

'The Best Part of My Life'

Missionary Kids Hostel evokes fond memories

Many missionaries struggle to find accredited educational opportunities for their children in the places where they serve. Missionary Kids Hostel (MKH) started for this reason. It provides boarding for the children of missionaries so that they can attend NIEA's Nav Bharat Mission School (NBM), an accredited Christian school in northeastern India.

Sunita Hansda teaches 5- and 6-year-old students at NBM. She is also an alumna; her parents were missionaries, so she started there when she was the same age as her students now. She remembers making good friends whom she both learned from and had fun with. She also learned practical skills like washing clothes and making her bed.

"My hostel became my second home where I learned discipline and the courage to take up responsibilities," Sunita says.

The living situation also encouraged spiritual formation. Students in the hostel participated in morning and evening devotions, prayer groups and fellowship meetings. They were also encouraged to participate in Sunday worship activities and to talk about how God was at work in their lives.

The staff working in the hostel created disciplined routines for studying. They and some of the older students helped younger students study for exams.

"I am indebted to them for their help in my academic progress," Sunita says.

While living at MKH, Sunita developed character values like punctuality, honesty and respect for elders. These became foundational to her growth in participating



Sunita Hansda teaches math for lower grades, and is pursuing a graduate college education in mathematics while also training with the government of Bihar to be a professionally qualified teacher.

in community.

"Living with others helped me to learn the benefits of mutual help, mutual communication and building healthy relationships," she says.

Children came from many different families and communities but lived together at the hostel in unity and equality. Sunita describes it as "unity in diversity," a key to broadening her outlook. At NBM, missionary children learn together with local children, many of whom belong to the Musahar, Santali, Mandal and Yadav people groups.

"Looking back, I would say the days I spent in the hostel were the best part of my life," she says. "I am what I am today because of the careful upbringing I had in the Missionary Kids Hostel. What a great blessing!"

Hundreds of students like Sunita have stayed in MKH, enabling their parents to serve as missionaries while their children received a good education in a godly atmosphere. Nav Bharat Mission School was established in 2008 by New India Evangelistic Association (NIEA). As of 2018 it had nearly 800 students, eight grades and a team of about 25 teachers and staff. The educational program includes academics which are compliant with India's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) as well as Bible training, physical education and character formation classes.



The Missionary Kids Hostel today.