

## In This Issue...

- The pandemic and reopening the school
- Covid 19
- Thanks Giving
- Navaratri music assemblies at RVS
- Movies
- Interview with new teachers
- Class 11 Highlights
- 4th Quarantine
- 6th Quarantine
- What is Taekwondo?
- Musical Evening

"You must understand the whole of life, not just one little part of it. That is why you must read, that is why you must look at the skies, that is why you must sing, and dance, and write poems, and suffer, and understand, for all that is life."
— Jiddu Krishnamurti


## The pandemic and re-opening the school

The Covid-19 pandemic has been an enormous challenge as it has forced us to be away from social and physical contact. To be human is to be in a continuous relationship with one another, and the pandemic brought an end to this, quite unexpectedly. What does it mean to be a social being in this context? We have lost loved ones, and gone through traumatic experiences that have shaken the foundations of human society. It appears as if we can never return to our earlier ways of social and cultural interaction, free of constraints. However, humanity is resilient, and has the incredible capacity to face challenges and adapt to changing contexts. This is our strength and gives us hope to face the future.

We are now striving to rebuild a social way of life through new beginnings to face this transformed reality.

Before the children returned to campus, we had been conducting online classes for several months. Our teachers learnt new technologies to adapt to virtual learning platforms, and used the aid of visual and other interactive resources to enrich the online learning experience. Parents too had to adjust their work schedules and spend time supporting their children with online school work. However, remote classes over two terms appeared to be tiresome for everyone, in large part due to the mental toll of having to be on screen for long periods of time. In other words, we were coping with the situation but it was not the happiest or the best solution.

We strongly felt that we needed to re-open the school to help our children have face to face interaction with their peers and teachers, play sports, climb trees, go for walks and hikes, do art work, strengthen their minds and bodies through in-person learning and interaction. We need to connect, be in continuous interaction and engage with each other and our natural surroundings. This is essential for our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

It is for this reason that we decided to re-open the school in a phased manner, keeping in mind the Covid restrictions and safety protocols. Taking all the necessary precautions, we took the plunge and have managed to safely complete the first term 2021-22,
efficiently dealing with the few Covid cases on campus, and creating an environment of academic and emotional wellbeing. We feel this has had a positive outcome for not only the school but for all of us at Rishi Valley who are engaged in the process of education as it unfolds on campus.

This has been a collective effort of enormous magnitude, and we appreciate the service and support of everyone who has been part of this restorative journey.

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- Meenakshi Thapan


## Covid 19

## A brief introduction

Covid-19, a viral disease from the corona family that affects a person's lungs, appeared around the last few months of 2019. Upon being discovered, all public places, including schools, were shut down.
In 2020, with a new school year, emerged a new way to studyonline classes. This was the new manner of learning till more was learned about the virus, and some ways to tackle it were created. In 2021, finally prepared with rules, guidelines, and the equipment to tackle this virus, Rishi Valley boarding school opened again.

## Rules and regulations

One of the questions asked first to the students who returned was "What has changed? Do you like the new rules and guidelines compared to how RV functioned before covid?" the answer?
" Other than PT, there was nothing I didn't like before. Now? I feel safe, but caged. You can't do what you did in 2019. It's probably better for the new students, but not so much for those who have been here for some time."


And the others who were interviewed seemed inclined to agree. But other than the restricted freedom and the new ways of classes, there were a few more rules in place that weren't that noticeable.There was a set of regulations provided by the government for opening the school to follow, a set of regulations as to how to treat someone who tested positive provided by the MOHFW (ministry of health and family welfare) to follow, and all modified guidelines and rules had to be government approved.

## Impact

Other than guidelines and rules, RV has had to deal with a lot more due to the virus. RV has had to compromise a lot, but it met with the challenges in an admirable way.
The 1st noticeable thing happened around mid-July,when one of the quarantine groups got a case. A batch of 14-15 8th grader girls who were put in precautionary quarantine in Neem House had a case. Later on, their house parent also got a few symptoms and tested positive. These 2 cases led to their quarantine getting extended as a precaution, and by the end, the girls had undergone 23 days of quarantine. "What makes me mad is, no matter how much we tried, no matter how much the teachers tried, it still happened, we still got quarantined."

