

Press Release
Open House Event
“Inspiring Young Minds”
As a part of Golden Jubilee Celebrations at IIT Kanpur
IIT Kanpur, 8th February, 2010

IIT Kanpur (IITK), as a part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations, organized a mega event “Open House: Inspiring Young Minds” on Feb. 8th, 2010. As it is clear from the theme itself, the main aim behind the event was to enthuse young minds towards exciting areas of Science and Technology. What can be more appropriate than these young minds getting a direct opportunity to interact with eminent faculty members, researchers, students of this world class premier research and educational institute of India. Indeed, that was the main spirit behind the Open House. Here, it is worth to mention that it is only for the second time in the history of IITK that such a community outreach event has been planned. The first event took place during the Silver Jubilee celebrations, 25 years ago.

Around 4500 higher secondary students (Class 9-12th Std.) from 50 schools of the Kanpur city were invited for this mega event along with their school teachers. The children arrived in their school buses in three time slots 9:30am, 10:30am and 12:00 noon respectively. Once they reported at the welcome desk, groups of 20 children each were made, who were under the constant guidance of a post-graduate student volunteer throughout their academic tour of the campus. The 1200 acre large campus was primarily divided into two zones: Academic Area and Non-Academic Area. Each group spent a minimum of about two hours in each zone. Inside academic areas, these children were given an exposure and taken on a guided tour of departmental laboratories, with state of the art research facilities along with hi-tech computer center, central library and central workshops. Brief demonstration of the major facilities was given by the IITK students and faculty coordinators to these young minds, who were full of enthusiasm during this whole visit. For these future IITians, it was an opportunity to closely explore about IIT system and get a real feel of not only brick and mortar but state of the art technological developments talking place. Further, these students spent a significant time in poster session which was specially arranged in the main Auditorium Ground by all departments to showcase their current research activities and the importance of their specialization. Various exhibitions were also witnessed by these young students which were organized in the campus. Amongst major attractions included. IIT Kanpur History Exhibition, Hindi Cell stall, NPTEL stall and Student Gymkhana stall. Shiksha Sopan, an IITK based NGO, also put up a stall in SAC displaying some basic sciences experiments explaining many basic scientific concepts and science awareness programs. To give the students a complete exposure to all aspects of development, Health Center of the institute, in association with Adolescence Society, Kanpur and Raptakoss Brett and Co. had organized an Exhibition on Adolescent Health Issues in the Media Center of IITK. The theme was ‘Yuva Bharat- Swstha Bharat’ (Young India-Healthy India), a very appropriate one of course, keeping in mind the age of participating students in Open House event. The visit to this health exhibition seemed to reverberate their thought-process, including their teachers, to initiate pondering on the intricate issues related to adolescents. In the series of this visit, organizers have attempted to give a flavor of IIT Kanpur hostel life to these young students. The tour included visit to Hall of Residence VII and VIII where the visitors directly interacted with the IITK students directly. Finally, an hour movie was screened in the Main Auditorium for all the children in three slots giving a glimpse of the historical development of the institute. At the time of good bye, all children were distributed an environmentally souvenir gift, sponsored by the Alumni Association of IIT Kanpur. Success of the event may also be evaluated by the fact that even after spending five hours in the campus, the young students showed no sign of tiredness. The excitement levels of the children were very high. As expected, all children were so enthusiastic and happy by this opportunity and got impressed with the overall environment.

“To reach out to the community and to give a first-hand exposure to the senior school students so that they get inspired to take up careers in Science and Technology was one of the objectives of this event”, informed Dr. Sameer Khandekar and Dr. Satyaki Roy, the main organizers. Most of these visiting students told that this visit will remain truly memorable in their life and it has really helped them in giving wings to their imagination. School teachers accompanying these children told that such visits may really inspire these young minds to shape their carrier into science and technology. Over 350 IITK students and all faculty members volunteered themselves for making such a huge event a reality.

Prof. Sameer Khandekar, Event in-Charge of the Open House told that organization of such outreach events is mutually beneficial for the campus community and the outside community. One side, some of these students will definitely get inspired for higher education and take up exciting careers in science and technology; on the other hand, IITK community will learn a lot from native curiosity and innovative and exciting questions arising during the discussions. He wished all success to these participating young minds in their future.