

CITATION

Alumni Award of Distinction - 2014

Christian Medical College Alumni Association

Mrs. Susan Abraham

Mrs. Susan Abraham first came to Vellore in 1960, joined Vidyalayam as a teacher in 1966 and was the principal for 18 years from 1973 to 1991. Although Vidyalayam did not have posh buildings to rave about, its modest, homely buildings housed children whose parents were from different walks of life.

A good school has at its core a strong leader and Mrs. Abraham fulfilled this role with distinction. She was professionally competent with impeccable integrity, adept at handling people and was always positive in her approach. Together with a band of dedicated teachers, the fledgling school was nurtured and transformed not just into “a place of learning” but into a haven where children enjoyed coming to school and could learn and grow in a secure and harmonious environment. The education imparted was holistic and value based. Equal opportunities were given to each child to achieve his or her maximum potential. The goal was not to churn out good students but rather well rounded individuals.

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way”; this succinctly sums up Mrs. Abraham’s role in Vidyalayam. She had a vision for the school and worked diligently to bring it to fruition and ensured that her colleagues did too; but most importantly she showed the way by example. She firmly believed that her actions had a far greater impact than her words.

She demonstrated the quintessential qualities of an ideal leader. She never lost her temper, and had the ability to stay calm in difficult situations. Her serenity instilled confidence in parents, teachers and children. She inspired others to give of their best, often by motivating and encouraging them. Her faith was an integral part of her persona and this is what kept her grounded and humble. She inspired hope, ignited the imagination and challenged everyone she interacted with to make this world a better place.

She was a great role model for her students and her colleagues, and always acted in the best interests of the school. She never compromised on principles and always upheld honest and ethical behaviour. As a principal she was always warm and approachable to the extent that children often talked with her through the window of her office. She was never too busy to listen to other people’s woes or problems; even children’s quarrels where she was both judge and jury. Mrs. Abraham was an embodiment of motherly love, gentleness, elegance and a loving

disciplinarian not only to the hundreds of her students, the campus kids but also to the parents of the children.

What is etched in the memory of parents is that their children were in the safe hands of teachers who loved and cared for each of the children, irrespective of the status of the parents- a quality which was passed on to them by their revered Principal, Mrs Jacob Abraham. Her world revolved around her children and this she undoubtedly considered as her greatest wealth. She saw the children of Vidyalayam, every single one of them, as models of creativity and charm and tirelessly helped to mould and build them up to produce individuals who were secure and ready to master the many challenges that lay ahead.

There were many times when desperate parents approached her at odd hours and in all those years she handled their emotional needs with her patience, gentleness, understanding and tireless listening. Never once did the children complain of being ridiculed or admonished even when they performed poorly. Many were the instances when Mrs. Abraham advised parents to let the children be themselves and to grant them the encouragement to let the gifts of their imagination shine.

Countless are the number of students who would seek out their beloved principal, their first guru to offer their 'gurudakshina' as a token of their respect, love and gratitude at this important phase in their lives.

Mrs. Abraham perhaps has not built edifices in her life time nor has she been the recipient of coveted awards. Yet today, when the children - her children whom she nurtured with abundant and unconditional love as they took their initial steps in life, stand on a dais and speak confidently or face difficult situations with courage and fortitude, some leading quiet lives, some becoming famous and some receiving awards of repute, what stands out is that most of them have become good human beings, having emulated their beloved teacher and principal.

The alumni association joins the CMC community in thanking Mrs. Abraham for her many years of service and commitment in the field of education, particularly for having taught our children what no amount of money can buy; and is proud to honour her with the Alumni Award for the year 2014.