

KG and Nursery Elections at SMILE “A Furry and Feathered Contest”

“Children learn to make good decisions by making decisions, not following directions” - **Alfie Kohn**



In a delightful display of 'Participatory Democracy', School elections were held at Santa Maria Integrated Learning Environment (SMILE) for children of Nursery and KG classes on 16 February 2024. The candidates weren't typical politicians but rather charming creatures from the animal kingdom. The contenders included Ladli, our school goat; Meenakshi, the parrot in our campus; the buzzing Honey Bees; and the Squirrel we lovingly called Squeaky. The election buzzed with excitement and showcased the students' engagement in a unique learning experience.



Children began understanding about rights and responsibilities during Republic day celebrations at School and soon after started discussing all about “making choices”, during class discussions and circle time.

The campaigning period was filled with enthusiasm as children passionately advocated for their favourite candidates. Adorned with colourful posters, the school walls echoed with cheers for Ladli, chirps for Meenakshi, buzzing for the honey bees, and the scurry of tiny feet for the squirrel. The fervour continued for 3 weeks, with students discussing the qualities of their preferred animals and understanding the importance of expressing their choices.

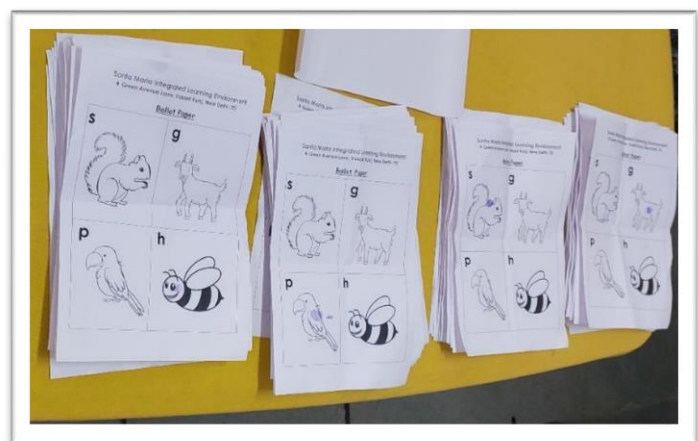


The teachers, in collaboration with parents, prepared voter ID cards for the children, making them feel like active participants in the democratic process. Parents played a vital role as election officers, volunteering their time to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections. The ballot papers featured adorable pictures of the animals, making the voting experience both educational and enjoyable for the young students.





On the day of the elections, each child proudly displayed their voter ID cards, ready to exercise their right to vote. Children joyfully put their thumbprint on the picture of the animal they wanted to vote for, showcasing their creativity and adding a personal touch to the process. The election officers marked their index finger after they had voted. After folding their ballot paper, the children solemnly dropped it in a specially designed ballot box, emphasizing the importance of confidentiality in voting.

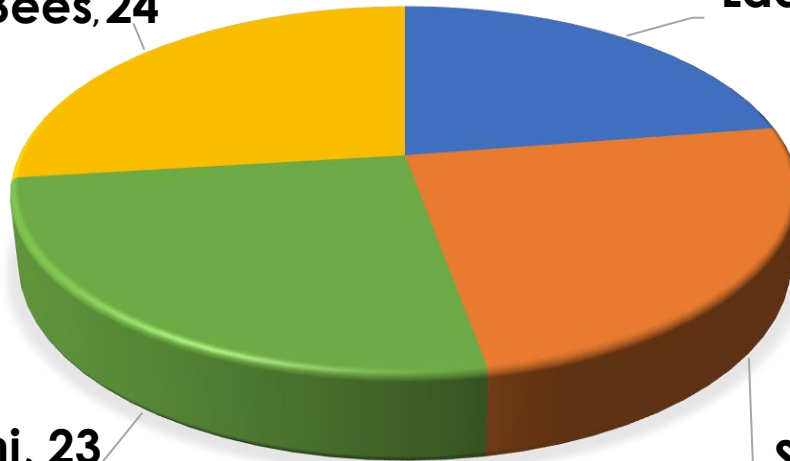


After the elections, the task of counting the votes fell upon the dedicated election officers. The meticulous process ensured fairness and transparency. The final count revealed a closely contested race with the honey bees emerging victorious with 24 votes.

