

BEST PRACTICE: 2

"X-Caritas: Be the reason for their Smile" and other Ongoing Services for the

Under-Privileged Children

OBJECTIVES:

1. To extend a helping hand to the underprivileged children
2. To put a smile on the faces of pure little children who are hidden behind the darker walls of destitution or impoverishment by creating kids' friendly environment for those children so that they feel at home
3. To provide health checkup facilities once in a year
4. To rise moral sense, empathy and social awareness among students
5. To develop a deeper understanding of the world around them and the importance of addressing social inequalities
6. To make the students accomplished in such a way, so that once out of the institution innately commit themselves to social work and contribute to making this society a better place to live in
7. To motivate the students to become agents of positive change in their communities and beyond.

THE CONTEXT:

"X CARITAS" is an event voluntarily organized by the AICUF, NSS, and the Social Outreach Committee of St. Xavier's College, Burdwan from 2017. The institution always focuses on the overall growth of a student. Being committed to any social work is a quality that should always be encouraged positively. This program has served its purpose by making students capable enough to carry forward the legacy. These are the main reasons behind the institution encouraging such an event and to make the legacy continue so that such a noble event never comes to an end. X-Caritas may seem like any other community outreach program but it is unique in many ways. A day completely dedicated to them to show them that the world that is out of their reach is full of colours and some people are always ready to welcome them with their open arms and a wide smile on their faces.

While X-Caritas is a one-day event, throughout the year, the college organizes a variety of initiatives aimed at improving the overall well-being and opportunities of underprivileged children.

THE PRACTICE:

During X-Caritas, children from various homes and village schools are warmly invited to our institution, ensuring they feel at home and enjoy a day filled with joy. Despite being a one-day event, organizing it requires meticulous preparation starting three to four months in advance. Student members, along with faculty from AICUF, NSS, and the Social Outreach Committee, meticulously plan every detail—from budget allocation to event structure and logistics. The entire program is funded by students, with careful allocation of funds for logistics, gifts for the children, and other expenses to ensure everything runs smoothly.

The event begins in the morning and continues until evening, following a consistent annual structure. It starts with breakfast for the children, followed by various sports events and a march-past. The next segment includes lunch and a cultural program. These activities are designed not only for the children's enjoyment but also to impart valuable skills and create lasting memories. Sports events such as the 50m race, chocolate eating race, sack race, skipping race and others aim to foster happiness and teach important qualities like resilience and perseverance. Play and win games like Ball in the basket add to the fun. Lunch is served by students and faculty, fostering a communal atmosphere. As the day concludes with sunset, the cultural event begins, providing children an opportunity to showcase their talents and gain confidence in front of a new audience. This event not only uplifts spirits but also inspires further growth and development in the children.

The college hosts many other initiatives year-round to enhance the well-being of underprivileged children. These efforts encompass a wide array of services, including educational support such as tutoring and access to resources, providing food and clothes for their families, arranging healthcare services like medical check-ups. These comprehensive services create a nurturing environment where underprivileged children can flourish, fostering their growth and empowerment through initiatives like relief fund giving and spending quality time with mentors and volunteers. Students love to spend time with those little wonders by playing or drawing or teaching etc. They spend time in computer lab and library under the supervision of students. They are also invited for the movie screening to develop their knowledge about outer world.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:

The smiling face of the kids themselves bears witness to the success of the program. After spending the whole day in such a joyful way, those children feel free to come to our college campus for different other events arranged by the college.

College students learn valuable life lessons, including crucial skills like event management, essential for their future as responsible citizens. Active participation enhances students' moral development, fostering empathy, compassion, and a sense of civic responsibility towards the community. The college encourages them to strive for excellence, fostering a legacy of continuous growth and larger-than-life visions.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Organizing such a big event is itself a challenge but with proper planning, the event has been carried with huge success over all these years. Since they plan the whole event so systematically that there has not been any problem that has been encountered while carrying out the programme. Although there are a few challenges that have always been tackled intelligently by the students. The primary challenge as mentioned before is the budget. Since, it is a student-funded programme; hence the budget is always very limited. The students need to plan for both gifts and logistics in that limited budget.

Challenges include limited resources, logistical issues, and addressing diverse needs such as healthcare, education, and emotional support for underprivileged children. Also, another challenge is taking individual care of the little children. The kids initially feel very shy as they come to the new environment and making them feel like home is one of the biggest challenges.