

Evening Classes for Government School Children

The evening classes have been going on more enthusiastically and are well attended. The children coming in the evening are of various groups. From June 2012, Sakthivel, Chidambaram, Senthil, Ambika have joined Rajammal, Devaki and Anu to teach the children in the evenings. Attendance is not compulsory, so our numbers vary from 15 to 60 each day. During the day we have regular preparatory sessions for the teachers to learn the content and plan the evening sessions. Most of the sessions are activity based learning sessions though there are classroom teaching sessions as well for some concepts.



This year we started filing all the children's work more methodically. Each child has a file and all his/her work is filed there by the child. So that at the end of the year one can see what the child has accomplished.

During this academic year, sessions were held on

- ♣ Basic languages - Tamil and English comprehension, reading and writing
- ♣ Math activities
- ♣ Science experiments
- ♣ Music
- ♣ Dance and Drama
- ♣ Art and Craft
- ♣ Practical skills

❖ Life skills

❖ Basic health education

Total number of children who used the facilities this year: 167

Average attendance every evening: 33

Besides the regular group coming, other children come from time to time to refer books for some specific reason or to use the learning materials or to prepare for some specific exam or project, etc.

Health classes

Randall, a young doctor working in The Tribal Health Initiative , Sittilingi conducted sessions on oral hygiene, basic hygiene, ill effects of tobacco, good nutrition etc. on many Friday evenings through the year. Along with the senior students and Anu he put up some plays on these topics for the evening children. On one brainstorming session on Health, the children came up with almost 60 varied questions on the body and Health. Randall and the other new young doctors of the hospital have agreed to answer all these questions over the next months through classes, discussions , video and other media.

Workshops For adolescents

We did a 2 week long life skills workshop for both adolescent boys and girls in Thulir. These were not lecture sessions but were interactive and sharing sessions involving a lot of role plays, games etc. The sessions were on understanding oneself, one's strengths, needs, wants etc., relationships, communication, listening skills, conflict resolution etc. ***All of them felt these sessions were very important and necessary.***

Classes in the Government school

The Government High school in Sittilingi had got computers, projector and some laboratory materials for Chemistry and physics. The teachers were not familiar with the things and were unable to use them. So they asked us to help. Through the academic year, June 2011 to may 2012, we conducted sessions for classes 6 to 10. We conducted chemistry and Physics experiments and showed them good documentaries on our planet, space and wildlife etc.

In June the headmaster and many of the cooperative teachers were transferred. So we have been unable to go and take classes. *We hope to establish a rapport with the new staff and continue these classes with the*

children as soon as possible.

Yercaud Trip

The entire village was agog with excitement as children prepared to go on a trip with us to Yercaud. We haven't taken the younger children on a trip for quite a few years now and this has been a long drawn demand from them. We didn't expect so much excitement though! Parents and children were awake and ready from 3.30am and on the road for the hired buses to come at 5am. As luck would have it there was a stray group of elephants on the forest road to Kottapatti(An unheard of event in this area) and the buses were delayed by an hour! But everyone waited patiently and except for the widespread motion sickness all 50 children and 10 adults enjoyed the trip, especially the zoo parks in Salem enormously!

Camps conducted for students of other Schools--Sita School Visit

Jane and Santhosh brought a group of students and teachers from Sita School , Bangalore,for 3, 4 days in the beginning of August. Each group taught the other crafts they knew and they worked well together

Exchanges with Marudham Farm school

We have an ongoing and meaningful exchange program with the Marudham farm School. Teachers from both schools have been visiting each other over the year. In September, Poornima brought a group of students and teachers to Thulir. Both groups went trekking together, swam in the stream, taught each other many songs and dances and had a very good interaction.

In December, Marudham School invited a group of us for their craft week. Anu and all the young women teachers attended. Meeting similar minded people doing great work, learning various crafts like palm leaf weaving, making masks, embroidery, theatre etc. were energising.

Reviving Traditional Art

Vellachi Ammal from Thekkanampet has agreed to come and teach the children traditional music of Sittilingi valley. We were apprehensive whether students would find her music 'cool' so we decided to keep the teenagers away for the first session as they might not be interested. But their response was surprisingly positive. 50 children from age 3 to 23 remained singing and learning for 3 hours!



Cycle trips

The older boys continued their long distance cycling trips. They cycled to Payir, Thenur in June. Their cycles are old and worn out. They carry their tool kits and repair them on the ride.

CHILDREN'S CAMP- April20th -21st

There were two children's camps this year.



The first one was on Oct. 2, where the kids had a film screening abt Gandhi's life and work during the first part of it and during the second, activities were

done including improvised skits.

During the second children's camp, 30 children from the age group 6-15 camped in Thulir for 2 days and participated in intensive sessions on life skills. There were discussions, plays, songs and movies around the theme.

Sports Days



We had three sports days this calendar year! One in March, one in October organised by the Thulir team and, one in December organised by Rolf and Susan., volunteer teachers from Switzerland. All of us enjoyed them hugely and the students of course would even like to have one every month.

Participation in Running events

Over the year, the children participated in the Auroville, Cauvery and Chennai marathons. But as the year ends interest in running has reached a new high with many younger boys -10 to 15 year olds- joining in. The seniors, especially Senthil, Sakthivel and Parameswaran have taken responsibility for their training. They got the parent group too involved. This young group ran the Chennai Marathon in December and Auroville marathon in February .



They participated in the Anandayana run – a run organised by Runner's high to raise awareness about projects working for underprivileged children- in Bangalore. This was the first time younger girls were participating and the highlight was that the group of 25 travelled to the venue and back by public transport.

Rolf's classes for the older group in Carpentry, metal Work and Gas Bracing



Kolam Festival-

The Pongal Kolam festival was celebrated as usual this year too with the hospital and Thulir families participating with great enthusiasm.



Susan and Florence's classes in English

Florence from France was here for 4 weeks. She took english classes for both staff and older and younger students. She talked to students about France. Once she left, Susan continued Florence's English classes introducing new activities and Games. By the end of their stay, the entire group's confidence in English speaking had grown enormously. They could communicate with ease in English.



Sittilingi Youth Group

35 young men in the age group 18-35 got together in May 2012 and organised a cricket tournament. We supported them in this venture and encouraged them to get together for social causes too. The Sittilingi Youth club was registered. A library cum activity Centre has been started in a rented house in the village.



Clean Sittilingi/ Anti Plastic Campaign

Was the first major activity of the youth group. The staff and children of Thulir too were enthusiastic participants. We cleaned the main streets of plastic and the youth group talked to the shop owners and residents about refusing,



reducing and managing plastic wastes. They have also urged the Panchayat to help with the dustbins and daily cleaning and maintenance. Many more such campaigns are planned for this year.

The youth group presenting news paper bags to replace plastic to the shops in Sittilingi.

