



THE LIGHT COMES
AS WE WORK TOWARDS IT

THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

VMSB

NEWSLETTER 2024



Together we can make a difference! As we step into the new year, filled with hope and promise, we are excited to **share stories, updates and take a moment to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year.** These stories are a testament to the positive change that has been made possible by the generosity of our donors. Every donation, every volunteer hour, and every word of encouragement has helped bring smiles to the faces of our children and has inspired hope in them.

Our Journey So Far...

Our residential School for the Blind offers free education, lodging and boarding to currently **80 boys from grade 1 to 10 following the State Board Syllabus (Marathi Medium).**



Students taking their science exam on computers



Classroom Activity



Dining Hall



Field Trip to Fire station



Students displaying and selling
Diyas made by them



Tactile lab



School Picnic to Vasai Fort



Health Camp



Awareness Activity during
Disability Week



Annie Braille Lab

Annie Braille is a special device that helps Blind children learn to read and type in Braille on their own.



Investiture ceremony

During the investiture ceremony, the school elected the captains, vice-captains and Head Boy



School Readiness Programme: ➔

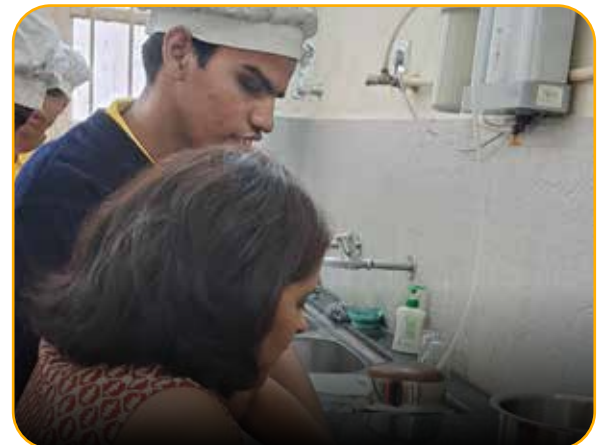


The School Readiness Programme is a structured initiative designed to prepare the students who have never been to school for a successful transformation to formal education.

Expanded Core Curriculum: ➔



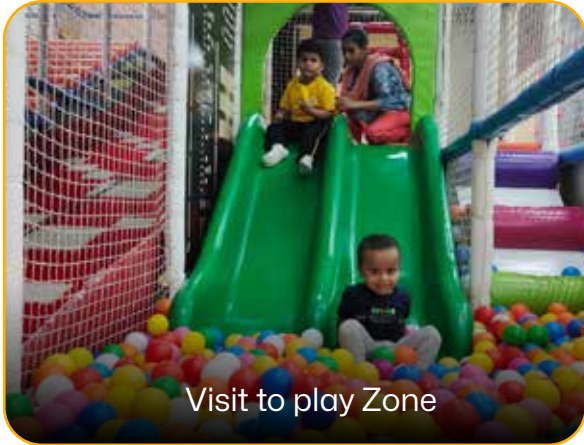
This course includes training in activities of daily living, like independent living, self determination, social interaction, recreation and leisure, orientation and mobility that will help the students to be self-reliant.



VMS Learning Centre (VMSLC)

We are celebrating the Silver Jubilee Year of our Learning Centre. The guiding force behind the establishment of Learning Centre was our former Vice Chairperson and Vice Chancellor of SNTD Women's University Late Mrs. Kamalini H Bhansali. VMSLC is a day school for children with intellectual disabilities. We provide Individualized Education Programmes for children with special needs, both boys and girls. We cater to the needs of children with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Mental Retardation, Muscular Dystrophy, Slow Learners, ADHD and other diverse needs. Our goal is to help each child learn and grow in a supportive environment.





Visit to play Zone



Sports Day



Childrens Day



Early Intervention class

Early Intervention classes for students under 6 years with developmental delays focus on preparatory skills, covering functional development, daily living activities, communication and basic academic concepts.

