

Virtual Hugs

Children's
Pratichi
2020



Bengali Association Of Greater Atlanta



Children's

Pratichi

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BAGA
Swaraswati Puja 2020

A Foreword to Children's magazine

It is my pleasure and honor to write a foreword for the children section of the 2020 BAGA magazine. 2020 is not a normal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has taken a significant toll on people across the world, has a severe negative impact on our day to day life and the global economy. It is causing us to feel lonely, confused, and worried about the future. At the same time, we have learned some important lessons about global connectivity. We are using digital platforms to connect and share our culture with the world.

This year BAGA is publishing a digital magazine instead of a print magazine and one of the sections will cover only BAGA children's artwork and writings. During 2011 and 2017, BAGA has published children's magazines, "BAGA kids pay tribute to Rabindranath Tagore" and "Ankur" respectively during Kabi Jayanti and Ananda Utsab celebrations. I feel proud to mention that all writings and paintings were by BAGA kids and they were all about Indian culture and heritage. The magazine is the field where you can grow your imagination and BAGA nurtures our children's imagination by showcasing children's creative works.

During this pandemic situation, it is really challenging for BAGA Editor Nita Bose, and other editorial members to publish BAGA magazine. This is a great opportunity for BAGA children. Kids will be happy and encouraged to publish their creations in the digital magazine and can share with friends and family anywhere in the world.

Mausumi Basu

Editorial

Dear Children of BAGA

This is the time we eagerly wait for Durga Puja every year. When we worship Ma Durga, the Goddess of strength, the celebration continues with spending time with your friends with unlimited fun, food or by participating in cultural programs. But sadly, the year 2020, has been an unprecedented year, and due to obvious reasons we cannot participate in festivities except only through virtual platforms.

Suddenly Coronavirus has transformed our world and life beyond recognition. You must have been worried, confused sometimes been overwhelmed with uncertainties. As much as you were anxious and sad, most of you have enjoyed spending time with your family, making art, growing produce in the garden and cultivating some good habits. I admire your adaptability.

When a cure or vaccine for Coronavirus will be available we will return to, maybe, a little altered normal lives. In the meantime, keep your spirits up, be kind to the world and if you feel stressed or concerned please talk to your parents; they will be able to help you with honest discussions and advice.

This is the first publication of a separate on-line publication of Children's Protichi. Hope you like it. If you enjoy it, our efforts will be worthy.

On behalf of the group of editors who really worked hard.

Nita Bose

Editor

Background

Near the end of 2019, a virus started to spread rapidly throughout China. By January 2020, the COVID epidemic began to make headlines around the world. At first, it was considered mostly a regional issue, and most were not aware of the high risk it posed to the rest of the world. However, thanks to frequent international travel in today's global society, the epidemic swiftly snowballed into a global pandemic. As people began to realize the urgency of the situation, several precautions were put in place - schools and offices were shut down and went online, and strict travel restrictions were imposed on anyone entering the United States from other countries affected by the virus. However, due to delays in initiating these precautions, the virus spread rapidly in the US as the number of cases spiked exponentially. In a matter of a few weeks, the USA was ranked with the most COVID cases in the world. As the case count rose, so did the number of deaths resulting from COVID infections. Moreover, the healthcare systems in the US and around the world were overwhelmed by the pandemic, resulting in more non-COVID related deaths as well.

After contemplating the ramifications of this disease I realized that while the US residents had the highest chance of getting infected due to the high cases and the lack of awareness of many people, many other countries had the opposite happen to them. The US is one of the most developed countries in the world. On the other hand, my native country, India, has a huge population that led to the spread of the virus. Even after the much stricter precautions taken there, the density of people meant that the virus was bound to spread at rapid speeds. Also, many places still have limited internet

and/or money. It was even harder for them to avoid the virus because of the many other problems they had. Knowing this made me want to try and help them out however I could.

Simultaneously, the very deadly cyclone, Cyclone Amphan, hit areas in Eastern India and Bangladesh on May 20, 2020. While there were many fatalities in this disaster, the damage done was a lot larger. This cyclone caused severe damage and affected landscapes and structures. The approximate cost of Cyclone Amphan was about 13 billion USD. Because of the COVID pandemic, the evacuation and repairing of the aftermath was dramatically slowed down.

