

November 2019

Dear Friends and Donors

Deepam's branch at Nadukupam

In Selvi's words: "On an auspicious day our outreach centre at Nadukupam was officially inaugurated. We lit oil-lamps and our older students were singing beautiful mantras. It is our ambition to serve children with special needs and their families in that rural area. There are already ten children in the 2 – 12 year age bracket, who are supported individually for various disorders and receive therapy on a regular basis. With the appropriate attention these children are visibly blooming. Jansi and Kasthuri, who are from these local villages, are enthusiastically running our new centre and are regularly supported by myself."



Transport

Our old school bus only had 12 seats and became too small to pick up our students from the further away villages. After substantial inquiries, we finally selected a 30-seater bus. Additionally, in order to save petrol we bought a mini-bus with 7 seats meant for smaller trips such as to bring children to the swimming pool or horse-riding and to pick up our lunch from a local canteen. Once again the registration process of these vehicles required a lot of patience and stamina.

Some good-byes

Jayasudha came to Deepam in 2000 as a young girl. She was born with severe cerebral palsy and lost her parents tragically when she was small. She was given daily intensive physiotherapy and finally walked her first steps at the age of 25. Jayasudha was part of Selvi's "girls-group" for many years and she was also taught handicrafts. Unfortunately she has stopped coming this year and was even misleading us when we called a few times to inquire as to why. We're disappointed with her family as she received substantial support. Usually at Deepam we say good-bye to leaving students, giving them a gift and sending them off with many good wishes for their future. We are missing Jayasudha in her wheelchair, with her beautiful big eyes and her bright smile. Hopefully she will remember her Deepam family if she is in significant need!



Nivetha came to us when she was already eight years old and spent three years with us. Her parents pleaded with us to accept their daughter who had already been at several schools that could not cope with her. Unfortunately, her family was not able to establish the positive input we could reach at Deepam in their home. We knew that she got beaten up, though we never found out what really happened. Despite a heavy prescription of medication, Nivetha remained extremely active at all times. With her continuously disruptive behaviour, Nivetha was a challenge for our group. As she is a lovely girl we wanted to give her the best chance we could, but when the smaller children started to copy her abusive words and behaviours, our team finally - with a heavy heart - came to the conclusion that Deepam was not the right place for Nivetha.

Thasin was delayed in his development so was not ready for school when he came to us. On his parents' request Thasin was with us for one year in our day-care group. At first he was hyperactive and had poor concentration, although he was socially intelligent. We concentrated on academic classes in individual sessions and now Thasin is a proud student at Aikyam School, whilst continuing to receive speech-therapy at Deepam.

Sarasu came when she was only one and a half years old and received her first hearing aids with our help. She had a long history with us, with many ups and downs due to her detrimental family circumstances. She gained a great deal from speech-therapy sessions, learned reading and writing and has become a successful tailor through our support. On 3rd November we travelled happily in our new school bus to celebrate Sarasu's traditional wedding in a crowded marriage hall with mind-bogglingly loud music. Sarasu is now 24 and has moved village to live with her husband who is also hearing impaired. We really hope that she will be happy and will continue to wear her hearing aids and make use of her electric stitching machine.



Four at a time!

Two pairs of gorgeous 3 year old twins have joined us. All four children are delayed in their development and receive physiotherapy. **Ameshini**, who was the first-born of the girls also receives speech-therapy. **Ashwanthini** was born with a short neck-muscle and therefore has a tilted head. The first born of the other pair, a girl named **Dhanyasri**, was extremely weak and so was kept in an incubator for ten days. She required cardiac follow up as well as a long process of orthopaedic treatment for her club-foot. Dhanyasri recently got accepted at the kindergarten of Aikyam School. Her brother **Dhaneshwar** is quite different. He

has a distinct squint in one eye and needs to take medication due to an epilepsy disorder. He also has behavioural issues and autistic traits, which we are now working with. Luckily these children have motivated parents who bring their children to us regularly and who also follow up on doctor visits. All four are inquisitive and we are confident that with the early intervention we provide they will be able to go far.

Ganesha

Under the guidance of our team member Babu, a few of our students have hand-crafted 450 beautiful Ganeshas out of paper. Ganesha is the elephant-headed god in Hinduism. He is one of the most worshipped gods; as creator of happiness in people's lives, he removes all obstacles and brings wisdom, success and good luck.

Our Deepam family wishes you Ganesha's blessings for the festive season and the new year to come!

Angelika Ehrle & Lawrence Selvi