VOTES TALLY

THE WINNER
Honey Bees, 24

Ladli, 20



Meenakshi, 23

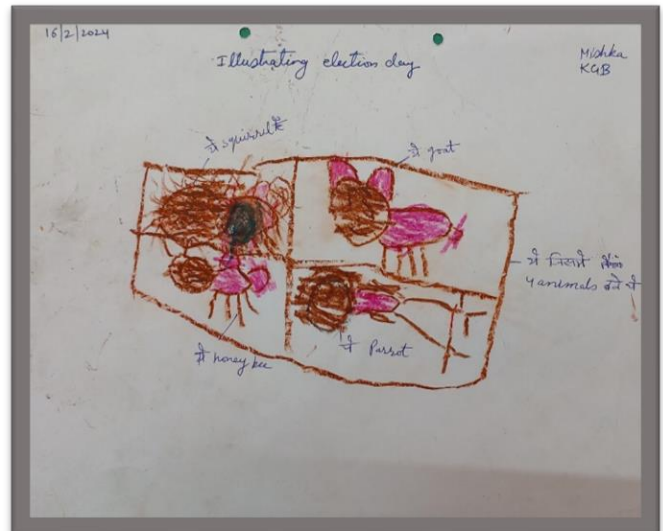
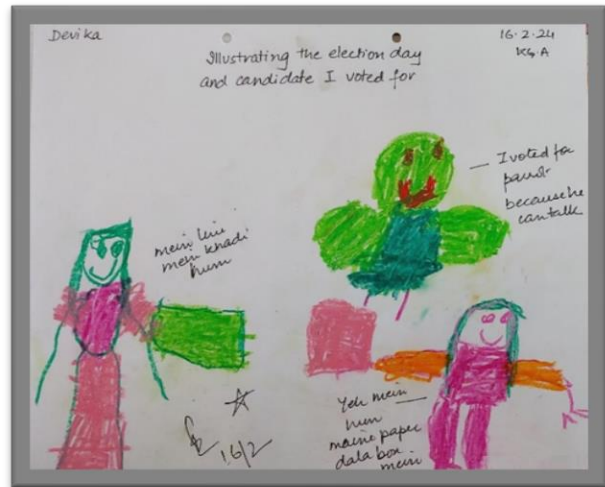
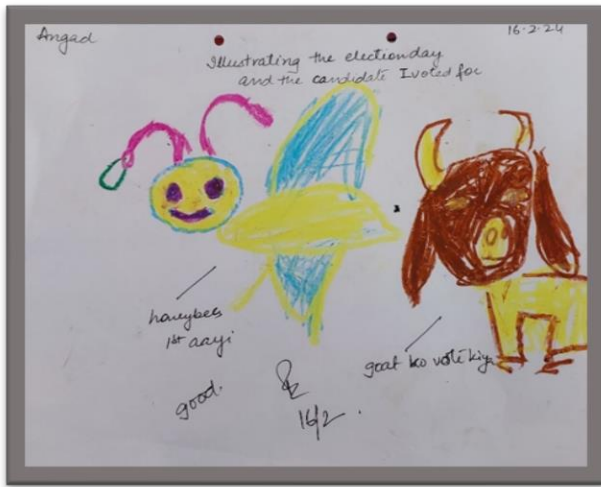
Squirrel, 22

The announcement of the winners was met with fanfare, as cheers and applause echoed through the assembly hall. The honey bees, despite being small in size, emerged as the popular choice among the young voters. The winners were celebrated, and each participant received recognition for their spirited efforts during the election period.



SMILE's unique approach to conducting elections not only provided an engaging and memorable experience for the children but also imparted essential lessons about democracy, decision-making, and the importance of individual choice. This event showcased that even the youngest learners can participate in fair and just elections, laying the foundation for responsible

citizenship from an early age. The buzzing excitement of the elections left a lasting impression on the young learners as was evident in their illustrations of the day's events.



Warm regards,
S.M.I.L.E.