

CEE Himalaya
World Environment Day 2013 Celebration
Gangtok, Sikkim

CEE Himalaya in collaboration with the Gangtok Municipal Corporation celebrated World Environment Day (WED) 2013 on 5th June at West Point School, Gangtok. The celebration was an effort to improve public awareness and understanding of the environment and sustainable use of natural resources. Considering the theme of the WED 2013 'Think.Eat.Save', CEE focussed on the topic of food wastage and the entire day's program was planned around the same. An important part of the WED celebrations included discussions on solid waste management in Gangtok. This is part of CEE's project Supporting Urban Sustainability and was clubbed with the theme of the day. In addition to generating awareness amongst participants regarding food wastage and management of domestic waste, other environmental issues were also touched upon by resource persons. The event was attended by over 200 students of the school.

The program commenced with an opening speech by Ms. Pemba Lhamu, Principal of West Point School. She spoke about nature and the environment and said that it is important to conserve nature today for a better tomorrow. She stressed upon the theme of this year's WED and urged the participants not to waste food. She said that society needed to start from a scratch and small steps may lead to big changes. She lauded the effort made by CEE to reach out to students to sensitise them towards important issues that are affecting the world on a large scale. She also said that more such activities were needed to create mass awareness, especially amongst the youth in order to make the world a better place to live in.

A Nature and Environment Quiz was then conducted by Mr. Nitish Kumar, Project Officer, CEE Sikkim for students of classes 8 to 12. The quiz comprised two rounds with questions with both multiple choice answers and subjective answers. The quiz was made interesting for the participants with the addition of visual aids related to environmentalists, animals, trees and birds of Sikkim and North-East India. This session lasted for around an hour and a half and score keepers and volunteers included teachers and students of the school. In order to make the session interactive, after every two or three questions, there was one question for the audience and the winner was awarded a bar of chocolate.

Two video films titled "What Can We Do about Food Wastage?" and "Ideas de Reciclaje" were also screened for the participants. While the first video focused on ways to manage food wastage in our daily life, the second video included suggestions to utilize/recycle abandoned materials for various purposes. For example, a fused bulb may be made into a showpiece by filling it with water and growing aquatic plants. The first video was shown after the first round of the quiz contest and the second one was shown after the quiz got over.

The first three winners of the quiz contest won prizes and goodies worth more than Rs. 2000. There were consolation prizes for the participants as well. At the end of the program, the Principal of West Point gave away the prizes to all the participants and also delivered the vote of thanks. CEE's role in hosting the program was much appreciated by the principal and the teachers. The students enjoyed the program and would like to be part of similar events in the future as well.