BAGA Youth Committee

Earlier this year, I became one of the Presidents of a non-profit organization called the BAGA Youth Committee. This committee derived from a non-profit religious/cultural group, BAGA (Bengali Association of Greater Atlanta). BYC's goal is to provide children with opportunities to socially engage and serve communities through projects such as volunteering, fund-raising, and many more. In 2019, I took a great interest in this and joined the BYC Board as a General Secretary. Being a part of this group was a wonderful and fulfilling experience, which inspired me to lead the next batch of youths to success. In 2020, I was appointed as President of BYC.

Initiative

Given the widespread impact of the pandemic and cyclone on numerous lives, I wanted to use the resources available through the BYC and BAGA community to raise funds for affected populations both in the US as well as in India. As President, I decided to take initiative and pitched my idea to my BYC Executive Board. The idea was well-received by the board members of BYC. We presented the same idea to the EC and BOD of BAGA, who gave us the resources to set up our fundraiser. We used the BAGA website as a medium for people to donate to the cause through a

simple, user-friendly interface. After setting this up, we requested to share a copy of the BAGA members' contact database. My BYC team and I individually called every member on the list and kindly asked for a donation, advertising who it would help, our goal, and how to donate.

Results

In the COVID fundraiser, we were able to collect a donation of \$6210, thanks to the overwhelming support of our community. We are also very grateful to the BOD and EC of BAGA. We received \$2000 from the BAGA BOD and \$3000 from the BAGA EC. The Sports Committee also donated \$200. In the end, BAGA raised a total of \$11,410.00 and donated these funds to several organizations that reside in the US and in India. These organizations have taken the initiative to provide essential supplies such as food and health kits to communities severely impacted by the pandemic. In the US, the donations went to the Atlanta Community Food Bank, Golden Harvest Food Bank, and Meals on Wheels Atlanta. In India, they went to the Sunaay Foundation, Bharat Sevashram Shangha, Belur Math, Rising Youth Society, Back to School Society, and Goonj Foundation.

In the Amphan fundraiser, there was a total of \$4101 raised. This money was donated to West Bengal Emergency Relief Fund, Belur Math, and Bharat Sevashram Shangha who used the money to help out in the repair of the destruction and the support of the people affected.

BYC is grateful to the BOD and EC for giving us the opportunity to be a part of this noble initiative.

Angan Samadder

BYC Board Members:

- Angan Samadder
- Aaditya Saha
- Kindam Chakraborty
- Aritra Saha
- Mihir Paul
- Spandan Bardhan



Arin Samadder

My Experiences with Covid!

Nishant Das (Grade-4)

Schools closed! Suddenly, schools in the USA closed in March of 2020 due to a deadly virus called the Coronavirus or COVID-19, which started spreading rapidly. After the schools became virtual, we started to do our studies online. Our entire spring quarter was virtual. My classmates and I were supposed to take our Georgia milestone exam for the first time in third grade, but it was canceled because of COVID. Our 2019-2020 school year ended virtually. Then came our summer holidays. I was not able to play with my friends. We usually go on trips every summer. But this year my parents had to cancel all plans.

On a normal week, my brother and I would have gone to school every morning. My dad would have gone out of town for work early morning every Monday, and we would have seen him again on Friday evening. When we would come back from school, mom would have taken us to our karate class, music class, and baseball practice. After coming back home, we would take shower, have dinner, and go to bed after that. But everything is different now. With no outdoor activities, we are all at home. My dad is also working from home. Lots of people are sick, and many died of COVID around the world. So, my parents told me that we would continue to stay at home and maintain social distancing. These days, after studies, I get to spend more time with my mom, dad, and brother. I am happy that I get to see my dad every day. My brother and I play cricket, baseball,

soccer, video games and also watch movies together. Dad also plays with us whenever he gets time. He also taught me how to fly a kite. Now, whenever there is a good breeze, I run outside with my kite, and I fly it well. My brother and I also celebrated our birthday parties over Zoom with families and friends. It was great fun as for the first time we could celebrate these virtually with family and friends. Since we are all together now, mom makes a lot of delicious food, and we are loving it.

Our new school year started in August 2020. Because of COVID, my parents opted for my virtual learning. I am loving the virtual classes. Since we are not going to school in person, mom lets us sleep a little more in the morning. She even lets us sleep a little later than we did on regular school days. Mom also helps me in my school activities when I need a little extra help.

