to stop transmitting sound. However, this did not hinder his interest in chemistry. After graduating at the top of his class, he studied at the University of Sydney. Even though he was not able to clearly hear lectures, he spent most of his time reading original research and scientific literature to make up for that. Cornforth went on to receive a Nobel Prize in 1975 for his achievements in the field of stereochemistry; demonstrating that no matter your difficulties, determination and passion for what you enjoy ensures fulfilment.

Sang-Mook Lee is a Korean scientist working in the field of computational techniques. In 2006, he suffered a car accident that left him paralysed below the shoulders. But he described it as a transformative experience. He began investing in education for differently abled students and creating various technologies that allowed the use of computers without employing one's limbs, which in turn, opened up careers in computation for differently abled students. His is an impactful story of how the urge to help can turn weaknesses into strengths.

Inspired by the figures I have spoken, I believe humankind is about the paradox of unity in difference – we are elevated by our individuality. Science reflects this in how it can be divided into the unique fields of chemistry, biology, and physics, but is only complete when they are studied together.

- Kabir Basu, Grade 8

STUDENT VOICE

Helping to fight loneliness

Loneliness is a feeling
That makes people sad
If you see anyone lonely
Don't leave their side
Listen to their thoughts
Love them for who they are
Lead them to their happy moments
Because happy people aren't sad
Don't leave it at that
Give them strategies to deal with loneliness
So they don't feel lonely ever again
Cooking, reading, playing are some good strategies
So if you see anyone lonely
Now you know what to do!

- Ziva Sama, Grade 3



Sarah
Abigail
Stoeckel,
Grade 3

Honk Honk

Every step we take every breath we take there a
Honk honk, honk honk
Every city I visit
From Bangalore to Kolkata
All I hear is
honk honk, honk honk!
Every time I come outside
On the streets I hear
Honk honk, honk honk!
So let's do something about the
Honk honk, honk honk!
Start to spread awareness by putting posters and
challenges across the world so we will never ever
have to hear the noise
Honk honk!

- Vivaan Vasant Padmanabhan, Grade 6

Connection Between Birth and Death

When I went to Kabini, I was both happy and nervous. I was excited to see animals and birds, but nervous there wouldn't be any. But we luckily got to see lots of animals on our very first boat safari—a painted stork, three kingfishers, prancing spotted deer, and my favorite bird of all, the snake bird. The most majestic sight was...a tusker. It was huge, with 5-foot tusks, and it stood still as we got closer to it. It moved its trunk like a “hello”, and I clicked a picture! Wow, what a thrill to see him move!

The next day, we went on a jeep safari. Deep and deep into the jungle we went. The road was really bumpy but the forest was so quiet. This made me think. For so many trees and for so much forest, there were very few animals around. The naturalist told us there was only one black panther in the whole of Kabini. This, he said, was because they are territorial animals and need a lot of space to live. They can't live in communities like we do. As I was thinking about all of this, we stopped the jeep. The naturalist pointed towards a tall tree high in the sky. Perched on the top of the tree was a vulture. It looked so beautiful and lonely. The naturalist told us that the vulture was endangered and that without it, the forest would not function. The vultures are in danger because of a medicine, Diclofenac, given to cattle to help with birth. When the cattle die and the vulture eats them, the medicine goes into the vultures as well. As Diclofenac is poisonous to vultures, it kills them. We must realise that without the vulture, there will be no cleaning crew for the forest. This will lead to diseases as the animal carcasses rot on the forest floor. Scientists have advised the forest preservation people to stop using the medicine for the cattle.

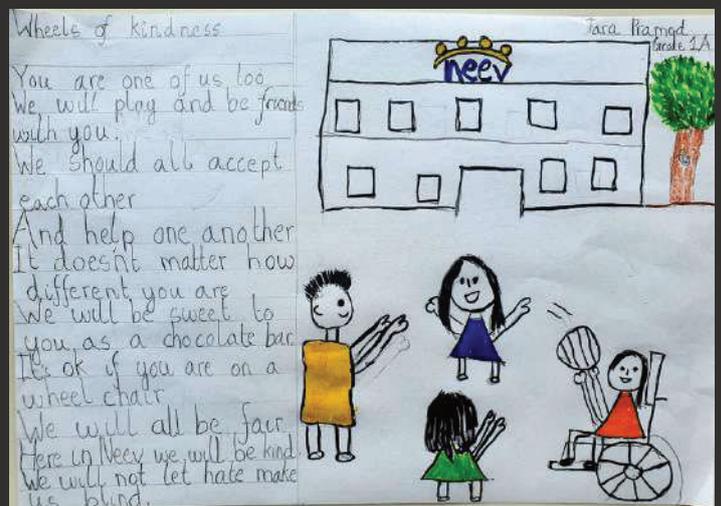
This story made me think of how delicate the balance of the forest is. I wondered how humans and the forest are in balance too. Animals think humans are their friends but are we thinking like that? No, we only think of humans as our friends. But without animals, would we be alive? No. We must include animals and the whole forest ecosystem as our family and protect the wonder of our forests.



- Atharva Raghavan, Grade 1



Samvit Suril Desai, Grade 1



Tara Pramod, Grade 1

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