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This was later followed by a minor outbreak in 10th grade which started around mid-August and ended around early October, with 5 positive cases in a girls hostel.
A 9th outbreak which started in early September and resulted in the entire grade being sent home due to an overwhelming number of cases. There were also 1-2 cases here and there in the 11th grade with no major impact.
All these cases and quarantines resulted in irregular breaks in the normal routine which the school was trying to maintain, negatively impacting the students' education. But while the senior school was going through all this, the school was quite successful in keeping the junior batches safe, with hardly any activity of this sort in 7th grade and below.

## Behind the scenes.

A talk with Lakshmi akka, the main doctor in the hospital, reveals there was much more going on than what one might notice.
The hospital got a special license to carry out covid tests on campus from the govern-ment, in an attempt to maintain the school bubble. The school always had a stock of rapid antigen tests prepared for use. The hospital itself had been divided into 2 wings, the normal wing for the injured, and a second wing for those who exhibited covid symptoms, had respiratory problems, or tested positive to covid. This proved useful later on. She was even asked why had not the 8th grade got covid. Throughout the term the 8th grade had a lot of exposure to the virus, though not a single case. She said that
[Continued in page 6]

# Class 9 highlights 

Due to the unfortunate
events of the covid 19
pandemic, the ninth graders
got sent home.
As for now, the ninth graders have online classes almost everyday along with regular
homework and projects.
Their presentations are 'Up
to the mark' \& 'Outstanding'
according to their class
teachers, Anita Akka and
Ranjit Sir. Online CLT classes
have been held for them
where they have lovely, open
discussions on relationships.
Recently a video about
bullying was shown to all of
them to which they all
responded openly and positively.

## ... thanked the

 staff from various departments but shared howit was a complex network of people working round the clock
and managing the school through the thick of Covid.


A short but moving function was held to thank all the staff who worked relentlessly during the Covid. Representative staff from the Building Department, Office, Medical Department, Dining Hall, driving staff, cleaning staff were all present in this function.

There was a short talk by Lakshmi Akka, Jyothi Akka, Kartik Sir and Kumaraswamy Sir who not only thanked the staff from various departments but shared how it was a complex network of people working round the clock and managing the school through the thick of Covid. Later, Satish Sir and Maya from Class 10 also added their thanks. Despite knowing how terrible the disease was, the nurses and cleaning staff went about their duties with cheer.

Lakshmi Akka and Sagai Sir were at the forefront managing and organizing the operations throughout the pandemic. Two new dining hall structures were put up almost overnight to segregate the seniors and juniors. Timings were changed and simultaneous dinner counters were being run apart from transporting meals to various quarantine centres.

Kartik Sir made a special mention of the help from local medical authorities and Asha workers. Above all, the support staff played a large role in the entire operation. The function's sole purpose was to thank them. The function ended with songs of appreciation.

## CLASS 10 HIGHLIGHTS

This term, the 10thies went on a lot of hikes. Jenner Sir took them on a hike to 3 Sisters and Bread Loaf Rock. They waited for the full moon and went on 2 midnight hikes. They had regular stargazing sessions and a few of the students became good at spotting Jupiter and its moons.They have been really involved in music and dance, they learned how to play the guitar. They hosted musical and dance assemblies. A few of them went birdwatching with Shantaram Sir. They also had a series of talks about their further education. Purna, an alumni gave a session on design. During their quarantine, they wanted to be fit sports wise and did some serious workouts in their respective houses.

