

TTM! CONNECT



The close of the academic year is a bittersweet time. Several mentees graduate from TTM! and, excitedly, new ones jump eagerly into their shoes.

While there is a quiet ache in letting go of mentees, there is also a sense of wonder at how far they've travelled. Each child carries a unique story of struggle, growth and triumph. Watching a once-shy student find her voice, or a wayward mentee metamorphose into a responsible and motivated lad—these moments become lasting reminders of why mentors chose this path.

Mentors, who guided with gentle hands and wise words, now stand watchfully at the threshold as their mentees fly confidently into their future, fuelled by the knowledge, the wisdom and the values they have imbibed.

Our message to these mentees:

"Take pride in how far you've come. Have faith in how far you can go."
(Michael Josephson)

However, "graduation" is not necessarily a time of separation. The TTM! family has created bonds of cosmic glue. We have innumerable examples of mentors who continue to walk alongside their mentees, often for a decade! Such is the power of TTM! It is fuelled by love, and love alone!

For those who feel the ache of separation, listen to Rumi's wise words:

"Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes. Because for those who love with heart and soul, there is no such thing as separation."



~ Malavika Sharma

Enduring Bonds

The Boy with Stars in His Eyes

Kapil always entered the classroom completely out of breath. What struck me about him was the regularity with which he attended English classes at the Begumpur centre and his undivided focus on what was being taught. He hung onto my every word.

I thought he would be a perfect TTM! mentee and we were fortunate enough to pair him with Uma Malhotra. Five years after he started his journey with Uma, he continues to be a model mentee. Uma describes him as “an excellent person, easy to talk to and easy to teach.”

Now back to my story about Kapil at the centre.

I had started a small library in the classroom with a very nice collection of about 250 donated books. Every Thursday, after class and before the tea and biscuits arrived for our weekly “party”, I would display some of the books on the table. To this, I would add a few books from my childrens’ collection. Amongst them was a glow-in-the dark book about the constellations. Kapil would borrow it, bring it back every week and borrow it again. Week after week he did this and even covered it in thick red paper to protect it.

I encouraged him to borrow other books for a change, but he was adamant that he only wanted the book with the red cover.

After a few weeks, or was it months, I insisted we offer the book to the other children as well. He reluctantly left it behind. No one borrowed it, so I brought it home. The very next week, COVID struck and the centre closed down.

I forgot about Kapil's favourite book, but when I was moving home I discovered it!

Kapil had continued to keep in touch, so I had his number. I called him and gave him his beloved book and this time it was his to keep.

An update about Kapil: until 6 months ago he was working at an accounting firm. He wanted a change, so did a course in graphic design. He has been unable to find a suitable job in his new field and is planning to rejoin an accounting firm.

I should also mention that we bought our weekly tea and snacks from Salman's tea shop. He was also a student at the centre.

Please join me in wishing Kapil all the best!



DEBIKA LAHIRI



Group Head Reflections

Saying farewell

From Group W, we bid farewell to the 15 incredible girls at Himjyoti School. Our hearts are heavy, yet full of love and pride. For the past three years from their class 7th till 9th, these bright, affectionate, and earnest young minds have been a cherished part of our flagship programme.

Each girl brought something unique—an eager beaver always ready to learn, a kind soul with a gentle heart, a determined dreamer who saw English as her bridge to success, a quiet thinker with depth beyond words. One girl amazed us all with her remarkable improvement over the years, surprising herself and her school. Another found comfort in her mentor's unwavering support through the heartbreaking loss of her mother. A gifted artist spoke through her breathtaking drawings, while yet another, despite imperfect sentence construction, expressed such beautiful thoughts that in a strange way grammar became irrelevant.

They loved their mentors, their *maasis*, and embraced every lesson with warmth and enthusiasm. Watching them grow has been a privilege. Now as they step forward to focus on their board exams, their presence will be deeply missed.

To our wonderful mentors—a heartfelt thank you for being a part of their journey. These girls have left an indelible mark on our hearts, and we send them off with love, pride, and the hope that they continue to shine.



PADMA RAO
Him Jyoti

Mentee Speak

I have been a part of TTM! for the past three years, and I can confidently say that this organization has played a crucial role in transforming my English-speaking skills. When I first joined, I was hesitant, nervous, and unsure about my ability to communicate fluently in English. However, thanks to the incredible mentors and their dedication, I have not only improved my fluency but also gained confidence in expressing myself clearly and effectively. One of the best things about TTM! is that it is completely free of cost. In a world where quality education often comes with a price, TTM! ensures that everyone, regardless of their financial background, has the opportunity to learn and grow. The mentors at TTM! are incredibly friendly and patient. They understand that learning a language takes time and effort, and they go out of their way to accommodate the needs of every mentee. What stands out the most is their flexibility in scheduling classes. They try their best to match the time slots that work for the learners, making it easier for us to balance our studies, or other responsibilities while learning English. Their structured approach, starting from the basics, benefits both beginners and those looking to refine their skills. Comprehensions, in particular, have helped enhance my speaking, writing, and vocabulary. Over time, I have noticed a significant improvement in my ability to construct sentences effortlessly and articulate my thoughts with greater ease.

