

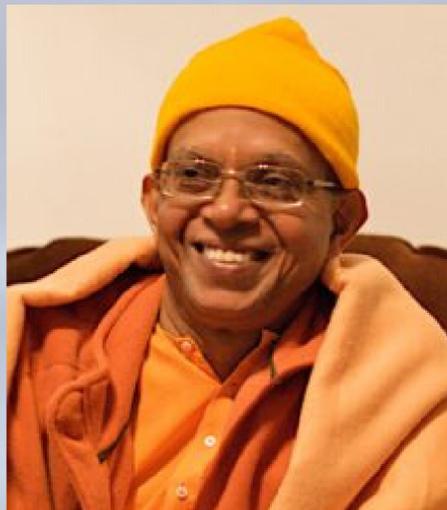


SPIRIT OF AWAKENING

NEWSLETTER BY THE AWAKENED CITIZEN PROGRAM

April - May 2020

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MESSAGE

In the last five years, The Awakened Citizen Program has helped teachers and children across India to discover a new way of thinking about how they can respond to life's challenges.

Swami Vivekananda said that Knowledge is not complete unless it is developed into wisdom. Wisdom comes from shared ideas of a community.

This newsletter is an effort to bring together like-minded people who have enough belief in themselves and others to contribute towards the regeneration of India.

We believe that this is one more step towards building a strong community of awakened citizens.

Sw. Shantatmananda



THE MISSION AND THE TEAM

***"Atmano Mokshartham Jagad hitaya cha"*
"for the freedom of the self and for the good of the world."**

With this twin ideal, Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 in Balaram Mandir in Kolkata. Soon after, the order began to expand through multiple branches around the world. The goal was to render education, medical services, rural-development and community services along with spreading the ideas of universal religious harmony, work as worship and the belief that each individual is potentially divine.

To realize Swamiji's unique vision of man-making education, Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi launched the Awakened Citizen Program in 2014 with a small team under the guidance of Swami Shantatmananda, Secretary, RK Mission, Delhi. Currently, around 5411 schools all over the country are hand-held by a diverse group of 88 members, striving to achieve the common goal of an "Awakened" India.



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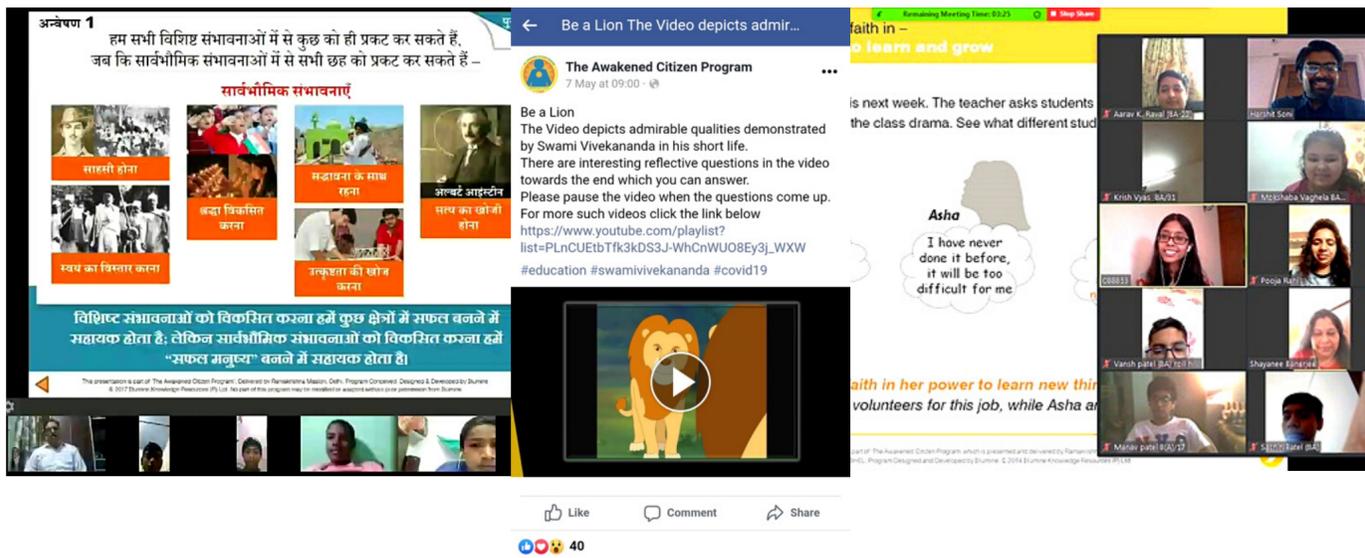


Food Distribution as a Relief measure, carried out by Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi at 4 different locations, viz. Mori Gate, Naya Bazar, Azad Market and the Ashrama premises in Paharganj along with ACP team members. On an average 1500 people were served in a day with hot wholesome food from March 26, 2020 onward.

