



Auroville, May 2013

Dear friends and donors,

The weather has become unpredictable! Last year we had a devastating cyclone – and now it has not rained for the last 6 months. Except for a few days of heavy rains at the end of October the **monsoon failed completely**. We do not remember such a dry year-end. The tropical summer has set in early and there are water shortages and crops lost in many places. Here we fully depend on groundwater which has to be pumped from deep down and is only restored during the monsoon.

In October there was **an epidemic of dengue fever** in the region. **Sarasu**, one of our girls, suddenly got a high fever and started vomiting blood while at Deepam. We took her to the hospital where she was admitted to the intensive care unit after falling into a coma due to haemorrhages and loss of blood cells. The paediatric doctor, who is known to us, took excellent care of her. He and his team saved her life! Sarasu, who is now fifteen, has a profound hearing loss and has been with us at Deepam since she was one and a half years old. Thanks to the help of a very kind visitor, we were recently able to purchase **two powerful digital hearing aids** for Sarasu. The visitor, who had first brought a donation from a friend of hers that covered one hearing aid, returned to Germany just before Christmas. Once there, she decided to cut down on the gifts for her family members and sent us the amount required for a second hearing aid for Sarasu. We all felt touched! Sarasu is full of pride as she wears her new hearing aids. This year, Sarasu started to attend the program at Life Education Centre where local girls are **trained in embroidery, tailoring and skills for life** twice a week. Sarasu was quickly integrated and is well accepted by the other girls.

Hema is now nine and has a moderate hearing loss. She attended our day-care for two years and has received many special classes. Hema has received **high quality hearing aids** thanks to a lovely woman who has a hearing aid shop in Germany. Last year, Hema began attending Aikyam Primary School and is doing well. In the afternoons we continue to help her with speech therapy and her home work.

Jayasudha, who was born with cerebral palsy, **made her first steps at the age of twenty-eight**. She cannot coordinate her spastic muscles properly and is bound to a wheelchair. During her childhood she did not receive physiotherapy. Her father was sick and died at an early age. When Jayasudha was nine years old, her mother caught fire and burned to death while lighting the stove to cook food. The mother in law had intentionally put petrol into the kerosene stove. Years later, Jayasudha was able to attend our day care program. She received intensive physiotherapy, learned reading and writing and also learned to do some handicrafts. Because she had to do some baby-sitting for her sister who was working, she was only able to come to Deepam irregularly for several years. It has only been in the past months that Jayasudha has been able to attend the program daily and we have been able to provide intensive physiotherapy. Recently - with the help of callipers attached with a tight belt around her hips - Jayasudha has been able to practice walking in the parallel bars with a huge smile on her face!

Construction work of the caretakers' apartment started in February 2012. We continued with the **renovation work** on the old part of our building that stretched out until March 2013. This was a



demanding time with constant noise, dust and workers around us. Despite these challenges our team managed to keep up the good work for our children. Finally, we now have **enough rooms available** for the essential therapy sessions and educational classes. One room is reserved for vocational training activities for the older students, such as candle-making and wood-work. One room is equipped for speech therapy, another for physiotherapy. The upstairs room is kept for quiet work such as massage and there is now also a computer to teach some of our students basic PC skills.

Our **annual outing** with the children took us to the **world-famous Crocodile Bank** in Mahabalipuram, where different kinds of crocodiles are bred. Explanations were given about what they eat, how big and how old they become and how many eggs they lay. We were also able to watch how venom was extracted from the locally found snakes for anti-venom production, which can be life-saving after a snakebite. Fourteen-year old Perisamy was out for such a tour for the first time ever in his wheel-chair; we were extremely touched to have him with us. Our children were happy and content and the bus vibrated with laughter, singing, dancing and drumming.

In April, **our team** spent a few days **in Kerala**. We spent a wonderful time at the beach, on the backwaters with a boat and in the mountains where tea, coffee and spices are grown. This was the only time in the year when we took a longer break and closed Deepam for some days, as our children need the meals, the health-care and the exercises.

Selvi writes: I feel blessed to have had the chance - together with my colleague Palani - to attend a **training in “Curative Education and Social therapy”** conducted at a Camphill community in Bangalore/India. Twenty-five adults with special needs are living there on a small compound together, as a family, with a Dutch-Indian couple who are in charge of this lovely place. Over a period of three years we have spent two weeks twice a year there. Our friendly and patient tutors came from India and Europe and we got insight into the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. Through painting, singing, various vocational trainings and the movements of Eurythmy we received useful tools which we can apply at Deepam with our students. As I am working with hearing impaired children I chose for my final report the topic: **“How to work with the emotions of hearing-impaired children and adolescents?”** With two of our adolescent girls from Deepam who wear hearing aids, I worked with drawings and drama to make them express emotions such as being happy, sad, angry, frustrated or scared. This was very intense and I found new ways to communicate better with these girls. I myself have grown a lot during these three years of training courses and the exposure to the concept of Anthroposophy.

We hope you enjoy our new flyer.

You can find more info on: <http://www.deepam-auroville.in>

Many greetings from South-India from our children and our team-members at Deepam,
Lawrence Selvi & Angelika Ehrle

