

Auroville, April 2011

Dear friends and donors,



This year because of the longer monsoon, we had to post-pone our annual outing with the children to the end of January. The main attraction was the world-famous Crocodile Farm at Mahabalipuram. Hundreds of crocodiles - some of them almost extinct in their natural environment - are bred there. Even more fascinating for our kids were the native poisonous snakes such as the King-Cobra and different types of vipers, which we meet sometimes where we live, especially at night. From a safe distance one could watch with dread how their poison was extracted for the production of anti-venom. For the picnic we had delicious tamarind-rice which was prepared early morning at Deepam, thanks to our cooking crew. The children were the whole day just gorgeous and happy, especially the smallest ones who joined us for the first time on such an outing jumped around with joy. During the bus-ride there was singing, drumming and even dancing. What a beautiful, social event to share together for our team and children alike!

A difficult decision at the beginning of this year was to send off our driver, who had become increasingly unreliable in his work for some time. As our children come from far-out villages the driver is in the morning the first to start and in the evening the last to return. Presently we have a driver from a travel-shop who has often helped us out in the past, whenever we had trouble with our van or when the regular driver was absent. Now three of our big boys have taken over the garden work, which our driver was supposed to do before. We have taught them how to put mulch around the plants and they can experience how the ground stays moist and how the plants grow beautifully without a



lot of watering. In the morning the boys write their names in an attendance register and they get pocket-money and also a monthly contribution on their own saving account. We are really proud of our boys who start to take up responsibility!

Palani, who now has been working for almost ten years at Deepam, talks about his work: "I am trained as a Multiple Purpose Rehabilitation Technician. In the first years, the focus of my work was more on giving physiotherapy to the children. Since 2003, we successfully developed the day care program, with lots of social and educational activities for the children and I discovered that I love to teach. We had to learn how to teach our children in a creative, visible and practical way, so as to offer them skills for their daily life, including some reading, writing and maths. In 2009 I got the opportunity to go for training, offered in 2x2 weeks over a period of 3 years at Camphill Bangalore. This training is based on Anthroposophy, the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and we learn about curative education. There I can gain insight and learn practical exercises which help me to go deeper in my work. The children who have attention deficit disorders respond very well to these gentle exercises for the body and the soul and to the painting and guided drawing exercises. Myself as well as the children are enjoying these sessions!"

It's the third year that we have volunteers with the "Weltwärts-Programme" of the German Government. A total of 16 volunteers came to Auroville to participate in different projects for a full year. Sophie and Sabine who joined Deepam in September integrated fast and have been extremely helpful and committed.

In the past year several smaller children, who are weak in all their skills, have been integrated into the day care group. They indeed need a lot of extra help for almost everything. We would like to thank our team members and volunteers for their tremendous patience and all their creative ideas to keep this group of 25 children and youth meaningfully occupied throughout the day.

Our children and our team members would like to send you many greetings and best wishes from South India,

Angelika Ehrle & Lawrence Selvi

Please keep us informed if your postal or E-Mail address changes!

See also our website: <http://www.deepam-auroville.in>

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