Nishant Das

I am loving my time with my family. But I still cannot go to school and meet my friends. Now, when we go outside, we must wear masks and maintain social distancing. I will be missing my favorite BAGA Durga Puja this year, which is so much fun with friends. I want to go back to school again. I am hoping the pandemic ends soon so that we can go back to our normal activities again.



Hallucination

Senria Nath

Freshman
Wheeler Magnet High School

It's 9:30 on a Monday morning, and the kids are filling the room. All I can hear are the voices surrounding me as I close my eyes and wait for the silence to come in. I open my eyes and take a good look around me. I can feel the children's eyes looking at me as I sigh. "Hello everyone," I say in my soothing voice. A couple of children reply with a hello. "So today, I will be sharing a story," my voice says as I start to pick up the book I chose for sharing a story, "Boundless Grace." I stop myself, put down the book, and decide to change plans. "This is a true story," I start, "this is the story of how I survived Monday." I saw a shadow crawl past me with no source. "OK, let's see! I was probably your age. I lived a decent life with my parents and...", a light flickers on my last word ... "do you kids know the origin of the name Monday?" As I finish my sentence, all the lights go out in complete darkness.

As panic fills the air, I reach for my phone, but in the pitch darkness I knock something over and cause it to shatter. I know that it falls away from the children, not harming anyone. A scream fills the air which turns into tons of screams and pierces my ears. "Silence everyone," I yell as hurried footsteps draw near the room. A lady throws open the doors as light pours through. The light in the hallway was working fine. Then, that lady goes to flip the light switch on. It doesn't work. She tries over and over to turn on the lights, but nothing works. It seems as though there had been only a power outage in our room.

library? There is enough light from the hallway to look around. I notice the item I shattered. It was a lamp, but how did a lamp come near me? My side of the room was empty. In confusion, I realize I am the last person in the room, and everyone else seemed to have left. I grab my belongings and head out to leave the room. When I reach the door, an arm grabs me. It is the arm of a young boy, and he asks, "Where are you going?" I am startled, and I look behind me, and suddenly all the kids are still there; nothing has shattered; and the lights are working fine.

"Uh huh, okay there is something totally strange going on, Manilla. I think you were just hallucinating," replies Adessa after I explain what happened earlier today.

"Hallucinating? Seriously! It was real. I don't even know what happened but it seemed so real," I snap

"Excuses to get out of reading a story are also real," Adessa barks back at me.

"You know what! You are just hopeless. Why isn't there anyone who believes me!"

"No one believes you because that never happened!"

My mind abandons the conversation. I think back to the experience. I see the memory flash by me. How could it be fake? It seemed so real.





Old cloth by Divija Nath

Memories

Sharanya Kar Bhowmik

Leaves fall
and float
Slowly
on the autumn breeze
Like memories
slowly leaving
my minds grasping branches
to be
replaced anew
with fresh leaves

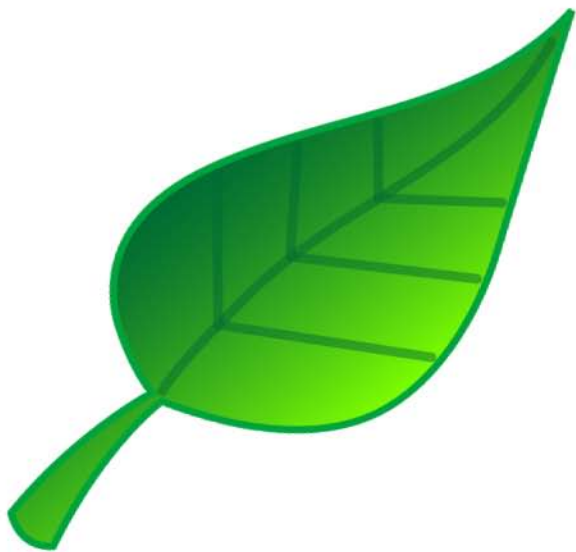
"Crunch" "Crunch"
feet
stepping on my happy
memories
my sad
memories
with ease

"flip"
I pick them up
and put them
in a box
stored at the corner
of
my mind

There
Safe
until summer
comes, and more leaves
will be saved

But then
there's that question
Will they survive
the strong winds of time?
Who knows

For no one can understand
Life and Autumn's harsh rhyme



Suitcase

Just imagine having to toss a part of your life into a brown, battered, and ragged suitcase! What moments in your life are represented by items that you would put inside? That is my immediate reaction after reading *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis. The main character Bud had to make a decision on the same matter. After much reflection, I decided to put these items in my imaginary suitcase.