Looking back at my journey with TTM!, I realize how much I have grown—not just in terms of language skills but also in confidence and self-expression. I am deeply grateful to TTM! and its mentors for their hard work and dedication.



ANKIT PAL
Literacy India

Congratulations !!!

Congratulations to

VEDANT SINGH

for having been awarded 2nd rank
in the Hindustan Olympiad 2024.



Creativity



ANKIT PAL

Literacy India



RAVI KISHAN KUMAR

Jeet



This picture has been made to show the beauty of nature and life. The different colours on bird (blue, pink, orange black and white) symbolise the different colours of life.

The brownish colour of the water shows the problems faced by the bird when trying to catch fish - indicating a person in real life finding solutions to problems he or she faces. The greenish background indicates a bright future with positive thoughts. This shows how a bird builds his or her home among the green trees and lives life while facing problems in his or her life.

AYUSHI SHARMA

Purkal Youth Development Society

Following are comments from other PYDS mentees on this beautiful work of art:

The beauty of a painting is in the elements present in it, like colour, texture and the emotional expression. This painting is a true beauty. It shows the beauty of nature and wildlife. The background is blending with the subject and the blurry reflection of the bird in the water looks very realistic. The bird has multiple colours and the main colour is white. The bird had a very long beak and equally long legs. It seems like the bird is concentrating on something.



MAYANK DHIMAN

The crane is in the pond. It is looking for fish as it is very hungry. It is looking at the water and waiting to catch a fish in its long beak. It has to stand still for a long time before it can catch any fish. It is a beautiful bird with white feathers. It has long thin legs.



RITIK RAWAT



Faces and bright colours attract me and acrylic paint is my favourite medium. In the first painting, I took the structure of the face, and for the second portrait, used black ink to portray my version.

In the other paintings, I took references, but to bring vibrancy, used bold colours and changed backgrounds.

I like mythological characters and facial features, to make them look alive - especially the eyes.

My Village

My village Atari is in Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh but I am currently living in Gurgaon, Haryana with my family and my paternal uncle. My grandparents, aunt and cousins live in the village. My cousins study in a school there. My village is really beautiful. Life there is so simple and peaceful.

The lifestyle is much healthier compared to the city life. Everything there is fresh and the air quality is pure and good. We get organic fruits, vegetables, milk and other products. Our family owns 3 houses in our village. While two are used for living, the third one is being used for keeping our 3 buffaloes. My grandparents and aunt take care of them, and they in return, give us milk which is really delicious and healthy, not like the packed ones we get in the city. My village is surrounded by green fields, huge trees and ponds. The grazing domestic animals add to the beauty of my village. I really love going and spending my holidays there.

It is only a 3-hour drive from Gurgaon. I always have a lot of fun playing there with my cousins and helping my grandparents. They always bless me and I treasure my time there.



SWATI SINGH

Jeet

My Favourite Subject

My favourite subject is Maths. I enjoy studying mathematics very much. It feels great solving math problems. This subject is based on logic. Many students do not like mathematics. Math problems are like a challenge to me which I like solving in school and at home.

I always get good marks in my math tests. It is an interesting subject as it allows me to exercise my brain and a subject that can be improved with practice. Solving mathematical problems give me a lot of confidence. I like mathematics very much