The VMS-Vijay Merchant Centre for Life-Skills & Development:

VMS - Vijay Merchant Centre empowers children with special needs through various therapies and life skills training to help them grow into emotionally secure, socially confident individuals. The Centre is open to any individual with special learning needs. In addition to our professional therapy sessions, we also empower parents with the training and tools they need to continue therapy with their child at home.



Occupational Therapy
Involving Parents

Music Class ➔

Padma Shri Suresh Wadkar's Ajivasan Music Academy provides music training for all the students of the school for the Blind, covering instruments like harmonium, tabla, flute and vocal training.



Music Class

Music and Movement Training 🎵🎸

Music and Movement Training is conducted to benefit physical and mental health of the students.



ABACUS Class



ABACUS and Vedic Math classes help students from the School for the Blind easily master numbers & alphabet identification as well as operations like Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Square Root, Cube Root, Decimals, Geometry and Algebra.

Cricket Coaching



Cricket Coaching is being given under the guidance of experienced coaches.



Mime



This training is imparted to all students at the school helping them improve communication skills and enhance sensory experiences.

Mallakhamb



It is highly beneficial for the students as it improves **physical fitness and concentration.**



Yoga



Yoga training holds significant benefits for students as it promotes relaxation and concentration.



Goal ball Coaching



Goal ball is a sport designed for persons with visual impairment. It provides an opportunity for **visually impaired students to participate**, which helps enhance their physical wellbeing, mobility, and confidence.

Educative Training Sessions

Sessions were conducted for the teachers, parents and students to enhance their knowledge and skill in teaching practices, child safety, child development, career guidance and the overall well-being of the students.



Session for parents on Parental Ageing, Autism, Spectrum & Consanguinity – Effects on Offspring”
by Dr. Ameet Patki

THE VMS-Radha Subrahmanian Centre For Computer Education

The Computer Centre for the **Visually Impaired (VI)** trains our students as well as adult VI towards digital literacy to secure gainful employment. Computer education is provided to them with the help of **Job Access with Speech (JAWS)** and **Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA)**, special software designed for the VI. JAWS reads aloud all text that is on the PC screen. The Computer Centre is the **Authorized Learning Centre (ALC)** for conducting the **Maharashtra State-Certificate in Information Technology (MS-CIT)** course and **Government Certificate in computer Typing Basic Course (GCC- TBC)** due to which the students are eligible for government jobs.



Navnit Manilal Shah Library Cum Resource Centre

The centre is equipped with Braille Books, Audio Books, Large Print Books, **Job Access With Speech (JAWS)** & **Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA)** enabled computers with internet access and many other Assistive Devices (reading aids). Approximately 1050 visually challenged members are registered.



School hosted an **Alumni Meet** where our accomplished alumni shared their school experiences and achievements inspiring us with their stories of **growth and success**.



Competitive Coaching Class

Online Competitive Coaching Classes are conducted to enable adult VI students to secure jobs in the field of Banking, Railways and other Public Services. Classes are conducted online to accommodate students across India. Guidance, study material and training are imparted to help them succeed in the exams and interviews. Several of our students have gained successful employment.



Facilitating Employment Opportunities:

The School has collaborated with MANN Foundation for skilling and employment opportunities for adults with visual impairment and intellectual disabilities. 13 students have been employed through this collaboration.



Massage Therapy Training 🧘

Our Massage Therapy Training Programme continues successfully. After a 3-month training session, trainees can get jobs at salons, spas, events and hotels and be self-employed as well.

“Eye Way Helpdesk” in collaboration with **Score Foundation & Supported by CIPLA Foundation** is operated by Counsellors with Visual Impairment.



The goal of this project is to provide vital information in the areas of education, employment, health, assistive devices, government schemes and any other assistance to persons with Visual Impairment from all over India.

