

## My Unforgettable Experience with APNA in India

When I first signed up for the APNA program, I thought I was relatively prepared for anything. I have been to India many times, almost every other summer, and have a lot of experience teaching kids. Even when I got accepted and received the syllabus, I was pretty confident in the material and how I could present it in a fun way. It was when I went into the classroom that my thoughts changed.

My name is Rucha Dave and I am an upcoming junior in Nashua High School South. This summer, me and my sister, Krishna, visited Gujarat in India during June and July. We received the material about a week before our flight and we prepared a lot, editing and changing the slides as we felt needed. We were planning on doing a 2 day spelling workshop for the 7th and 8th graders at D.P. Desai School in Nadiad, Gujarat. It is a private government affiliated school with around 25 students per grade. When we reached Nadiad, my grandfather took us to meet with the principal of the school to arrange the program. We were really surprised when we saw the school. The building was very old and run-down. There was no air-conditioning in the



school despite the temperature outside being in the 100's. We saw that the principal's office was in the same condition. When we were called in, we explained the goals of NSF. Eventually, he agreed to holding a 2 day workshop, the first day to

teach and the second for the spelling bee and award ceremony. We found out that the school was Gujarati medium. This meant that they had just started learning basic English, so we came up with a whole new list of words for them to learn.

We spent around a week preparing these new words and then it was time for us to teach. We went to the school with all of our words and activities ready. When we got there, we started by giving them a practice quiz. It took 10-15 minutes for them to finish. Then, while my sister graded quizzes, I taught them how to play spelling games such as Hangman and Sparkle. When she finished grading the quizzes, she walked up to me looking worried and said, “I think



we need to change our word list.” I looked at the scores and started panicking. We had started off with some of the easiest words on the list but none of the students had spelled them correctly. We didn’t know how we could teach them the lesson we had prepared. Then, we came up with an idea. We started off with really easy words like dust and door. Then, we tried to find rhyming words for each one and write them on the board. Since the spellings of those words were similar

to one another, it was easy for the students to catch on. We then introduced the ideas of silent letters and rules such as q before u. Then, we wrote out a new spelling list for them to study. The next day, we started the spelling bee. We gave each student 1 strike before they had to sit down. Since we had gone over the whole list many times with them, they all could answer at least one word before having to sit down. There were many students who studied hard for this bee. In the end, we had 5 students standing. We had them all come to the first benches and write out the words this time. This way, we got our top three winners. We had an award ceremony where we gave everyone certificates, chocolate, and stationary. For the winners, we gave them 100, 50, and 25 rupees respectively. We also gave ice-cream out to all the teachers and staff members. The experience we had there gave me a new perspective to life. I will never forget this.

