

AHMEDABAD HEROES

An Ahmedabad Mirror Initiative

Part of Ahmedabad Mirror's 6th anniversary celebrations, the Heroes campaign looks beyond everyday do-gooders and simple acts of kindness. This initiative will honour people or institutions that have decisively – and positively – changed Ahmedabad for the better. If you know a hero, tell us about them at www.ahmedabadmirror.com

INITIATIVE
CONDUCTING
ENVIRONMENT
EDUCATION
PROGRAMMES,
PROJECTS



Face behind it
Wricha Johari, 28
Prakshal Mehta, 28

Nominated for
Promoting
environment-friendly
practices



**GETS MY
VOTE**

Wricha and Prakshal are working for the conservation of environment. Their effort is praiseworthy.

–Malti Mehta,
former in-charge
director, EMMRC

**Know a
hero?**

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suggestion about a
hero you think
deserves to be on
our list



MANISH MISTRY

WAY-EC's initiative Pen Pals, said to be first of its kind in the world, has earned Prakshal and Wricha the coveted title of 'Global Shapers'

Instilling green values

Prakshal Mehta and Wricha Johari are promoting green culture by their innovative programmes

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The desire to see a greener world has inspired Prakshal Mehta and Wricha Johari to prepare a battery of 'agent of change'. Recognised as 'Global Shapers' by World Economic Forum for their contribution to the field of environment conservation, their brainchild World Around You - Everything Connects (WAY-EC) has been promoting green culture among masses by its innovative and interactive programmes.

After an in-depth study of 'boring and traditional' environment education programmes and awareness drives, the two started giving shape to the state's first ever three-year-long behavioural change 'communi-action' programme, WAY-EC, for students of class 5, 6 and 7. "We want to instil green values among the budding citizens. The idea is to bring permanent change in behaviour by inculcating environmental manners at tender age. This will groom them as change-makers for their local environment," said Prakshal who studied the impact of tourism on Gir National Park as part of his master's research work.

Wricha and Prakshal's dissertations, prepared while they were doing Master in Development Communication, helped them understand environment education and conservation activities. "We found people-connect missing in most environment programmes. Because it lacks innovative and interesting ideas, the green cru-

sade is often reduced to a dud affair. We try to plug in these loopholes through our initiatives that attempt to establish a link between people and the world around them," he elaborated.

From individuals to industries, students to researchers, housewives to CEOs, and NGOs to government departments, WAY-EC caters to all awakened groups and individuals who want to protect the environment.

There is no dearth of nature lovers who have conservation in their heart. But we didn't want to sit and wait. And, therefore we started to find our own WAY to realise the dream — a world full of all natural hues, said Wricha who studied the effect of outdoor environment education programmes conducted in different parts of the state.

From being classmates to partners in education, the two 2008 passouts consider themselves fortunate for being able to 'turn their passion into profession'. The two young Amdavadis also

initiated a few projects at college level that taught them how effective communication can bring a sea change in perspective of society.

Neha, a student who attended WAY-EC's batch 1, said: "My mother is thankful to the WAY programme as we now know the importance of saving electricity. We switch off the television and other appliances when they are not being used."

WAY-EC's initiative Pen Pals, said to be first of its kind in the world, has earned Prakshal and Wricha the coveted title of 'Global Shapers'. They have conceptualised, designed and hand-crafted utility products from thrown-away plastic pens. The initiative has got unexpected response at all levels, said Wricha who has presented the project to the just-concluded WEF's annual meeting in Davos.

They target to collect 50,00,000 discarded pens from schools, colleges and offices to hand-craft utility products from these pens with the help of local women groups and artisans.

Shopping for the planet is another unique idea, WAY-EC has floated. The programme has been designed to increase people's participation in reducing and reusing lifestyle wastes in simpler ways. The event will invite nearly 3,000 underprivileged kids and collect thousands of reusable waste items from permanent collection points.

While Wricha has worked with premier organisations like CEE and EMMRC, Prakshal too had a stint at CEE, WWF and EMMRC.

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