New Initiatives ➔



- ➔ We have partnered with Xavier's Resource Centre for Visually Challenged (XRCVC) which enables our teachers to receive expert training and support in providing Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) education, empowering them to effectively teach Science and Math concepts using technology.
- ➔ We have also partnered with Vision Empower to offer Interactive STEM learning and computational thinking experiences, enabling critical thinking, problem solving and innovation in our students.

Milestones



" Everyone in the school is extremely encouraging and kind. They changed my life and my perspective of viewing the hardships of my life".

Mahek Doshi from the Learning Centre secured **68%** in 12th grade, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)



"The school helped me build confidence; the facilities and teaching were invaluable. Everything I required was available under one roof".

Devashish Mandal from the School for the Blind Secured **80.80%** in SSC Board Exam



" I am grateful to VMSLC teachers and therapists for their constant support which helped me clear my 10th std"

Anushka Datar from the Learning Centre Secured 65% in 10th Std, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)



Kevin Jena

Mohak Golam

Students from Learning Centre won the Best Photography Award at the Spixels competition.



Students from the School for the Blind participated in the State Level Goal Ball Competition.



Our Ex-student Venkatesh Mandadi from the school for the Blind (extreme right) performed Mallakhamb with his group at the Paralympics 2024 in Paris

Testimonials by Staff members, Parents, Ex-students, Volunteers and Well-wishers



My name is Arzan Sachinwala. I am working as a Receptionist at Flamboyante Restaurant. I am very happy now and thankful to the school for educating me and also training and supporting me to get this job.

Mr. Arzan Sachinwala, Ex-Student- VMSLC



“VMSB has given me the wings to fly and reach for the stars. The computer class has helped me to clear the MSCIT Exams and the competitive coaching classes helped me to secure job as clerk in a Nationalised Bank. Thank you VMSB”.

Amit Bhise, IDBI Bank, Clerk



I am very thankful to the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind. They taught me computer skills and helped me prepare for tough exams. With their support, I passed a difficult exam and got a good job.

**Dinkar Bhagat, Probationary Officer
Union Bank Of India**



I'm forever grateful to the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, my alma mater. They provided me with free academic education, computer training, and supported me in completing my MSCIT course. The school's guidance and coaching enabled me to crack competitive exams, leading to my current role as a Clerk at Bank of India. Thank you for empowering me!

Prashant Sable, Ex-Student, Bank of India Clerk, MSCIT



I'm Shirin Kheriwala, an Eyeway Help Desk Counsellor at VMSB since 2017. As a person with disability, this platform helps me to make a meaningful impact in the lives of people with visual impairment. VMSB provided that, with a supportive family-like team and emphasis on creativity and innovation. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to VMSB's mission and thank them for believing in me and providing me with an inclusive environment to grow.

Ms. Shirin Kheriwala, Eyeway help Desk - Counsellor



I am grateful to the school for providing me with numerous opportunities that have helped me grow and develop. As Welfare Officer and Warden of VMSB, I oversee student supervision and hostel administration. My experience has taught me empathy, patience, and adaptability.

Ms. Vidya Iyer, Welfare Officer and Warden



I'm grateful for my time at the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind as a Special Educator and School Coordinator. This experience helped me grow professionally and personally while making a positive impact on my students' lives. I appreciate the school's commitment to the cause and wish them continued success.

Ms. Avanti More, Special Educator and School Coordinator



I have had the privilege of working with The Victoria Memorial School for the Blind for over a decade, witnessing first-hand the transformative impact we create in the lives of students with visual impairments (VI) and intellectual disabilities (ID). Our organization is committed to empowering these students by providing them with quality education, life skills, and opportunities to lead independent, fulfilling lives.

Through innovative programs, dedicated staff, and a supportive community, we ensure that every child is nurtured in an environment that fosters their growth and potential. It is incredibly fulfilling to be part of an organization that stands as a beacon of hope and inclusion, tirelessly working to bridge gaps and build a brighter, more equitable future for these students. I am honoured to contribute to this mission and proud to be part of an organization that continually inspires change and makes a meaningful difference.

