October 2013, all the classes were working with the earth module. While for the Lkg, Ukg it is about playing with sand and making snakes and balls with clay, for the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} it means learning about the variety of animals, birds and plants in puvidham and at home on their own farm. For the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} it was an exploration of making colours from flowers, leaves, soil, charcoal and ash which they used for painting their concept drawings of the stories and poems they learnt. For the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} it was learning about medicinal plants and trees and using wood to make toys like tops, gulli danda, push toys attached to long sticks and small puzzles. The 7\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th} studied National parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and The Bio-reserves of India.

The children from 5\textsuperscript{th} to 8\textsuperscript{th} were invited to Chennai by Selvaraj Ayya of The Siddha Consciousness Research Foundation to put up their exhibition called “MAN MADE GOD or GOD MADE MAN”. The exhibition aims at rethinking the concept of God. The children explain the origin of the earth and slowly put forth the idea that the images of god that are largely worshiped are not god. God is the energy from which all creation was made and therefore exists in each living and nonliving thing in the universe. It concludes with the message that if we want to worship god we must work ourselves away from consumerism and take from the earth only what we need and not waste its resources for undue comfort which generates disease for the body, soul and the earth itself!

Meenakshi was honoured by The Theosophical Society of Dhanmapuri at a meet organized for the popularization of traditional medicine. The meeting was centered on the practice of Auto Urine Therapy as a traditional practice for the maintenance of good health and the freedom from modern medicine which is more harmful than useful. Meenakshi gave a talk on how she began AUT and how it has served as a means to free, completely reliable and omnipresent medicine which has no negative side effects at all. For which we do not have to know the name of the virus or the disease to be able to cure it. Four of the students of Puvidham Learning Centre, Annakili, Velmurgan, Shanmugham and Pavitra, who have been cured of asthma, endocrine gland dysfunction, high intermittent fever for a period of 3 months and one sided headache respectively also shared their experiences with the audience. We have been practicing AUT for the past 22 years. Our school and hostel children use AUT in combination with other herbal medicines to heal themselves. Two visitors from Auroville, James and Yumi who also practice AUT heard about our practices and spent one week sharing their own experience with the children.
They also gave us a copy of the book called “Your Own Perfect Medicine” by the Canadian Dietician Martha Christie. James also taught the children juggling.

A group of artists from Chennai, came to puvidham at the behest of Suresh Kumar, the manager of The South Indian Bank Dharmapuri and Geetha, his better half.

We also invited children from nearby government schools to participate in the work shop. Children from Babymardanahalli, Nadapatti, Pudur and Gandhi Sevalayam at Palacode came. Totally around 100 children from the nearby schools participated in the three day workshop. They learnt how to do paper cutting, making masks was one major attraction, there was theatre and dancing, playing music on the traditional thapatti, and claywork. On the third day guests were invited and a performance was staged exhibiting the paper cutting, the masks and their dances and dramas. The emphasis was on using waste material and other locally available resources to make art an everyday activity in the lives of the children. Even the youngest child Marimuthu was included and performed his part very graciously.

We were all amazed by them and would like to express our gratitude to Ezhilarasan – (Sculpturist, Interior designer, Ceramic terracotta, Paper mashes works), Chitra – (Painter), Gunasekar – (Artist, Painter, Sculpturist, Agrolic and oil painting and water colour paintings), Sekar –( kirigomi), Arogya jenifer – (folk artist- Paduga dance, Kollatam, kummi, sakkai kuchi aatam, Oyillatam), Vaiyampatti ayya – (Lyric artist), Sentamilselvan – (Folk artist-Kavadi karagam kummi), Kadhir – (mime artist, short film maker and theater artist), Vishnu – (Theatre and mime artist, short film maker and guitarist), Poorna sundhar – (Theater artist, dancer, specialist in Accupuncture), Satheesh (kadhai solli, theatre artist) for making those three days very memorable.

In November Meenakshi attended a 5 day workshop on Life Based Open Learning Resource Generation Organized by the Nai Talim Samiti in collaboration with Seva gram Wardha and Azim Premji University in Ahemdabad. It was an exercise in looking back at Mahatma Gandhiji’s idea of education while working and creating products that are useable including work like farming, construction, carpentry, tree planting and conservation, water harvesting and waste management etc. It was a heartening to see that finally there was beginning to be an idea among a vast body of people that nothing can be learnt without doing work which creates usable products. There is no need to goad children to memorize if they are using their mind to solve problems while making things and doing work. The idea of Work Based Education as visualized by the Nai Talim way of learning can be liberalized and practiced in all schools without the emphasis on the sale of the products supporting the school as was desired by Gandhiji.

Meenakshi was invited to give a talk on the changes that need to be incorporated in to Bangalore in the CITIZEN ART DAYS organized by the students of Srushhi Design Centre at Bangalore. She was able to share the work that is being done at puvidham towards freeing education from the shackles of memory and liberating the children through meaningful work, free thought and purposeful action towards maintaining their surroundings and their relationship with nature!

Do look us up at www.puvidham.org or come to Puvidham. If you would like to foster one or more children or contribute to any of the activities, do contact us at puvidham@gmail.com

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