

THE PRESIDENTS REPORT- 2018

As this year draws to a close, we look back on it with great satisfaction. And while it has certainly been more peaceful after the madness of the 60th, the WGAA has been far from idle.

REGISTRATION AND NETWORKING

We have consistently registered Exies through the year and with the FCRA certification, it has been very convenient for overseas alumni to register and send in their fee. Diya, Devyani and Shivani have very successfully created a system of registration which has helped consolidate our database and update information. We now have 1347 registered WGAA members.

We have also been successful in setting up chapters in various cities across the globe with many more in process. Some of the city chapters are Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Singapore, London and Los Angeles. Many of these chapters have held well attended gatherings in the last few months. Kolkata held its most recent one in August 2018 and London in September 2018. Singapore and Los Angeles had theirs last month and Mumbai is planning one soon. We know many more will take place as Exies discover the joy of reconnecting albeit after decades and irrespective of batches!

WEBSITE

Our great achievement this year is the launch of the all new WGAA website. The website team of Hema, Natasha and Arshiya worked with our young Alumni designer Aliyah and the website developer to create a fantastic website for the WGAA. It is a delight to use and peruse. Do ensure that you are a registered member in order to get your unique password and have complete access to all its features.

INTERACTION WITH SCHOOL

Renee was invited to be Chief Guest at the Special Assembly held at School on 6th October 2018. She gave out 740 medals as well as trophies and certificates (and nearly fainted in the process). Quite apart from her speech, her presence there must have been very inspiring to the students, showing as it did that Welham connections are lifelong.

The WGAA has also been in constant touch with School, coordinating projects, workshops, setting systems vis-a-vis passing out batches and providing feedback. It speaks volumes for the approachability and proactiveness of the Principal that she takes our inputs in the right spirit and gives us the required support.

FOUNDERS 2018

Founders this year was a joy to attend.

It started with a hearty tea organized for the reunion batches the evening before Sports Day. It was a warm and thoughtful gesture that welcomed Exies to their Alma Mater.

Sports day saw a freak downpour, which while it played spoilsport, failed to dampen the spirits of the students, teachers, parents and more than a hundred alumni who enthusiastically marched across a muddy field, splashing, slipping and sliding but ensuring the show went on.

That evening, we had a taste of the dramatically inclined Welhamites in their full glory as they enacted George Orwell's "Animal Farm". The play was directed by Ex-Welhamite Prashansa

Sharma, batch of 2009 who is an established actor and has performed on the national and international stage. It was a superlative performance in every way with the music, theatrics, costumes and stage setting perfectly aligned. Bravo to all those involved!

The next morning we had the Exhibitions and the stalls. The WGAA memorabilia stall was mobbed (as usual!) with many items being sold out in the morning itself! Cheers to Parbeen and her team who constantly strive to create new and interesting products for our Alumni to use.

This Founders also saw the inauguration of the uber new Homescience lab which churned out the favourite old peanut chikky- as sticky and chewy as ever!!

It was very gratifying for the WGAA Committee to have the Principal take cognizance of our activities in her Founders Day address. We hope our efforts will encourage the new generation of Alumni joining the fold.

The cultural program was sublime as it showcased talented Welhamite musicians, singers and dancers.

The anniversary batches were very well represented. The Golden Girls- the 50th reunion batch were 24 in all- and it was both humbling and inspiring to see their enthusiasm and interact with them. Living up to the Welham motto, they contributed a handsome amount for the class IV staff.

The batch of 1993, who were celebrating their 25th reunion, were 60 strong and undertook to finance the much needed toilets in the big field. Thanks to their efforts, there are now adequate spanking new facilities for both gentlemen and ladies. In addition, the batch has decided to contribute a generous sum to the WeCare corpus which essentially funds all our social responsibility initiatives.

WE CARE

Our effort to provide succor to the needy have touched new heights this year. We currently provide financial support to six retired staff members in the form of supplementary pensions. Through the 'One for One' initiative, which is the brainchild of Shruti, we now support the education of 45 girls at the Aasraa Trust.

This year, we were approached by a school bearerji with a debilitating medical problem. He was in tremendous pain with a progressively degenerating hip joint and would be unable to work if the condition was left untreated. Unfortunately, he was not covered by insurance. Surgery involving hip replacement would cost a whopping 1.5 lakhs which was far beyond his means. WeCare decided to step in and have his treatment done. He was operated over summer and was back to work in September.

It is very reassuring that because of this case, School is reviewing its employee insurance policy and looking to cover all its employees, irrespective of salary structure.

We are extremely fortunate that we are in a position to help those who have nowhere else to turn. We would like to do more. Please **strengthen** our wings so that we may enfold those who need us. **Please donate to WeCare!**

ALUM REPS ON THE BOARD

Renu Basu and Hema Mehra were inducted onto the Board of Governors as our Alum reps last Founders. They have been diligent and active in their roles and have had meaningful interactions with all stakeholders. Both School and the Alumni body have greatly benefited from their interface even in this short span and I have no doubt their presence on the Board will be very advantageous for the entire Welham community.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

As some of you may know, I will end my term as President of the WGAA at this AGM and what a roller coaster ride it has been. There has been a lot of hard work involved in order to systemize the entire organization and bring it to this level. I would like to thank each and every member of the Executive Committee for their dedication, tenacity and passion without which none of this would have been possible. My humble gratitude to Renee and Hema for their innumerable contributions and for being exceptional mentors; to Shivani, who has been a remarkable Vice - President, connecting the past, present and future and following through on all projects; to Manvi and Devyani for their painstaking backend handling of the finances; to Shruti who has taken WeCare to another level altogether; to Parbeen who has been putting together the most exciting memorabilia year after year; to Sabina who successfully organized most of our fantastic alumni get togethers; to Diya who is most efficaciously handling the registrations and finally to Natasha for valuable inputs, ideas and suggestions and for always rising to the occasion. In addition there are many alumni who have pitched in over the years to help us whenever needed with donations, networking, logistics, advice and support. Here I would particularly like to mention Asha Chaudhri, the Puri sisters- Radhika, Rashmani, Mandakini and Mallika, Kalindi Harnal and many more. I must also mention young alumni like Aiman Sabri and Arshiya Takkar who have greatly assisted us with memorabilia and the website respectively. Here, I must urge more exies to step forward and participate in the running of the WGAA-it really is your association and it is for you to take forward as you will.

I would also like to thank the DSOBS who have always extended great support to the WGAA whenever we have reached out to them.

It has been extremely rewarding for me to have interacted with Exies through six decades and I feel very privileged to count many of them as my friends.

I am particularly happy to hand over to my successor a fundamentally strong, systematically organized association and trust she will use this solid foundation to take it to new heights. I wish her and you all, my dear Welhamites, all the best for the future.

Cheers and keep soaring high!

Anjali Sapra
President
WGAA

November 2018