

NSF Youth Ambassador: Eesha Arabhavi

I came to know about this program through a family friend. My mom had told her that we were going to India for a month this summer and she told us about this amazing opportunity to go to a school in India and teach them about a topic of my choice. I was immediately excited and jumped to this opportunity because not only would participating in this program look good on my college resume but also it has been a dream of mine to help underprivileged people in any way possible.

My mom comes from a small village north of Belgaum, Karnataka by the name of Amminabhavi. We decided to stay there for 3 weeks of our 5 week trip to India. When we arrived, my uncle and I actively started to look for schools for me to teach public speaking and spelling tips. Fortunately, it did not take us long as my uncle teaches at a college in a village by the name of Nidasoshi. I conducted the workshop in a school by the name of S.J.P.N Trust's School. As I talked to the principal about NSF and the APNA program, I realized just how hard it would be to conduct this workshop as even the teachers in the school were having trouble trying to understand what I was saying.



I was given a 4th standard class as the items I was going to cover with them fit with the curriculum of that standard. As I walked up the stairs with the teacher, I was nervous about what the children would think about me. I stepped into the class and when the teacher introduced me and told his students that I was from the United States, everyone gasped and started whispering. It was at that moment that my nervousness disappeared and it was replaced by excitement. The class was at least 40 student, 3 students per table. They were all looking at me with interest. After the teacher calmed the class down, he told me to tell them a little bit about myself. And so I did. I remembered what my mom and dad told me: "Talk slow or they will not be able to understand you"



I started my workshop off by teaching the students how to effectively speak in a public setting. They listened with interest. I then gave them a prompt for them to brainstorm topics. I realized at that point that I could not have them talk about the prompt as there were too many of them. They brainstormed ideas and would come up to my desk with questions about the prompt or about my life in the US. The more they listened, the more curious and excited they became.

The next day, I talked to the students about spelling. I gave them tips and tricks on how to spell. I also gave them half of the list of words I was going to quiz them on on the last day. I said the list out loud so the students could try and spell the words without seeing them first. I would then ask one of the students to spell the word out on the chalkboard. If they spelled the word wrong, I would ask another student who had the correct answer. This would go on until the right spelling had been written on the board.

The third day, I retaught the tips I wrote on the board the other day so the students could better understand how to spell difficult words. I had a word search prepared for the students on the second half of the words. I put it on the smartboard and asked them if they wanted to find one of the words from the list of words I had given them. They all jumped out of their seats and pushed each other to get closer to the board. I asked them to raise their hands when they had found the word. They would raise their hands and say “Teacher! Teacher! I know where it is!”



The last day, I tested them on their spelling ability by giving them all a sheet of paper and asking them to write as many of the words they could remember. I had one student who wrote down almost all the right spellings but missed a few words. I had another student miss almost all the spellings but write all the words. Some students handed me a sheet of paper with nothing on it because they did not know what the words were.



The APNA program really helped me teach the students how spelling is taught in the US. I grew a personal bond with the students in the class. At the end of the workshop, two girls walked up to me and gave me a card. They told me that when they grow up, they will go to the US to pursue a job. I inspired them to shoot for the moon. Going to the US from a very small village is not easy. They understood that. I know I made a lasting impression on the students of S.J.P.N Trust’s School.