My first item is a picture of the Sullivan and MacDonald family crest. This item gains a spot in my imaginary suitcase, for it represents my dad's Irish heritage. When I see the crest, I start to ponder my ancestry from the Irish countryside. I would not want to part with this treasure because it channels my family into my mind when I see the red and yellow clothes with the knight's helmet and then the two mighty lions. Leaving the picture of the crest would be like leaving part of my family history. That information gives the picture of my family crest a notable part in my suitcase.

Even though that item seemed very crucial to my history, that is only one element of it. My second item is some hotel cards, which are the embodiment of my first trip to India. These hotel cards remind me of my family far away in India and my mom's parents' sacrifice to move to the U.S. for a better life. They show my family's willingness to move away in order to construct a better life, which in the end, created who I am. If I were not with this treasure, I would forget the special trip, the time we had in India, and all my family that is still there. For those very special reasons, the hotel cards are granted a noteworthy place in my suitcase.

Rohan Sullivan

My next item is a few papers and a drawing by my brother. For my entire life, my brother has looked up to and played with me, which makes these items important to me. He also did them in Mrs.Dahl's class, which means these also represent her. These things are memorable because they represent the fun, interactive, and joyous times I have had with Mrs.Dahl and my brother Naveen. They help me remember that I always have someone who is looking up to me and will offer me comfort when I need it. If I were not with these papers, I would forget the grand times full of laughs that I had with Mrs.Dahl and my brother, but most importantly the family I could always have fun with. My brother and teachers are very important to me and they allow these papers a special place in my suitcase.

After that, many people would blank out on what to put in a suitcase, but I have another two items that deserve a place there. The first one is a gray notebook with a city pictured on it that my mother gave me. This is of value to me, for it helps me remember everything my mom gave me to make sure I had the brightest future possible. This book also lists many things I have had fun with and thought about. It contains small bits of my favorite things that would help me remember what always pleased me. I feel leaving this crown jewel would leave the memories stored inside it. Without it, I would probably forget my mom's sacrifices to make the best possible future for me. For those reasons, my notebook gains a very valuable position in my suitcase.

For my final item, I chose a Jelly Belly dispenser shaped like the Death Star from Star Wars. This item currently sits in my dad's office, which if you connect the dots, means this represents my dad. I treasure this item because it

Rohan Sullivan

helps me think about how much my dad taught me about sports, life, and history. It also helps me remember how much he encouraged me at whatever I did and his passion for my learning. This represents me because all his teachings are still inside me. Losing this would be like losing my dad's knowledge and help that he offered me. I would also lose his encouragement, which helped me know someone was always cheering for me. That information gives the Star Wars' Death Star Jelly Belly dispenser the last crevice of space in my suitcase.

Those bits of me fill the dusty suitcase. After this task, I understood how much of my life is stored outside my body. My brain says I chose very well and that these will truly represent me. As I shut the suitcase, the dust flies outside into the room preserving the jewels inside.

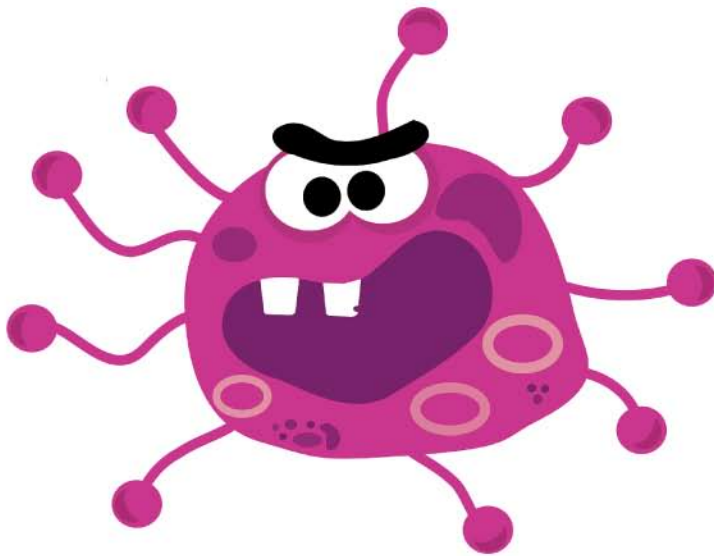


Sunset



Ritshika Mukherjee

Let's talk about the Coronavirus pandemic!