Dr. Salil Jandyal, Executive Officer - VMSB



I'm grateful to be part of VMSLC, where our dedicated staff provides personalized care and support to each student. Our inclusive community fosters growth, belonging, and friendship. To me, VMSLC is more than just a school - it's a nurturing community that helps students thrive.

Ms. Minal Kaskar, Head Teacher - VMSLC



I'm Alpa Raval, Coordinator at VMS Learning Centre. Working with special needs students has been transformative. I've learned to appreciate each child's unique strengths, be patient, and adapt creatively. I'm grateful for VMSLC's supportive culture and inspiring team, which empowers me to make a meaningful difference. I'm proud to be part of this team and committed to helping our students reach their full potential."

Ms. Alpa Raval, Coordinator - VMSLC



I see a lot of development in Yohan. The devoted teachers provide excellent education and engaging activities. We highly appreciate the concern and the positive attitude of the teachers and the caretakers towards my child. They take care of even the minute details in terms of his development and report it to us and even educate us on the practices that need to be carried out at home.

Mrs. Susha Pranav Raje, Parent- Learning Centre



VMS is more than just a school - it's a pillar of support and empowerment for children with special needs and visual impairments. We're grateful for the school's tireless efforts in helping our child reach his full potential.

We feel blessed to be associated with VMS and appreciate the school's dedication and commitment to providing exceptional education and care.

Mrs. Dilnavaz Samuel Jena, Parent- Learning Centre



After joining this school, my child has made remarkable progress and grown significantly. My son has become confident, happy and active now. I am impressed with the support and guidance of the teachers and staff.

Mrs. Sunita Neware, Parent- School for the Blind



The Victoria Memorial School for the Blind is a second home for our child. The school environment is very positive and the emphasis is on the overall development of the students. The school principal, teachers and other teaching staff are supportive. Our child's academic and personal development has grown tremendously and we are grateful to the school for that.

Mr. Pandurang Mestry, Parent- School for the Blind



I'm deeply grateful to be a part of the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind. Witnessing the determination and resilience of the students has been truly inspiring. The school's unique environment and commitment to empowerment make it a sanctuary of hope. I'm proud to contribute to the students' journey and confident that together we can build brighter futures.

Pradeep Singh Rajput, Trainer-The Destination Academy

Visit by Eminent Personality



Mr. Srikanth Bolla on whose life a film has been made titled **Srikant (CEO of Bollant industries)** visited the school on 21st June,2024 and inspired our students with his motivational and engaging talk.



A Big Thank You to Our Current Major Donors – 2024

Anand Rathi Wealth Management Co. Ltd Nihchal Israni Foundation
Alkyl Amines Chemicals Ltd. Pranlal Chhaganlal Desai & Sons Charitable Trust
Bahar Infocons Pvt. Ltd Rayoman Charitable and Research Foundation
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Gopaldas Visram and Co. Ltd., Standard Chartered Bank
Laxmi Dwarkadas Charity Trust Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri
Morgan Stanley Bank UTI Asset Management Co. Ltd.
Navnit Manilal Shah Foundation

AND to our devoted Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff and our dear Parents without whom our achievements would not have been possible

Our Stalwarts

Dr. Preeti Varma - Academic Consultant,
Dr. Salil Jandyal - Executive Officer,
Ms. Shampa Roy – Principal, Learning Centre,
Ms. Rajani Hiremath – Principal, School for the Blind

Our Management Committee and Trustees

The Hon'ble Chief Justice of the High
Court of Bombay

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Vice Chairperson/Trustee

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Member



Mission

To provide quality education and
rehabilitation opportunities to the
differently abled.



Vision

To encourage, nurture and develop differently
abled individuals; to empower them to take
their place in the world and society, as
confident and productive.



Value Statement

To strive for a better quality of life for every visually impaired and intellectually
impaired individual by providing education, training and rehabilitation
opportunities, thereby making them self-reliant individuals.