



Creating Prosperity in Students through Implementation of a Leadership Program.

Sai Baba says that:

“Character is the most precious gift of education”; that

“The end of education is character” and that

“Education should be useful to society. It should make citizens follow the path of morality and righteousness and make their lives happy”

Sanathana Sarathi, December 1994, P333

Personal social goals are highly important for Groups 3- 4 Students. Young adolescents are in a process of re-evaluation of self and society. As internal, societal, peer and parental pressures confront the young adolescents at this stage, teachers can play a key role in providing an atmosphere of intellectual challenge and support.

Our SSE students today are the future leaders of tomorrow and in the Sai Organisation. Every school has leaders such as School Captains, SRC members, Peer Group Leaders etc. But the question is, “Are they effective leaders?” Only a person whose thoughts, words and deeds are in harmony can become an effective leader. If his or her thoughts are pure then there is no relation to lust, anger, attachment, greed, egoism or jealousy. Such leaders say what they think and do what they say. There is no insincerity or hypocrisy in their words or actions.

Using this as an incentive to increase the awareness of students when making values and judgements and with the intention to focus on character building, the Syllabus for Group 3 for 2011 was subsequently based on the commitment that education should develop character. The syllabus incorporates and builds on the previous syllabus to include aspects of worldly education that would assist the student to grow from an external focus to an internal focus on spirituality and self realisation. At an everyday level, the syllabus is concerned with practical applications of lessons learnt but on a higher level it involves individual introspection. All

students should therefore acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to protect their rights and be able to function as responsible and contributing members of their local, national and international communities.

As members of an organisation which is focused on promoting the Human Values, it is also important to help communities in whatever ways we are able to. With this in mind, I tried to introduce a Human Values Program into a single sex High School in Sydney. This was done through an association with a member of the school staff. However, the attempt was not welcomed as the school policy was to work within the school system and without outside influence. I continued to maintain contact with the teacher and guided and provided her with lesson plans to be used during pastoral lessons.

On Easwaramma Day, I was approached by this teacher who was very excited about the fact that she had been appointed as the teacher in charge of the Student's Representative Council (or SRC) as it is commonly called and needed to organise a training program for the new leaders of the school. She invited me to devise some kind of training for these students. I accepted the offer and submitted my workshop plan to her to put to the school administration. The committee accepted my submission and a date was set for the end of Term 2. Twenty three students were present for the Leadership Workshop, the majority of who were Year 11 /12 students.

Since each individual is unique, students were encouraged to write a personal mission statement (or philosophy or creed) to reflect that uniqueness. Their personal mission statement focussed on what they wanted to be (character) and to do (achievements) and on the values or principles upon which being and doing are based. They were made to realise that within each one of us is a sense of who we are, what we are about and what we value. It is this that helps us to cope with the changes within our personal environment and in the world.

Since the Group 3 Syllabus includes a study of Humanitarian Leaders, it was easy for me to use one of them as a case study which led on to the qualities of a leader. As a whole group, our shared thoughts and insights generated a collective understanding of the basic characteristics/traits of a leader and compared this to the Nine Values for Australian Schooling as outlined by the Australian Government Dept. Of Education, Science and Training in the **National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools**. The discussion also included the 5 Human Values, the importance of the sub values in enhancing the performance of a leader and how these sub values created prosperity and enriched the lives of the leader and the team members. The students then did a group exercise on how individuals could relate this to their own personal growth and development. Finally the students presented their ideas on how they could make a difference to the school community as well as the wider community. They then looked at identifying key roles, setting goals and time management among other aspects of leadership.

The implementation of this value- based leadership workshop is the first of its kind in the local community and has the potential to be implemented successfully in other schools.

By

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