Source: Internet

What to do?



Source: Internet

I feel like the Coronavirus is bad but not horrible. I am fine with wearing masks and I am happy to be back at school.

Naveen Sullivan
Elementary School

"I have enjoyed the time at home with my family and really like hanging out with my grandparents at home! I miss going out and not seeing my friends, and teachers in person. I miss giving hugs and having play dates, but I have started learning singing and I really enjoy that! I've also had fun doing zoom singing performances which my family get to see in India and all over the world. It's been different being at home so much, but super fun!"

Ryma Ellora Mitra, 2nd Grade
M.H. Mason Elementary School

My name is Saanvi Kahali. I am in 3rd grade. I think this pandemic is awful because no one can go anywhere and it is killing everyone. I am also very sad because I am bored at home and missing my friends. But I believe very soon, the medicine will come out and everyone will be safe and going out again.

Saanvi Kahali, 3rd Grade, Davidson Elementary School

Ever since Coronavirus hit North America I've felt more cautious and kind of panicked. The thought that a disease could kill millions, was lurking in my own country was scary. After the lockdown continued I grew less stressed. Now today I feel calmer than ever and I've started feeling more relaxed as things are returning to normal.

Rohan Sullivan
Middle School

Glimpses of Children's Thoughts during the Pandemic

The pandemic has devastated my life. I've to do online school which I hate because I don't enjoy staying home as I miss my friends and teachers. This is my first year of Middle School and I'm missing all the fun.

Sreyash Roy, 6th Grade
Autrey Mill Middle School

I think that this pandemic has definitely brought a feeling of chaos and exhaustion. But to look on the bright side, I've started appreciating things more than I did before. An easy example is school. I know from my personal experience that I never wanted to wake up so early and to stay at school for at least 7 hours. However, now, I would give up anything to stay at school for however long it takes. I believe that this pandemic has opened up a side of us, which is starting to look at things differently than we did before. Ultimately, I think that there are a lot of positive aspects to this global situation.

Anushka Choudhury

Coronavirus has interrupted the beginning of my high school experience. Although my first year in high school was much different than what I dreamed it would be, it is much more important to stay at home and be safe. I cannot wait for this pandemic to get over and go back to our normal life.

Nayonikaa Chakrabarty, 9th Grade
Lambert High School

From High School Children:

As proven by the toll it has taken on innocent families all across the globe, COVID-19 has been a strong contender in a battle we are still fighting. With its emergence in late January came a period of mass hysteria. As time went on, more cases were detected all around the world, and more security and personal safety measures were taken and recommended. For students like me, however, the pandemic situation has merely been an annoyance. School life has completely transformed into sitting in front of a computer for 7 hours a day, 5 days a week. During summer, when coronavirus was on the rise, most of us were forced to stay at home or take cautionary measures when going out. Our teenage years were being wasted! But physical health is also very important, so we abided by the rules of quarantine and still do. As of now, schools and businesses are gradually opening back up, provided that they practice the same cautionary measures since January. Students can finally go to school a couple days a week and even grab a bite to eat sometimes. Although we did have to endure some struggles during quarantine, it seems like everyone is starting to loosen up on their regulations, which is good for us.

IN SHORT:

For students, quarantine and COVID-19 has taken a toll on our free time and our school life. We go out less and less, and our schools have gone from face-to-face classes to completely virtual. However, schools and businesses have begun to loosen their regulations on safety, which allows us to go to school in person sometimes and go out to eat, provided we wear a mask and wash our hands.

Mihir Paul

The pandemic has presented us with a situation none of us could have imagined. It's been a confusing time for children, teens, and adults alike. It's taken time to adapt to these unfortunate circumstances, but in the end what matters is that we stay healthy. Staying online is the best course of action to take right now. But I know that if we can stay strong together and maintain proper guidelines, it'll all work out in the end.