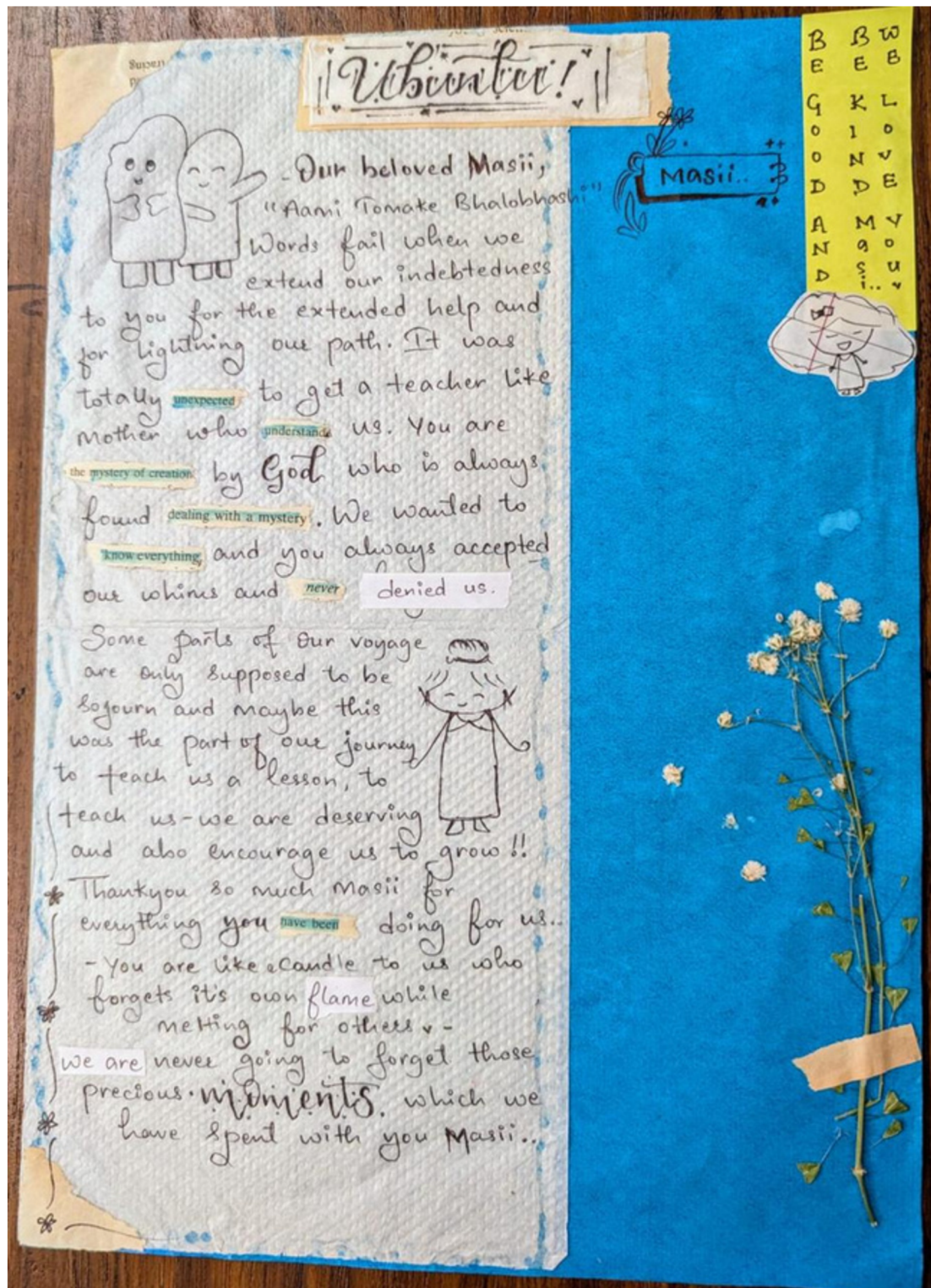


SUFIYA PARVIN

Jeet

Magical Bus

Card made by the HJS girls for their Pincha Maasi who did the Magical Bus programme with them.



Chicken Soup Caring and Sharing

It was in March last year that one of six friends that comprise our group was admitted to the hospital with swollen legs and feet. Further tests revealed that she had lymphoma. The news came as a huge shock not only to her family but to all of us too.

Prayers have tremendous power and that was all that we as friends could offer. It was a spontaneous promise that we made to visit Tirupati after she was cured and three of us also pledged to offer our hair.

After more than five months of intense chemo our friend was declared cancer free and we immediately made our way to the temple town, and before the darshan, completed the ritual of donating our hair. It was a blissful experience and never once did we feel awkward or shy about sporting a bald head. In fact, I also received a lot of compliments about the new look!

Most cancer patients especially women are traumatised by the idea of chemo as it leads to hair loss. This was a gesture to show solidarity in a way, and that hair /external appearances don't in any way define the real us.

ALKA BATRA



Before



After



Editorial team signing off

The Joys of Travel

Who does not love travelling? New places, new people, beautiful sceneries, wonderful architecture, impressive relics and exotic food - all give us enriching experiences and widen our view of the world. Whether it be a weekend outing, or a one-month trip, they leave their indelible mark on our memories. We learn so much from journeys.

We remember travel from the fun it provides as well. We remember ridiculous situations, funny characters and comments made by friends and family members that sit inside us like happy stars with twinkling eyes.

Do grab opportunities to travel. The real fun is in the journey itself.