- Shriya




## "This hit movie

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it depends on a person's exposure to the virus and their immunity system. And that it is extremely possible that the whole grade had a minor outbreak where they all were positive for some period of time, were asymptomatic, and recovered in a day or 2 before it could even be detected.
As for the outside dining hall, she said that it was becoming extremely hard for the DH staff to manage so many different timings for the sake of maintaining the class bubbles, and it was safer as well to have more ventilation. The fact that the outside DH is safer, and the DH is able to manage it, are the 2 primary and main reasons for the outside DH to be constructed.

- Mishika Bhardwaj


## Movies:

Catch me if you can :
(edited)
Released in 2002, Catch me if you can is a pg 13+ movie based on the autobiography of Frank Abagnale, who allegedly before aged 19 performed cons worth millions of dollars. This hit movie was shown to the 9th and 10th graders upon coming
out of quarantine.

## The Aristocats:

Released in 1970, The Aristocats is a pg 4+ movie based on a real family of cats that inherited a fortune in 1910. This hit movie was shown to the 4th and 5th graders during quarantine.

## Misbehaviour:

Released in 2020, Misbehaviour is a pg 13+ movie based on the real events that took place at the Miss World competition 1970. This hit movie was shown to 9 th and above on the same day as when 'The Aristocats' was shown to the 4th and 5th graders. Later on, upon much request, it was also shown to the 8th graders.

## Kung Fu Panda:

Released in 2008, Kung Fu Panda is a pg $6+$ movie that is centered around martial arts. But being based in a Chinese setting, it is also full of Chinese culture. This hit movie was the 2nd movie shown to the $4-5$ th graders.

## I am Sam:

Released in 2001, I am Sam is a pg 14+ movie that is centered around the impact of having a loved one in your life, trying to deliver the message, "all you need is love." This movie was
first shown to all grades from 8th and above.

## Baran:

Released in 2001, the Iranian film Baran is a movie centered around Afghan refugees and what they go through. The production was meant to show the real state of the refugees as well as possible. This mostly unknown silent masterpiece was the 1st movie shown to all grades 8th and above in august.

## Black Beauty:

Released in 2020, Black beauty is a $\mathrm{pg} 7+$ movie that was originally a book. This hit movie was shown to the 6th and 7th graders as their first movie in august.

## A Bug's Life:

Released in 1998, A Bug's Life is a pg 5+ movie that slyly critiques economic exploitation and military expansion while simultaneously celebrating the ideals of ingenuity and democracy that defined the early American Republic. Of course, in the setting of a bug's life. This hit movie was the 1st movie shown to the $4-5$ th graders in the beginning of august.
Wizard of 0 z :
Released in 1939, The Wizard of Oz is a $\mathrm{pg} 7+$ movie that was originally a book. The storyline of the movie is completely fictional. This hit movie was shown to the 4,5 , and 6th grader's mid august.

## Life is Beautiful:

Released in 1997, Life is Beautiful is a $\mathrm{pg} 13+$ movie that's based on a true story. This hit movie was shown to all students from grade 6-10th mid august.
White Nights:
Released in 1985, White Nights
is a pg 15+ movie that centers around racism, and how the african americans defect the soviet union to create a society without it. This movie was shown to the 11-12th graders mid august.

## Happy Feet:

Released in 2006, Happy Feet is a pg 5+ movie that centres around the effects of global warming to the arctic regions, which is a penguin habitat. This hit movie was shown to the 4 5th graders on 21st august.

## Pollyanna:

Released in 1960, Pollyanna is a pg $6+$ movie that was originally a book. This hit movie was shown to the 6-7th graders on 21st august.
Sully:
Released in 2016, Sully is a pg $12+$ movie based on real life events. This hit movie was shown to the 8th graders on 21st august.

## Karamati Coat:

Released in 1993, Karamati coat is a pg 7+ movie centering around the fact that 'easy money' doesn't exist. This popular movie was shown to the 4 5th graders late august.
Children of Heaven:
Released in 1997, Children of Heaven is a pg 10+ movie that centers around the idea that despite diversities, life is still wonderful. This hit movie was shown to the 6-7th graders late august.
Cruella:
Released in 2021, Cruella is a pg 7+ fictional movie that centers around the fashion world, and the competition in it. This newly released hit movie was shown to all grades 8th and above late august.

