

November 2018

To all Friends and Donors

Selvi was in Germany

“In the summer I made my second trip to Germany. This was only possible with the generous help of many friends. Angelika started months ahead to coordinate my trip as numerous people were involved at different locations in Germany. There were more invitations than I could accept. My official invitation which is required to obtain a visa from the German Embassy, including the health-insurance, was taken care of by a kind friend in Karlsruhe. Another friend picked me up from the airport and I was warmly received at lovely homes and sometimes the whole family was looking after my needs. Train tickets were booked, sightseeing, outings to the amazingly quiet Black Forest, to castles, and an invitation to a concert were arranged. I enjoyed eating delicious German breads and amazing salads, yummy strawberries and cherries, all kinds of berries, cakes, spaghetti-ice cream and traditional food such as Knödel and Dampfnudeln. Coming from India there are some things which are especially astonishing, e.g. the late sunset in summer, the cleanliness of the country and that everybody follows traffic rules.

Teachers and therapists of special schools welcomed me to observe their classes and shared their expertise with me. Another experience was at a Kindergarden for hearing impaired children who have been provided with cochlear implants (an electronic device which is implanted into the inner ear). I also spent a few days at a Camphill community where adults with special needs are living and working harmoniously together with their care-givers. Wherever I was, I observed with open eyes how much care children with special needs receive, how well organised the workplaces were and how punctual and qualified the teachers are. I could see the latest techniques being used and carried back lots of ideas to be gradually implemented at Deepam. When I recall these memories I get tears in my eyes. From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank each and everyone who supported me throughout this rewarding journey!

Angelika joined me in July for two intense weeks. We met friends and donors and attended several events which were wonderfully arranged by many 'angels'. Once again Angelika and myself were extremely touched to see how many supporters are behind Deepam. We need to thank all of you wholeheartedly! Another big thank you goes to our wonderful team who made it possible to spare us both for a while and continued smoothly the daily work at Deepam!”

Angelika adds: “When I met Selvi in Germany she reported enthusiastically about her experiences. Suddenly she paused and said “You know, I have seen extraordinary work and facilities, but I realised that we are also doing very good work at Deepam, as we know our children in depth and as we are offering many interesting activities to them.”

We are missing Ramesh

At 36 years old Ramesh was our oldest at Deepam. In past years he helped keeping our garden clean. This spring, when Ramesh became obviously even more lean and weak, we asked his mother to take him for investigations. Ramesh was diagnosed with an aggressive skin cancer which had already infiltrated a big part of his tongue. The radio- and chemotherapy he received then was started too late. Sadly Ramesh left his body in July. Ramesh came in 1992 as a small boy, to our first playground under the trees. Unfortunately he was already, at that time, very sick as he had contracted tuberculosis from his father who had died of this terrible disease. Ramesh had often bronchitis and fever and was treated with long courses of medication. He always slept in an upright



position as he had difficulty breathing. Though Ramesh was at times particularly stubborn and never spoke much, he was a lovely being with especially warm eyes.

Three new boys at Deepam

Though they are of different ages and character, what our new boys have in common is that they have previously been at mainstream school where they could not cope and also got teased. Their teachers did not have the training to take care of the special needs of these children.

Thasin is only six years old. His parents are close relatives. Thasin is delayed in his motor-skill development and in his speech. He has weak muscles and is malnourished. On his parents' wish we integrated Thasin into the daycare group where he is blooming as he feels more understood. He is still over active active and low in his concentration. Puzzles and games are his favourite and he receives educational classes in individual sessions. His wish is to go back to “normal” school, which we would love to support, if at all possible.

Purusothaman is nine years old. His school teacher dropped him several times at Deepam as she could not manage his disruptive behavior. We had to explain to her that she needs to bring his parents along and that we first need to do an assessment. After observing Purusothaman, it came clear that he is a slow learner, combined with a hyperactive disorder. As both teacher and parents found that Purusothaman would profit more from the program at Deepam, we agreed that he could join our daycare group. In individual classes we have finally taught him to distinguish colors, to learn counting and hopefully he will learn to read and write. Socially Purusothaman is well integrated at Deepam, though he tends at times to do “tricky” things behind his teachers' back.

Abdul is already 17, but can't even write his name. His parents are also close relatives. Due to cerebral palsy Abdul has spastic muscles and is also mentally challenged. He is able to walk, though with difficulties. At Deepam Abdul is receiving physiotherapy for the first time and we integrate him into the vocational training program to teach him skills for life. His speech is unclear and slow but he is able to express himself. Abdul is an extremely sweet person and was instantly liked by everybody.

The **Deepam celebration of light** will be on 23rd November with the full moon. As each year, we will light over a thousand small oil-lamps which create an especially warm atmosphere. Our children and youth are enthusiastically preparing for a performance of song and dance. In the middle of the monsoon season it will, once again, be exciting to see how the weather develops!

Our children and team members would like to thank you for your continued support and would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and good luck for the New Year!

With warm regards,

Angelika Ehrle and Lawrence Selvi

