

January 2023

Issue No. 1

Break the Chain

Welcome to the Pudumai Penn newsletter!

In this issue...

- Meet Deepashri, one of our girls!
- A top tip from one of our alumnae for how to make the best of your time at Pudumai Penn
- Student Journalism Spotlight
 - This month, Sridevi has provided a short piece, dwelling on when 'learning' ends

... and more!

Hi everyone,

We at the Pudumai Penn Foundation want to increase the engagement between students, alumni, donors, volunteers, and our well wishers who are interested with the work we do. Break the Chain, our newsletter, is an attempt in that direction.

January has been a great month for us, and what a way to kick off 2023! From our seminar on 'How to have a positive attitude', to sessions on personal effectiveness, these opportunities to meet our students face to face as we ease out of the COVID pandemic have been fantastic.

This newsletter showcases the varied interests of our students and the excellence they demonstrate in their chosen fields. For this, our pride is palpable.

So here goes...
Enjoy!

In conversation with Deepashri

Deepashri is 19 years old, studying for a BSc in anaesthesia technology. When I called Deepashri, she was travelling from college to her home in the Chengalpattu district, a journey which takes her two and a half hours. Here's what she had to say...

What made you want to study anaesthesia technology?

I wanted to study medicine but didn't have enough time to study for the exams. Even if I had studied, we don't have enough money to study MBBS. Anaesthesia is such an interesting field – we are giving some unconsciousness to a conscious patient to bring them back to a normal state. Also, we are in the lifesaving industry, which brings me a lot of satisfaction.

What is your New Year's resolution?

Actually, I am getting angry too quickly with everyone – friends, family... also, I am working in a tuition centre, tutoring students in 10th and 11th standard. Even those students are getting scoldings from me every day! After the scolding, I think 'what was I saying? Why was I even shouting like this?'. Shouting, shouting, shouting, that's the one thing I want to reduce, reduce, reduce. Though I have taken that resolution, I don't think I'll be able to maintain it throughout the year. But this new year will bring me the skills I need!

What is your dream job?

To work in the hospital itself. I want to join the JIPMER institution in Pondicherry, which is maintained by the Central Government of India. I want to pass an exam and get into that job as an anaesthesiologist – we are the technicians, combining maths and science. Even when money is not considered, I am satisfied with this plan.

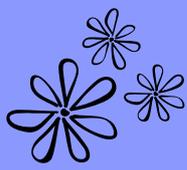
Who is your role model?

APJ Abdul Kalam. His journey from Rameswaram is the greatest thing. He was just a newspaper man, who used to wake up at 6am and deliver newspapers every day. His family did not have the money to feed him – he would eat thanks to his school's midday meals scheme. He studied, became an aeronautical engineer, and became President! The starting position is not important, what we do for ourselves is the most important way to achieve anything in life.



If you are a student and are interested in being interviewed for Break the Chain, scan the QR code to join the WhatsApp group!





Alumnae top tip

Aparnasri graduated in 2019, with a Bachelor's in general commerce. She is currently working for Sathya Sai Consultancy, specialising in Indian tax returns.

Her advice? "**Schedule your work according to your priorities.**"

"Everyone will have a busy schedule. But remember: you can attend functions any time, but if you miss a class there's no way to make up for it.

"At the time of taking the classes, I didn't know what I wanted to do in the future. But the skills I've learnt at Pudumai Penn – for example, workspace etiquette, or patience, or how bold and independent women should be – are consistently applied to my work."

Aparnasri also reflected on some enduring lessons she got out of her time at Pudumai Penn.

"I am from a lower middle-class family, and recently my father met with an accident. So, myself and my younger sister have taken up many more responsibilities. Pudumai Penn has taught me that as a woman, we should be very strong. **Women can do everything. With the right mindset, you will certainly be successful.**"

A word on our sponsors

Pudumai Penn has a wide range of sponsors ranging from individuals to large corporates. Individuals either sponsor specific students or sponsor as a family where different family members sponsor multiple students. They support the student through multiple years of education and have the satisfaction of knowing that they have helped a young girl become a Pudumai Penn who is capable of earning and supporting her family. Pudumai Penn also enjoys the support of many foundation and trusts who donate a certain amount yearly which is used towards the students expenses. Apart from the above corporates also contribute from their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) budgets to Pudumai Penn. This goes a long way towards meeting the expenses of the foundation.

We remain extremely grateful for their continued support, and hope to feature some of them in future editions!

The Student Journalism Spotlight is the chance for students or alumnae to produce a newspaper-style article on any topic which interests them. If you are interested in writing an article for Break the Chain, please email mahikars@gmail.com.

STUDENT
JOURNALISM
SPOTLIGHT

Learning ends after...?

“Never stop learning because life never stops teaching”. I came across this quote somewhere on the internet, and it made me to look backwards through the – admittedly very few – years I’ve lived.

