



Auroville, November 2010

Dear Friends and Donors,

During her recent visit to Germany, Angelika met with many friends and supporters of Deepam, in addition to conducting several Fund-Raising events. "I would like to thank all of you who have supported me in different ways! Deepam is supported and maintained by a beautiful and dedicated network of people. Coming back to Deepam in the beginning of July, I received a big welcome by both children and team members alike. I felt touched by the atmosphere and to see how much the Day Care Group has grown together. Our team is diverse, each of us contributing different qualifications, talents and skills, so we can cover all the responsibilities. The success of Deepam is directly related to the strength of the Deepam team."

Several children who have been with us for quite some time have left for various reasons:

Kannan is probably the most challenging child we had ever integrated into the Day Care Group. Over time, through his participation and education at Deepam, both his behaviours and skill levels improved dramatically. While attending Deepam, Kannan was living in his uncle's house. After a visit to his parent's village, he did not return to school. We were told that Kannan now roams the village unsupervised, and we can only hope that whatever he has received at Deepam, he has retained and it continues to live within him like a seed.

Nathiya, after a great deal of individual work, has been moved into mainstream schooling. This is a tremendous accomplishment and we will continue to support her as well as her parents and teachers.

Sarasu came to Deepam in 2001, when she was 2 years old. With our help, she acquired a much needed hearing aid. Sarasu has a long history at Deepam. Last year Sarasu suddenly disappeared without any notice or information, probably the result of family financial difficulties. We are quite sure that due to the cost of batteries, which we had provided before, Sarasu is no longer able to use her hearing aid. As this letter was being prepared, Sarasu and her mother appeared back at Deepam. Sarasu almost a head taller, received a warm welcome. She had lost her hearing aid. The Deepam team met and agreed that Sarasu would be permitted to return to Deepam after a two week waiting period.

Currently there are 25 children and youth enrolled at Deepam receiving developmentally appropriate academic education, occupational-, speech, physiotherapy, creative expression, daily living and social skills. There are several new students we would like to introduce:

Devi, a 7 year old girl with developmental delays is unable to cope in the mainstream schools. Although still a bit shy and nervous, Devi is visibly blooming within the developmentally appropriate, supportive and nurturing environment at Deepam.

Dharini came back to Deepam at the age of 12 after several years in an outside school. Dharini who is also developmentally delayed, was behind her peers in all academic areas, and is now just able to write her name. In the mainstream school there was no appropriate help for her. At the age of 2, Dharini had already received physiotherapy at Deepam. She is also taking strong anti-epilepsy medications, which produce at times, unusual behaviours. The Deepam staff closely monitors and supervises Dharini to better understand how to support her development.



Nandini first came to Deepam for physiotherapy when she was nine months old. She did not have a smooth start in life. Her mother while pregnant with Nandini, attempted suicide by burning herself with kerosene. For months, while pregnant with Nandini, her mother was hospitalized with profound burns. As a result, Nandini was born prematurely with multiple disabilities. Since we have known her, Nandini has been undernourished and suffers from intestinal parasites. Now 7 years old, Nandini is mature enough to join step-by-step our Day-Care program. Significantly delayed in her development, training her to use the toilet on her own is still an enormous challenge. Nandini loves to be in the group with children and is making steady progress. With her shiny eyes and happiness, she is a ray of sunshine here at Deepam.

We would like to introduce two members of the Deepam team whom we are incredibly proud of, and grateful for their hard work and dedication. As young boys, both had suffered from polio, which has left their leg muscles weak and resulted in walking difficulties.

Gopal comes from a far away village. Although he travels by scooter from an hour away, he is the first to arrive at Deepam each day. Gopal has infinite patience with the children and is an absolutely reliable employee and team member, sharing in all the responsibilities. We do not know what we would do without him.

Kalaimani comes from the Kulapalayam village where Deepam started in 1992 as a small project under the trees. When he was little he came after school to our playground for physiotherapy exercises. We kept him in our memory as a skinny, friendly boy who did headstands. This past August, Kalaimani came back at the age of 26, simply asking if he could join the Deepam team for work. He has been trained as a lab technician, but after a friend had died next to him in a road accident, he no longer wanted to continue in that profession. Kalaimani came first on a trial basis and integrated smoothly with both the children and the team. He is very helpful in the education of the children and where ever he is needed. We all feel Kalaimani belongs with us!

More about some of our team members and children is on our website: www.deepam-auroville.in

*Friends are like stars.
Even though you do not see them,
they are always there!*

We would like to thank all of you for your support in this year
and would like to send you best wishes for Christmas and the New Year
from our children and team members at Deepam!

Angelika Ehrle

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V. Lawrence Selvi..

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