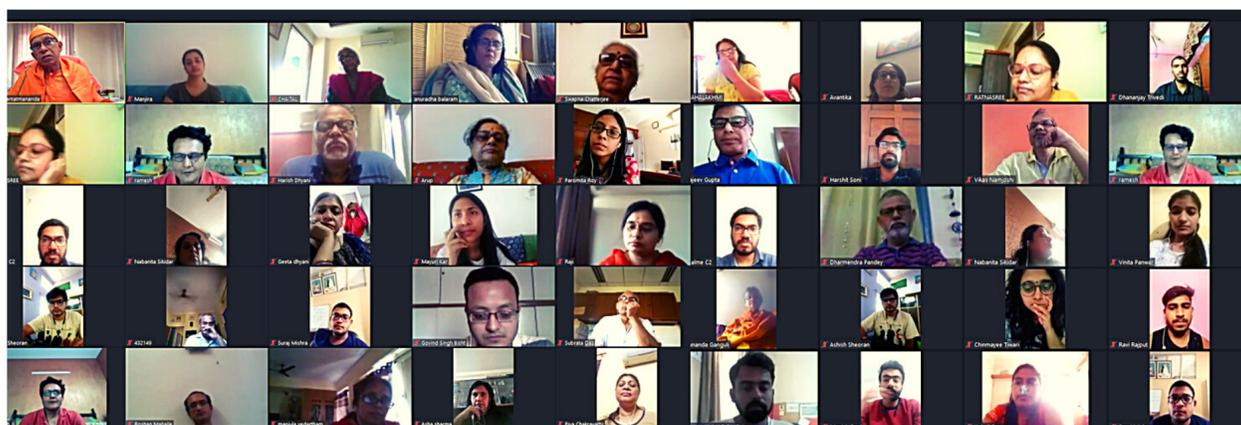
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GLIMPSES OF ACP



To keep the students and teachers motivated to handle the crisis with a positive frame of mind, with the help of our knowledge partner M/s Illumine Knowledge Resources Pvt. Ltd. we rolled out ACP- Digital to facilitate the classes online via video-conferencing systems and the team members created various value-based activities for offline access.



Team members meeting over Zoom



FROM THE EDITORS DESK

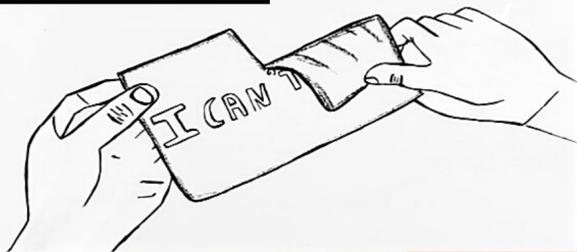
Dear Readers,

A newsletter comes to life only when it deeply stirs the reader in some way. It could be a new way of thinking perhaps or a gentle nudge to do something worthwhile. We are looking for appropriate cartoons, incidents and poems which are original and deal with choosing to live a value-based life. Really good efforts will be rewarded in the form of books from time to time. We would like to hear inspiring thoughts and interesting events from your life to awaken such thought and action in our readers. We can build an awakened India together.

Dr. Anuradha Balaram
Chief Coordinator
The Awakened Citizen Program



CREATIVE CORNER



Students
express
their
ideas
through..

...art
and
craft
work



Display board of KV no.2 Agra Cantt

READER'S COLUMN

"Comfort is no test of truth; on the contrary, truth is often far from being comfortable."

- Swami Vivekananda
(C.W., Vol. 8, Pg. 2613)

1. Is it worth leaving behind your comfortable life in search of Truth? What do you think and why so?
2. Can you share an incident from your life when you walked upon an uncomfortable path in your search for Truth.

