

World Environment Day, 2013

CEE Himalaya Celebrations in Himachal Pradesh



Participants at the WED 2013 celebration at HAPS, Hamirpur

World Environment Day (WED) 2013 was celebrated on 5th and 6th June, 2013 at two locations in Hamirpur district, Himachal Pradesh by CEE Himalaya in collaboration with two Paryavaran Mitra Schools: Him Academy Public School (HAPS), and Government Boys' Senior Secondary School (GBSSS), Hamirpur.

On 5th June 2013, HAPS commenced WED celebrations by organizing a rally in areas surrounding the school. The participants carried placards and posters made by students that had messages related to conservation of the environment and various other environmental issues. Following the rally, the students visited a nearby jungle with teachers and experts to learn about the rich biodiversity of the area. They then learnt about the causes of forest fires and ways to protect jungles from fires. After that the students proceeded to clean a patch of the the jungle by collecting *Chir Pine* (*Pinus roxburghii*) needles, a major cause of forest fires in summers. After the exposure visit to the jungle, the students returned to their school and participated in various events like painting, poetry writing, slogan writing, skit, environmental quiz, declamation etc. All activities and competitions were carried out to promote the theme of WED 2013 - **“THINK.EAT.SAVE”**. Prizes were awarded to the winners of all the competitions. As part of the celebration of WED 2013, students also visited Institute of Biotechnologies & Environmental Science, Hamirpur, where they interacted with scientists and discussed various environment related issues. Around 200 students participated on the celebration of WED 2013 at Him Academy Public School.

The students of HAPS in general are very proactive and take their responsibility towards their environment seriously. For example, some days ago, a tiny little squirrel was wandering on a tree when it fell on the HAPS playground and got injured. The students not only tended to it but also restored its good health and the squirrel is now a member of HAPS family. Similarly, the school organized a visit to the school botanical garden for elementary students who took great interest in the medicinal plants in the garden. The students were particularly interested in the medicinal tree 'Triabblu' and learned about its uses and benefits in daily life.



The squirrel that the children of HAPS saved



Students and teachers discuss the benefits of 'Triabblu'



Participants at the WED event held at GBSSS, Hamirpur

On 6th June 2013, WED 2013 was celebrated at GBSSS, Hamirpur. All schools of the district headquarters participated in the celebration of the event. The event commenced with a 'welcome speech' by the principal of the school. Mr. Vipin Sharma, a resource person from HAPS, spoke about the emission of harmful gases and other products into the atmosphere. He stressed that every individual must strive to alter their lifestyle in order to directly reduce carbon footprints. He said "nature is wonderful and it has provided us with many beautiful things to embrace and feel. It's only we humans who due to unhealthy lifestyles are polluting the environment day by day. We do a lot of things without being aware of their harmful effects. This can be a big threat to both ourselves and the environment. The principal of HAPS said that there are many ways in which one can follow a low carbon lifestyle. Some options that can directly influence climate change impact include include using BEE Star rated appliances, installation of solar water heaters, efficient use the geyser, petroleum products, electricity, power, and electronic gadgets.

After the speeches and interactions between students and resource persons, a beautiful skit highlighting the importance of sustainable development in the modern world was performed by students of HAPS. All 220 students participated in various events like painting, poetry writing, slogan writing, skit, environmental quiz, declamation etc. Prizes were also distributed to the winners of various activities. Towards the end of the event, all participants visited the herbal garden created by students of HAPS in order to learn about the importance and high value of medicinal and aromatic plants. Some students were also inspired to create their own herbal gardens either at school or at home.