I went back to a breezy evening. I was sitting in the shared bench of our neighbourhood with my new, fresh-out-of-school-bag 10th Standard science book in hand. That’s when I first heard that familiar mantra: “Do not worry, all this studying is only till you successfully clear your board exams, after that, you are a free bird!”, exclaimed my next-door aunt.

Later, I recall a busy evening, for all of us students of XI ‘B’ rushing towards our 12th syllabus special classes. “Study hard for another year, pass your higher secondary board exams and you would be left free to roam as you like!”. The same mantra had become the opening tradition.

When I joined college, the mantra reared yet again. But this time, the mantra came from within me. I cleared my college exams, got recruited by a company, joined there as a trainee. I thought to myself, ‘at last, no more mantra in my life’.

On my first day at work, I was greeted with the same old mantra again, during the ‘Fresher training program’. The million hints thrown at me from mentors, professors and even my own conscious mind all through college, finally dawned to me. And, I learned, that mantra is a lie!

For some reason, we often think that learning starts when we start school and ends when we leave, but my experience has proven that to be wrong. Associating learning with only schooling is either forced upon us or independently developed from a young age. At some point in life, when truth stares at us, we stare back and start to wonder. I too wondered.

In the journey of my wondering, I came to understand that two basic mindsets shape our lives, a fixed mindset, and a growth mindset. A person with a fixed mindset thinks they cannot change their abilities, no matter how much effort they put in. And having a growth mindset is belief that you can develop talent and knowledge with continuous practice and effort.

Having a growth mindset is one way to be reminded of the less spoken fact, “learning never ends”.

By Sridevi Soundarajan. Sridevi graduated in 2019 with a Bachelor’s in engineering. She currently works at Capgemini, an IT company.

January's headlines

Selected by the editor, on topics which Pudumai Penn students expressed interest in on a recent survey.

06/01/2023 Chennai was found to be the most gender inclusive city in India, followed by Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai.

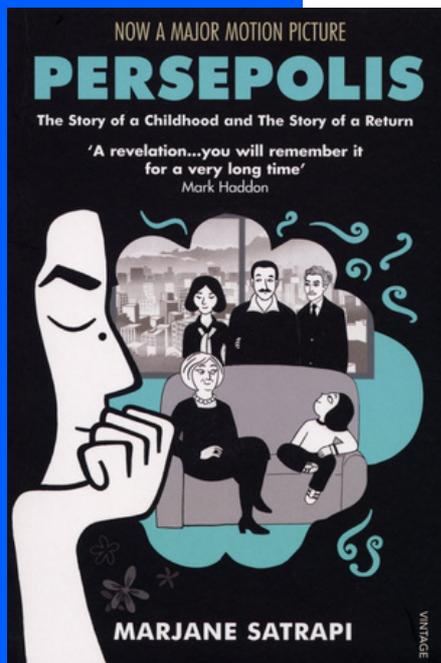
A city inclusion score (CIS) was calculated, an average of social inclusion score (SIS) and the industrial inclusion score (IIS). The IIS measure is more empirical, looking at density of gender inclusion organisations and other such factors, while the SIS measures general accessibility for women to the workplace. 100 is the highest possible score, and Chennai, the highest scorer, achieved 78.41. Only nine out of the 111 cities examined scored over 50.

19/01/2023 Jacinda Arden, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, announces her resignation

Arden has a remarkable legacy. She became the youngest female head of government in the world, when she was elected prime minister in 2017. She even had a baby in office! But, conscious of strains to her own mental health, Arden recognised she would be "doing the country a disservice" to continue as PM, with an inspirational level of introspectiveness.

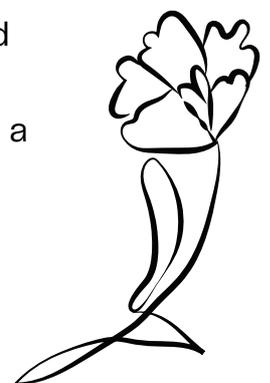
24/01/2023 Itokawa, the 4.2 billion-year-old asteroid, could come dangerously close to collision with Earth

Itokawa is a rubble pile asteroid, which forms when solid asteroids collide. The resulting fragments of rocks, pebbles, dust and a void have independent gravitational pulls which holds the asteroid together. This makes the asteroid extremely shock absorbant and hard to destroy. So, NASA's solution is to use shock waves to push the asteroid off its course, rather than destroying it.



Book of the month: 'Persepolis' by Marjane Satrapi

'Persepolis' is an autoiographical graphic novel. It follows Satrapi's childhood in Iran until her early adulthood in Austria, set during and after the 1978-1979 Islamic Revolution. The book overall paints a vivid picture of feminism in the Middle East. It is engaging and emotional, enhanced through illustration.



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Get in touch!

Quote of the month:

"You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water."

- Rabindranath Tagore



Written and produced by Mahika Ravi Shankar