'IS OUR RESPONSE TO SITUATIONS UP TO US?'

Grief came in the form of a phone call in the year 2008 when we received information that a helicopter was being sent to take us to Ranajay, my cousin brother, an army officer posted in Kupwada, a small district in Kashmir. Hence, from the very moment that we received the phone call, we all knew we had reasons to grieve. Sorrow, however, manifests itself in different ways. I noticed this most acutely when I saw my aunt getting ready to prepare a meal right after she heard the news of her son's death. Later, I saw her adorn herself in her best saree,

and embellish herself in her most dignified jewelry as she made her way to bid adieu to her 24 year old son. To put it simply, her demeanor astonished me. She, who had every reason to breakdown and lament, had instead chosen to dutifully fulfill her responsibilities. The question about how she could do this kept bothering me and one day, years later, I took the courage to finally ask her.

She told me she had received her strength from acceptance. She was not trying to evade the reality of the situation; as she knew how transient the external world is. She believed anyone could do it, and that too at all moments. Human beings, she said, even in their weakest moments, have the ability to control their responses. This steady control of the mind allows one to accept every situation. It does not minimize the pain, it simply prevents one from dissolving in the negative emotions of anger, depression or violence. My aunt, a simple housewife from a remote village in West Bengal, that day taught me a big lesson about responding to situations. The way I understand it is, there's nothing wrong with being emotional but allowing our emotions to dictate our responses can destroy us. Hence, practicing acceptance via mind control allows us to regulate the way in which we respond to situations. We then remain in control of ourselves.

We would love to hear from you.

Write to us at: awakenedcitizen.newsletter@gmail.com





SEEDS OF REFLECTION

..from our ACP Team Member

Date: 13th Oct 2017, Friday

Location: Kabirali Village, Udalguri District, Assam

It is often said that adverse conditions bring out the best in us. In these last three years I came across several such situations but I happen to remember one incident vividly.

It was my first year in North East India and my work involved extensive travel to remote areas.

This incident took place while I was traveling to Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Udalguri.

I started early in the morning as it was a long way to travel. I hired an Auto and started enjoying the scenic beauty around. As I grew eager to reach my destination and meet all the gleaming faces of the students, my auto came to a sudden halt.



I peeked out. I was in Kabirali village and gazed at an uncalled strike. I found myself stranded in the midst of nowhere with a hefty bag on my shoulders. I checked my phone, it was 8 am and the Google Map showed my destination was 18 km away. I had no choice but to wait for the strike to clear up. By 12 noon I started getting extremely restless. I called the school office as the Principal was unreachable. They told me that such strikes are common in this area and one can do nothing but wait.

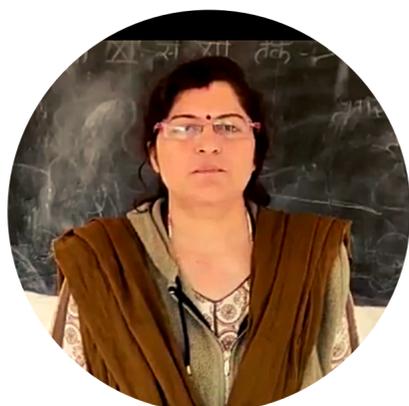
It was past 3 and with no help around I decided to walk. After covering a stretch of almost 3 km, I saw a man driving in the same direction and requested him for help. He was skeptical initially but after questioning me for a couple of minutes he finally agreed to drop me to the nearby Auto-stand. As I was moving closer to my destination I realised that life is uncertain and full of challenges and every challenge opens up a new horizon for us to understand, learn, solve and grow.

-Subhash Pareya, Resource Person, North East India

..from our extended ACP family

"ACP has given a platform to my students to inculcate values and realise their inner potential which is otherwise neglected during regular academics."

- Smt. Nirmala Kumari M, Principal, KV Mysore, Karnataka



"ACP has helped me overcome my fear of public speaking. Now, I voluntarily take part in activities like Anchoring etc."

- Smt. Archana Arora, Teacher, GSSS Harrajpura, Ajmer, Rajasthan

"Earlier I used to start every work with a passive mind, after going through ACP I now start everything with a belief that I can do it."

- Aarti, JNV Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