Aditya Bhattacharya, 12th Grade
North View High School

The coronavirus pandemic has caused a change of lifestyle for everyone. My life has changed into waking up late and staying up all night to finish schoolwork, only to repeat the same cycle day after day. The social person I once was has gone into hiding as the only interaction I have with friends are through virtual screens. I miss the days when I could hug my friends and spend time with them every day. The memories of my everyday life at school before coronavirus is slowly drifting away as this new wave of memories from FaceTime calls and endless amounts of schoolwork replace it. Though I will miss the comfort and love from my home, I long for the day when life returns back to normal.

Shreyashi Dutta, 11th Grade, Denmark High School

Covid 19 has not affected my life at all. In fact everything I normally didn't have time for, has been miraculously created. I now have much more time to do things I normally couldn't! While I'm quarantined. Life has been pretty normal.

Sagnik Nandi, 10th Grade
Alpharetta High School

I would probably say I had a different experience from many other students during pandemic. Unlike many teens, my parents were not home most of the time due to their job. My mom is a coronavirus research scientist, so she has been more busy than usual. I usually spent my day doing my homework in the morning and playing video games with my friends or doing extra homework in the afternoon. However, during the summer, it would be difficult to pass time by myself without online summer classes. I am still taking online classes and really missing my friends, and school.

Arka Bhattacharjee, 9th Grade
Denmark High School

There's no doubt that during these difficult times life has become challenging for everyone with school online, not being able to socially interact, and activities being canceled. But in the end of the day, as long as you're staying safe and healthy, this can be a positive experience since the circumstances really allow you to appreciate the things taken for granted and with the technology we have we're lucky to still be able to live our lives virtually.

Senria Nath, 9th Grade
Wheeler High School

The pandemic, I feel, has taught not only me and my family, but humanity about the value of things that we take for granted. Now, the once-common practices of going to the grocery store and celebrating birthdays have been taken away. Personally, this is my first year of high school, and I have not even set foot in any of my classes--I have to learn my lessons in my room, alone, and through a screen, not to mention the loneliness that comes with not seeing friends for months.

Rohini Roy, 9th Grade
Johns Creek High School

Glimpses of Children's Thoughts during the Pandemic

The pandemic had four main stages...

No school, long summer!

Wait, people are dying?

All I want is to see my friends and go back to school.

I've learned more about myself and the world in the past months than my entire life.

Priyanka Roy, 9th Grade
Peachtree Ridge High School

"COVID-19 has affected many things in my life, including my school's studies and my general lifestyle as of recent. School is no longer open and is now the learning system has changed. Everyone is just stuck at home and on Zoom calls all day. Although I like being able to just attend class at home, I would prefer being able to go around instead of just being stuck at home. In my free time I usually play games with my friends online or go for a bike ride."

Spandan Bardhan, 10th Grade
Walton High School



Wear a Mask



Practice Distancing



Wash Hands



Stay Home If You
Have Any Symptoms

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic started I wasn't worried until it had gotten extreme. As soon as my school changed into virtual schooling, I knew it was only going to get worse. At first, I didn't have any classes and I only had assignments. It wasn't that bad, and I was never watching the news. When summer hit, I wasn't worried at all. I was enjoying myself throughout the whole of summer. However, when school started, I thought virtual school was awful and schools could maintain social distancing indoors. This was something I thought should've been easy. As time passed, I learned that not only are schools lazy, but the students don't try to maintain social distancing either. At this point, virtual classes were growing on me. To this day I still think schools would be able to maintain social distancing easily and students are also part of the problem. There is only so much schools can do to try and prevent social distancing, but at the same time they aren't even trying their hardest to maintain it.

Debesh Majumder, 7th Grade
Chamblee Middle School

The pandemic has changed all our lives in different ways. I pray for all the families that have lost their near and dear ones to Covid 19. I am glad that me and my family and my friends are safe and healthy. I miss hanging out with my friends and doing all the fun stuff. I want this to be over very soon so that we can all get back to our normal lives.

Aditya Deb
Chatahochee High School

Future BAGA Members



Pearl



Avighna

Congratulations!