## Song of the Sea:

Released in 2014, Song of the Sea is a pg 7+ movie based on Irish legends. This hit movie was shown to the $4-5$ th graders early september.

## Iqbal:

Released in 2005, Iqbal is a pg 7+ movie based on a true story. This hit movie was shown to the 6-7th graders early september.

## Ratatouille:

Released in 2007, Ratatouille is a pg 6+ movie centering around the power of determination and hardwork. This hit movie was shown to all grades from 4-7th around mid september.

## Hamilton:

Released in 2020, Hamilton is a pg 13+ movie inspired by alexander hamilton's biography. This hit movie was shown to the 11-12th graders around mid september.

## The Water Horse:

Released in 2007, The Water Horse is a pg 7+ movie that was originally a book.this hit movie was shown to all grades from 4th-7th on 18th september.

## Spirited Away:

Released in 2001, Spirited Away is a pg 9+ movie that is based on Japanese myths that were once well known. This hit movie was shown to all grades from 4th-7th late september.
A few days later, upon tremendous request, the 8th graders were shown misbehaviour (edited).

## Vikruthi:

Released in 2019, Vikruthi is a pg 13+ movie that is based on true events. This movie was shown to the 8th \& 10th graders early october.


## School Bus:

Released in 2016, School Bus is a pg 7+ movie based on Gaslight.Gaslight.real events. This movie was shown to all students from 4th-7th grade early in october.

## The English Patient:

Released in 1996, The English Patient is a pg 16+ movie based on real events. This hit movie was shown to the 11-12th graders early in october.

## Gattaca:

Released in 1997, Gattaca is a pg 14+ movie that centers around genetic inheritance. This hit movie was shown to the 10th graders early in september.

## Old Yellar:

Released in 1957, Old Yellar is a pg 8+ movie that is inspired by a dog, though completely fictional. This hit movie was shown to all students from grade 4th-7th on 9th september.

## To Sir, With Love:

Released in 1967, To Sir With Love is a pg 13+ movie based on real events. This hit movie was shown to the 8th graders on 9th september. Chocolat.
Released in 2000, Chocolat is a pg 14+ movie that was originally a book. This hit movie was shown to the 11-12th graders on 9th september.

## Wonder:

Released in 2017, Wonder is a pg 10+ movie which is an adaptation of a novel. This hit movie was shown to all students from grades 4th to 7th mid september. This was their last movie for the term.

## Arrival:

Released in 2016, Arrival is a pg 11+ movie that is based on a novel. This hit movie was shown to the 8th graders mid september. It was their last movie for the term.

## Gaslight:

Originally released in 1940 and remade in 1944, Gaslight is a pg 12+ movie that is based on a stage play. This hit movie was shown to the 1112th graders mid september. It was their last movie for the term.

- Mishika Bhardwaj, Shreshta.G.



## CLASS 8 HIGHLIGHTS

The class teachers are Nirmala Akka and Tanuj Sir. Class 8, especially those initially in Neem House have been through a lot. Beginning with the Neem quarantine they spent around a month then, in the mid during their term they faced three more quarantines. Apart from all that, they had fun too...

Taekwondo Assembly by few students of Class 8.
Thanks to their houseparents and a few other teachers they were taken to several hikes.

While they were quarantined in the middle of the term their enjoyment was thought of too, they were given projectors each weekend, in their hostels and would watch a movie together.

The term had been a bit rough for them because of the last year which had been online for them. So, there had been many talks with Tanuj Sir and a lovely presentation by Dr. Shyla on adolescence.

Many documentary sessions. Dr.Sreevani spoke about atoms to them. Joshua Sir showed many documentaries. Vajahat Akka and Sreevani Akka showed them Chemistry documentaries too.

Takshila people have explored their artistic skills by drawing on the walls. The entire Class 8 have been fascinated by Rubix cube.


