

## **Sylvia Wright Trust Volunteering Report**

**Cait Hanstock**

**August 2017**

### **Rangammal School for Deaf Children**

I really enjoyed my time working in the school. I loved interacting with the children across different age groups and found that I improved my communication skills greatly as I learnt some basic sign language and found which way is easiest to communicate with the children so that they would understand what I was trying to say. We firstly observed some lessons to see how the teachers interacted with the children which I found really interesting. Watching the ways that the teachers taught the children to pronounce words properly by making them feel vibrations on their face and throat was very interesting. We spent time doing art and crafts with the children and also taught English including animals, colours etc. I enjoyed spending time with the students on an evening too. We played with the little ones by blowing bubbles which they loved and we also chatted and watched TV with some of the older girls.

Whilst at the school, we also did administration work including writing biographies for the children and writing articles for the Trust magazine. I really enjoyed doing this as it taught me lots about Indian culture especially with regards to the causes of the children's deafness. I learnt a lot about the children and their personal lives which was really interesting.

One of the aspects I really enjoyed about staying in the school was the weekends and being able to take part in activities with the students. On the first weekend, I spent the morning with a group of girls preparing flowers and making flower chains for the girls' hair. Other groups of children were preparing others goods such as fruit and snacks. We then held a small fair where the children were given money to 'buy' some of the products on sale. It was done to give the children some practise in handling money. It was lovely to be a part of. We also got to see all the children's families come to visit them on the last weekend of our stay. It was heart-warming to see the children with their families and it was clear to see that they were very much missed and loved by their parents.

We were also lucky enough to be a part of the Independence Day celebrations. We dressed in saris and went along to the celebrations with the children where we watched a whole range of performances from students for a range of schools. We watched the students from Rangammal perform a piece on the theme of the army and I have to say it was great! I felt so proud watching them. They did such an amazing job!

### **Florence Nightingale School of Nursing**

Working in the nursing school was my favourite part of my stay in Tiruvannamalai. We firstly went through our schedule with the vice principal which was a lot more full on than I was first expecting! We were given a tour of the school and it was really interesting to see the

facilities the school has, for example, the labs and all the equipment they use. We read through the syllabus and when I found out that the students are taught in English I was very impressed. The first lesson that me and Emma taught was on Communication, overcoming language barriers and maintaining interpersonal relationships. For this, we went through information on each part and tried to involve the students by asking for their ideas. We also tried to link the skills to their subject to make it easier for them to understand why the lesson would be relevant for them. We did some activities and games with them such as charades and Chinese whispers which both went down really well. The reason for these games was that it would help the students to improve their communication skills in different ways which they could then use in nursing. We spoke about the different ways that language barriers can be overcome and in what situations they would need to do this. The students were very interactive when speaking about relationships, especially when they spoke about the relationships they would encounter as nurses and they were great giving ideas on how they can improve relationships. We asked the students to create a mindmap showing the traits and qualities that are needed for a successful relationship. At the end of this session, me and Emma spoke a little bit about our degrees and explained the different types of communication we both used in our projects to give some context to the lesson we had taught. The second workshop we gave was on the skill of leadership. We again started by going through background information including types of leaders and we also asked them to identify famous leaders and say why they thought that the particular person was a good leader. The students completed mindmaps on the qualities necessary to be good leaders and each group then presented their findings in order to increase their confidence (which was one of those qualities). We then asked the students to work in groups and come up with someone who inspires them and why. It was lovely to see a range of people including Sylvia, Florence Nightingale, their mums and dads. To then improve their public speaking, we asked the students to work individually and create a presentation on themselves which they would then present to the class. They all did really well! We then did a workshop on the skills of problem solving and the situations that might require problem solving and the different steps you can take to successfully solve a problem. We did an activity called 'moral dilemma' in which we had written down simple moral dilemmas, which we then gave to a number of groups. The idea was that the students should use the steps to come up with a solution to the given problem. The students came up with great ideas and it was clear to see that they were all great problem solvers. We also brought along some small handmade jigsaw puzzles which we asked the groups to solve. It was good to see the groups working as a team and it looked as if they all really enjoyed that activity. The final lesson we taught was on our experiences in different countries. We firstly explained about continents and our first activity was getting the students to colour in flags of different countries from across the world and try to identify them. I was quite surprised to find that the students didn't know many countries at all. For each of the countries, we then went through famous food that comes from them, famous landmarks and animals that you would find there. We did this by explaining to them and also showing them photos to expand their knowledge. We then did an activity in which we shared knowledge. The students created mindmaps on India and we asked them to include as much information as possible which they then presented to us so that we could learn more about the country we were in. In return, we spoke to them about

England and gave them lots of information trying to explain the differences between England and India. It was a great learning experience for both parties!

We also had the opportunity to observe a lesson in midwifery which was really interesting. We also were lucky enough to be taken by students to observe community healthcare nursing where we saw them provide information to local people. We then went to a primary healthcare centre which was really interesting to see. It was weird to see how different it was to home! Me and Emma were also then able to visit the hospital in Tiruvannamalai which Sylvia built. It was amazing to see the work she had done and to see how many people are benefitting from it. I really enjoyed working with the students and I definitely learnt a lot whilst teaching them.

### **Integrated Educational and Therapy Centre**

My last week in Tiruvannamalai was spent in the IETC. It was lovely to see that the children have somewhere to come where they can be looked after and enjoy themselves. I enjoyed spending time with the children and as I had never worked with disabled children before, I found it interesting working with them. It was clear that the centre is still in development stage in terms of equipment for the children and training for the staff, but it is still a great place for the children to be and is good to see that individually they get assessed so that personal care can be given to each and every one of the children. The staff are lovely and obviously care about the children a lot so with some training and guidance, they will be able to cater activities and lessons to the specific needs of the children.