Pratichi Editorial Board
BYC, BAGA-EC/BOD

Shreyaan Manna



Nail Polish Disaster

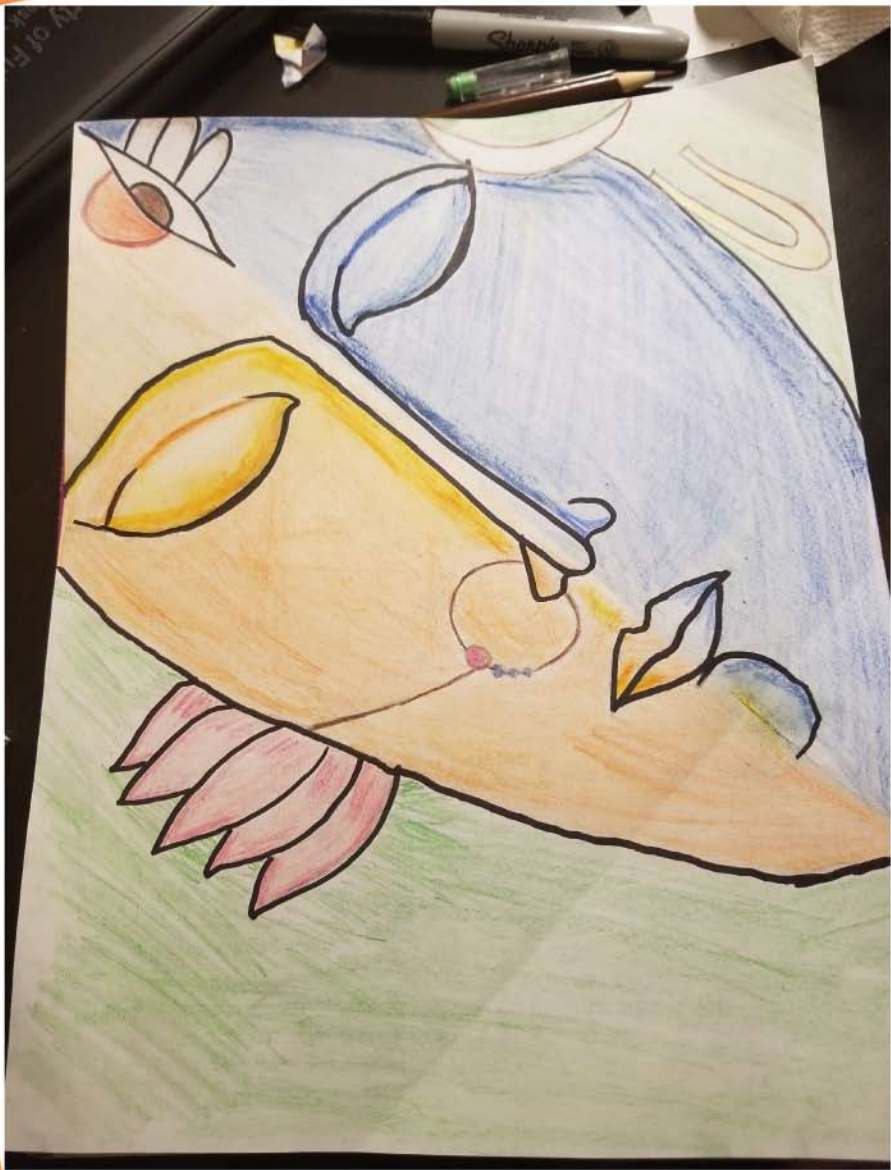
My friend came to my house. Before she came, I did my happy dance! I rushed to the door. "Hiya!" I said jumping up and down. My friend said, "Hi" and shut the door with a loud CLANK. I said, "that's the boys' room, and this is the girls' room." I said pointing to the right. I picked the right room because the room had markers, crayons, toys like dolls, paper, colors, and MAKEUP! First, we colored. I made a pink dog, and my friend made a pink-violet cat. Then, we played with dolls. I picked one with a pink sparkly shirt and skirt. Then we saved the best for last -
- Make Up!

I said, "C'mon, let's do this." First, we used silver sparkly nail polish. I wore mine neatly, but my friend struggled; so, I went to help her. "Oh, No!" I said in a worried voice. My friend accidentally spilled it all over the floor! My friend said, "on the bright side, your floor is sparkly." I said, "that's not the point; now, let's get it clean before my mom comes." Too late—I thought. She had come. Creak....