## Class 4 Highlights

Some voices:

- In quarantine it was difficult, so Akka and Sir spent a lot of time with them.
- Freshers hike to 160 degrees was awesome, especially the view at the top.
- CLT NATURE WALKS.
- Class hike to Lost Lake.
- Eat out with chips and cornetto YUMMY
- Fun with Jenner and Pooja.
- Poetry assembly -- English and Telugu.



## Class 6 Highlights

- Freshers hike.
- Class hike to Biodiversity park and Duranta Hill.
- Assemblies: 6A Hindi poetry and Telugu songs


## Interview with Meenakshi Akka



She holds a club Understanding Contemporary India. She writes books and she is a sociologist on the fields of Education, Migration and Gender
During these tough times they worked as a team . Before the students came the plan was made and then they came in batches.
She feels it was necessary for the 9 to go and it was sensible. This indeed has been the toughest thing the school has faced .

She mentions that she doesn't like it when children use foul language and in a way it hampers a good relationship. She feels troubled when we can't be together and relate to each other in a culture which is so nice .

She chose Rishi Valley because she had an old association. She finished her BA in 1974 and came for a year and taught prep. She did her PhD in Rishi Valley and wrote a book called 'Life at School'.

- Harhita Tibrewal. 8A



## Interview with Praveena akka:

Dr Mullapudi Praveena, was born in Thadepalli which is near Vijayawada. She studied in Sir CRR women's college. She received a BSC in electronics \& an MSC in physics from Andhra University. She then took an examination and got All India Rank 250 which led her to get selected for the Indian Institute of Science (IISE).Her specialization is Nano-optics.
Other than teaching, she enjoys music, dance, yoga, drawing ,cooking, and gardening
She is fluent in English, Telugu and Hindi. She loves children, which is one of the reasons she was drawn to her profession in Rishi Valley.

## Interview with Satish Sir

Satish Sir is from coastal Andhra Pradesh, East Godavari district.

He worked in Punjab and taught 11 and 12 students. Then he worked in Maharashtra. He taught classes 6,7 and 8 in Karnataka. He also worked in Imphal near Myanmar. He came here by choice for its learning process and for improvement.

He studied in a hostel for 7 years. In Rishi Valley he is intrigued by the tradition of calling female teachers Akka but male teachers Sir. He is comfortable with being called by his name or sir or even anna.

He feels that more importance should be given to the outside world like coping up with current events, General Knowledge and there should be

a little competition as when we go to the outside world the competition is high and our future might get a bit troubled In Rishi Valley he is handling 8,9 and 10 . Compared to other schools, teachers and students don't have that much stress . It's comfortable and better here . He feels blessed to come here at this particular year and his respect for the school has become more.

- Harhita Tibrewal. 8A


## Interview with Kaladar Sir



Vadigala Santhi Kaladar is from Shrihari Kotta, Nellore District ,Andhra Pradesh. Before he came to Rishi Valley he worked in other schools. He used to work for our Vice President Dr. Venkaya Naidu's school. He has performed with SP Balasubramaniam, Shankar Mahadevan, Chitra,S P Sailaja and Jesudas . He chose Rishi Valley because it is a conducive place for music and he wishes to make children artists.

He learnt Mridangam at Shree Satya Sai University. His guru is Madala Sai Babu Pinakapani Anant. He hopes that there would be concerts for each festival and doesn't approve of children wasting a lot of food and he says that they should avoid this kind of behaviour. He owns a Youtube Channel - Kaladar Mridangam

- Harshita Tibrewal 8A


## Interview with Rajshekhar Sir

Raja Shekar Sir is from Rajahmundry which is his native place. He worked in education non-profit CLIX before joining Rishi Valley. He researched education and poverty and loved to work with children. He cares for their psychological well being. He chose this school because he is interested in Krishnamurti's teachings. He appreciates the fact that there is room to engage beyond academics, for example Astachal and Culture classes. He thinks that teachers are not able to meet house parents as they are very busy as they dont get free time. He feels strange yet fulfilled.

