KatalysTrends

Katalyst
winds of change

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HIGHLIGHTS – KATALYST POOJAPRAKASH GOES TO CORNELL

Our focus has always been to promote excellence among individuals by giving access to higher professional education, improving the quality of life for women from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. We have established a successful track record of identifying and supporting meritorious girls from economically challenged backgrounds across diverse professional courses and honing them to become go getters. One such excellent example is Katalyst Pooja who has managed to push the bar higher for other Katalysts to emulate, by becoming the first Katalyst to get admission at Cornell for her MS in Engineering

Pooja hails from an economically challenged family as her mother single handedly brought her up after her father deserted the family. She is motivated to carve a unique niche for herself by studying very well hence she has always been a topper, she obtained 96% in PCM (Physics, Chemistry, Maths) and an overall 91.16% in the decisive 2nd PU exam. In the Common Entrance Test conducted by the Karnataka Govt. for entrance to engineering courses, she got a rank of 175 among 3 lakh students who had written the exam. She also got a 480th state rank in the AEEE examination.

She was adopted into the Katalyst fold when she took up Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science at R. V. College of Engineering, Bangalore which is one among the best Engineering institutions in Karnataka and India. In Pooja's words;

"With Katalyst's help I performed consistently in every semester of the course and obtained a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 9.42 at the end of the course. Along with academics, I was involved in other activities like being the Mozilla Campus representative and Microsoft Student Partner to name a few. I was involved in evangelizing these technology among students in our college. Katalyst has given me opportunities to expand my intellect by visiting new places, meeting new people and gaining new experiences in addition to financial support. It has helped me develop my personality as a whole. As part of Katalyst, I visited Goa with my peers for an educational trip. Staying at a five star resort and getting to know how life is, on the other side of society made me want to work harder to reach my goal. Also, as part of Katalyst, I visited Nataraja Gurukula, an adventure academy on the outskirts of Bangalore. It was a brilliant experience! We did rock climbing, rappelling, trekking, and various other adventurous activities. It made me realize that having fun is also an important part of life. "

Pooja (first from the left) with other Katalysts at their farewell party after engineering.

She did a 4 month internship in Cisco and then moved on to become a Software Engineer in Yahoo, and has been for the past 10 months now working in the Cloud and Platform Group at Yahoo.

She further says of Katalyst *"Attending the various personality development sessions and talking to many people at Katalyst enabled me to look at the myriad opportunities that await me and opened me to a whole new world out there. With a desire to study, learn and research further, I wrote the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) which is an entrance test for students intending to pursue Master of Science (MS) programs abroad. I got a score of 1410/1600 and 4.0/6.0 in the English essay. Also in the English proficiency test TOEFL I obtained a score of 113/120. Then I applied and obtained an admission offer to pursue Master of Engineering in Computer Science at Cornell University which is one among the best schools for Computer Science.*

I have finished my studies with the help of Katalyst and in a way it has been a foundation stone for my success till today."

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MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

We believe education gives knowledge whereas a good mentor moulds attitudes. Till date, we have aligned all the Katalyst students to mentors, who have been interacting on a regular basis. We have designed a mentor & Katalyst interaction tracker to help us consolidate information about the mentoring and fine tune the mentoring program.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Our vision is to inspire and attract more Katalysts to become technological leaders. We want to do this by integrating science and engineering students with professionals in their fields. We have been regularly holding events in the past that has helped them by providing academic and career assistance. To succeed in this endeavour we want Katalysts to regularly interact with more professionals in the fields so as to enlarge their opportunities of work experience. We need your help to fulfill our objectives by helping us get guest speakers, especially women, who have made it to the top despite all odds. Please do get in touch with us with your suggestions of names of possible speakers.

Pooja (first from left) and other Katalysts

At Katalyst we take our mission of economic empowerment of women very seriously and hence we have decided to financially support Pooja Prakash to complete her Master of Engineering course at Cornell University. We believe our support to her will have a positive, lasting and sustainable impact on her and through Katalysts like her we are committed to facilitating meaningful change in the country.

WOMEN'S DAY

On 7th March, Honeywell Automation celebrated Women's Day at their office in Pune. They have been supporting five students from Pune. Katalyst students were invited for lunch at their office in Hadapsar, Senior women in the organization came forward to be mentors to the Katalyst students, the mentee and the mentors had the ice breaking session over lunch.

Later followed the Women's Day celebration along with the other women from Honeywell. The chief guest was Renuka Krishna - VP, Talent Search & Development, KPIT Cummins. Her talk was very motivating and encouraging for all those who were present.

Katalyst students were called on the stage and felicitated; they played games with the other employees. All of them had a good time on early evening well spent.

TREK TO LOHEGAD FORT AND BHAJE CAVES

The trekking route to Lohegad is easy and is an ideal 'I at trek experience' with picturesque scenery, lush green grass, cool mountain air, and the pleasant salubrious climate. Lohegad is an ideal one day trek because of its ease and accessibility thanks to the local trains.

The trek was organized by Swati Vajpaiee, taking time off from Phd. studies. She has been on several such treks. It was very nice of her to take the Katalyst students for this adventurous experience.

Avisha Mehra volunteered to be part of this trek. She took the responsibility as a team leader. She interacted with the students and helped the students complete the trek in the stipulated time

The learnings from this enjoyable trek - Explore, Learn and Review

Time management – following schedule

Team building – helping eachother to achieve objective

Leadership – communicating team members, planning

Resource management – managing water, food etc., carrying necessities in backpack.

FACILITY TOUR TO SYMANTEC SECURITY LAB

Katalyst students from Pune had the opportunity to visit the Symantec office, at the auditorium core team from their office spoke to the Katalyst students on various aspects related to their area of work. Students gathered a lot of information on Symantec Operations Global. The students had circulated questions prior to their visit, they were more than satisfied with the response that they got for their queries'.

The visit to the facility Response Lab was just fascinating, where they saw how the Norton Software is developed. How Norton system protects its users from illegal sites. Thus provide security when users connect to external devices like pen drive, CD-drives to their computer and protection against cyber crime.

The CD given to every student will help them protect their data on the PCs. This was really thoughtful.

Our special thanks to the SWAH group of ladies who were present and shared their experiences with the Katalyst students and to those who came forward as mentors to the Katalyst students.

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