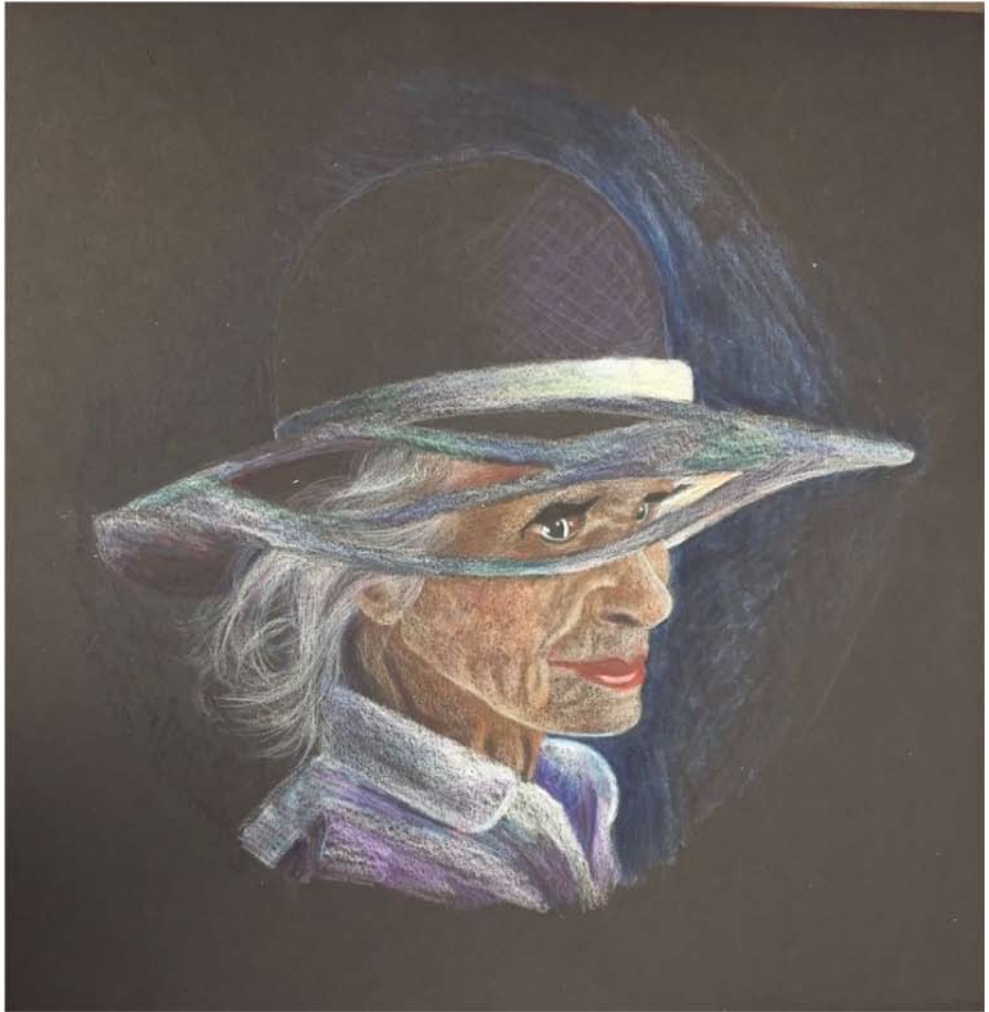
My heart thumped fast as a cheetah. "Nothing to see here!" I said quickly shutting the door, so she couldn't see. "Let me see what happened," said my mom. We said, "fine." My mom looked at me, and I looked down. She wasn't that mad. She just said, "Don't do that next time." We said, "ok" and "sorry" sadly. Then, we played with toys and especially not with make-up.

THE END

Moral: Never play with things that you are not allowed to play with.



Ardhanarishwar by Eshan Manna



Lady with a Hat - Sophie Williams

Ishayu Dasgupta





BAGA gears up virtual Durga puja celebration this year due to the COVID -19. For more information please visit the BAGA website.

Thank you all,

BAGA -Executive Committee

www.baga.net

2020 Swaraswati Puja



Children's
Pratichi
2020



BAGA

The logo for BAGA features a stylized orange symbol above the word "BAGA" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.