- Harshita Tibrewal 8A



## Class 11

## Highlights

Before quarantine, a few of the 11th graders did serving duty. A few of them held dance performances and music assemblies. They had talks from Alumni and watched documentaries..

They went on class hikes to the Japanese rock garden \& the Biodiversity park. They even went on house hikes
(Duranta, Alamanda
Amaltash \& Gulmohar). As a part of their school activities, they helped in organising SME (Senior musical Evening).Their efforts certainly went off with a bang.(To read more about SME go to page 9 ).

Taekwondo Assembly

## What is Taekwondo?



# "The black belt around my waist 

 does not represent who I am.
## It does represent what

## I can be and what I am capable of."

What is Taekwondo?
The word Taekwondo means "The way of the foot and the fist." It is a martial art that uses bare hands and feet for attack and defense by kicking, jabbing and shouting. The Korean word 'Tae’ (?) means foot, 'Kwon' (?) means fist, and 'Do' (?) means art. Hence, 'the foot and fist art' or 'the way of the foot and the fist'. The father of Taekwondo is Choi-Hong-Hi, who was a great South Korean General. He combined parts of Taekkyon and Oh Do Kwan Karate to develop Taekwondo.

Taekwondo became an official sport at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The Kukkiwon (???) is the recognised governing organisation for the Olympics or World Taekwondo Federation style Taekwondo. Kukkiwon is also known as World Taekwondo Headquarters and Home of the World Taekwondo Academy. This is where the official Taekwondo governing organisation was established by the South Korean government. Ownership of a Kukkiwon Dan certificate demonstrates international acceptance of one's Taekwondo Skills. This is the highest degree certification available in the world today.

In Taekwondo, a student (Hak Saeng) is given belts after having performed in front of a grandmaster. There are different numbers of belts given, depending on the style. The belts range from white to junior black belt (half black, half
red) or plain red. The order and colours used may differ between schools, but the common order followed is white, yellow, green, blue, red and then black. There are 10 levels of Black belts, which are called Dans. Dan 1 - Dan 10.

Induvadana and Meenakshi of class 8 had performed Taekwondo in an assembly on the 25th of October, 2021. Indu had been learning Taekwondo for almost 10 years, and passed on some of her knowledge of this sport to Meenakshi. Indu recited a poem on Choi-Hong-Hi that she had written, and together, they demonstrated a series of kicks. They performed Roundhouse kick, Supporting Roundhouse kick, Turning-jumping Roundhouse kick, Turning hook kick and Spin kick. They also gave simple, useful tips for self defense in case you were encountered with an assault. Indu and Meenakshi showed us how a Taekwondo fight is done, with Aratrika as their referee. Indu explained the rules of the fight and even showed a mock foul.

Overall, it was a brilliantly planned assembly, kept short, crisp and easy to follow. The assembly was also quite fascinating, and Meenakshi did a great job with the kicks, considering she had only learnt for a short while.

We should all be inspired to learn Taekwondo, or any martial art for that matter, and aspire to have dedication and passion like Indu does.

- Aratrika, 8B


## Senior Musical Evening



A splendid evening for both teachers and students filled with Rhythm \& Rhyme, laughter \& fun.

This was the only whole school function given the circumstances and almost the first one in almost two years after the pandemic. This event was made possible by the efforts of the medical team, Dining Hall Team and the Building Department. The precautions, double mask and social distance were set in place and were followed respectively by everyone. To mark the event there was a special dinner with
mouth watering starters, desserts and cold coffee.

Class 11 were the event managers on the occasion and peppered the songs with humour and information about the artist or the album. Solos, duets and group songs were sung with gusto and there was celebration in the air. It was a memorable evening for all but especially the seniors who felt nostalgic about the event. Photo sessions followed for students of classes 10 and 12 . Class 12 had folkie before they retired for the day.


News Letter Team: Shriya, Harshita, Meenakshi, Mishika, Aira, Aratrika.

