

November 2024

Dear Friends,



In this letter we would like to share the immense joy we felt celebrating the birthday of the God Lord Krishna at the end of August. We embrace traditional Indian festivals to help our children connect with their heritage and culture. Lord Krishna is well-known for his mischievous childhood, often stealing sweets and butter. The preparation for this event began months in advance and involved learning songs and dances that culminated in a truly impressive performance. Everyone had a role, but **Purushothaman and Nilofar shone as the main characters**. Nilofar, our deaf student whom we introduced in our last letter, was our beautiful little Krishna. Our dedicated team members patiently guided her through her role using sign language. Raised in a Muslim family, this experience allowed her to connect with and understand Hindu mythology in a unique way.



Fifteen-year-old Purushothaman, normally a shy and timid boy, convincingly portrayed the wicked king Kamsan. Despite being a slow learner, he memorized and delivered his lines with clarity and power. We are incredibly proud of him, especially given the challenges he faces, including the loss of his mother who ended her life during Covid and a father who is not able to give him the support he needs. Understandably, in recent years there were concerns about his behaviour, but now he is showing a keen interest in carpentry and gardening and is eager to improve his reading and writing skills in Tamil. Both Purushothaman and Nilofar have visibly gained confidence through their performances.

Thirumurugan

Thiru, lives in a remote village and has been attending therapy sessions at our outreach centre in Nadukuppam for the past year. Thiru was born with a serious condition called infantile spasms, which causes jerky movements of his head and body, along with approximately 30 seizures each day despite being on medication. Additionally, he has been diagnosed with global development delay and obesity, as well as severe anemia. Six months ago, his doctor recommended a ketogenic diet, which focuses on increased fat and protein intake whilst reducing carbohydrates. Thiru has already lost six kilos. He requires continuous medication and often requires hospitalization which is a significant burden for his low-income family. Recently, a hearing test confirmed our suspicion that Thiru can only hear very loud sounds. For now, we have provided him with a pair of discarded hearing aids to help him gradually adapt to wearing such devices. Once he is comfortable, we plan to supply him with high-quality hearing aids, hoping this will enhance his ability to engage with his environment. Initially, Thiru was lethargic, often just lying around and sucking his fingers, but with increased sensory stimulation, he can now sit up, hold his head upright, and even seek eye contact. With regular therapy and supporting the family to follow up with specialists, we hope to see him happy and smiling!



Volunteers

Over the past 32 years, we have been fortunate to have many volunteers contribute to Deepam's rich program. Their extra hands are always appreciated in supporting the children through various activities. Most of our volunteers have been from Germany, however recently we have welcomed more volunteers from India and other countries. Zea, a volunteer who grew up in Auroville, shares her reflections: "I am continually inspired by the dedication of Deepam's team to empower children with special needs. The time I've spent here has shown me firsthand how life-changing their efforts are. I really appreciate the opportunity to learn, grow, and hopefully contribute as much as I can."

Creative expressions

In addition to the therapy sessions and educational programs, each student participates in activities such as dance, storytelling, singing, horse riding and music. For the children and youth in our daycare program, we focus on painting and all kinds of handicrafts. These activities provide a non-verbal outlet for expression, help develop fine motor skills, and boost self-confidence as they see their own creations. For the older students, our vocational training center offers a space filled with stimulating materials and tools to expand their skills. Below are some examples of their creative expressions:



As the year draws to a close, our team and the children would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, which is truly appreciated.

Best wishes from Deepam,
Angelika & Selvi

