

Vanakkam Aikiyam Friends,

Since the second newsletter of this school year is coming out right after Diwali (the festival of light), may it shine a little more light for you on Aikiyam School and on our latest work with the children. It is an interesting time to watch the children engaged in classroom projects, trying to find different mediums like graphing and picturing to present their findings. Our 8th graders have recently visited a wildlife sanctuary with their class teacher. What an adventure it was for them to see the various wild animals. We also want to remind all of you who will be in Auroville on the 26th of January, India's Republic Day, to visit Aikiyam School's one day exhibition of the children's work. I thank you all for your continuing interest in Aikiyam children. Aum...



"Students and volunteers at the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary in Ooty".

"Children love to draw in bright colours."



August 15th Celebration at Aikiyam School



Those of you Aikiyam friends who have been here in the "city of dawn" during the second week of August or the 3rd week of January may have had a moment to come and enjoy some of Aikiyam School children's bi-annual performances as well as the display of the objects they have created to express their vocational skills.

Being one of the Auroville outreach schools, Aikiyam gives an opportunity to our village children to actively celebrate two special national occasions, Independence Day and Republic Day. Since August 15th happens to be not only India's Independence Day, but also the birth day anniversary of Sri Aurobindo, our joy multiplies on that day.

This year, August 15th was celebrated with great splendor, joy and respect to Sri Aurobindo and Mother India. The teachers at Aikiyam organized many cultural programmes such as flag raising, speeches given by the children on India and its genius, specially

choreographed dancing, and joyful group singing.

This festival was a great opportunity for the school to talk about the importance of Auroville, Sri Aurobindo and India. And, August 15th was a special day for our children for many other reasons! Our kindergarten children received sweets sent to them by one of Auroville's toffee makers, the parents were delighted to see their children's performance and the teachers looked very happy as they watched the results of their efforts.



Yes, while many people in India might have been thinking back to the end of British rule, our school children were singing, dancing and talking about everything in a true spirit of oneness; this was indeed a celebration of human unity.

Alumni student interview

Anandh and Tamilselvam graduated from New Creation Bilingual School, as Aikiyam School was then called, in 2008. Thereafter each of them attended Kulipalayam Trust School (KTS) for the next 2 years. For Tamilselvam's 11th and 12th standard studies he transferred with a full scholarship to another local area school. Anandh finished 12th standard at KTS. Both young men received exceptionally high marks on their exams and received tuition scholarships from Auroville's Reach for the Stars program so they can attend a good university in Chennai. They met with Amy to talk about how their Auroville education and experience helped them along the way:



Tamilselvam (left) and Anandh

What did you learn in New Creation School which helped you in your further studies and life?

They both easily answered, "English, we learned good English." They both openly talked about all the extra-curricular activities they had such as carpentry, tailoring, and sports. Anandh was happy to recall how a student could show his or her talents through games and other learning methodologies in the classroom.

What did you do after leaving New Creation School?

Tamilselvam and Anandh's school life changed dramatically. They went from having a daily balance of academic subjects with vocational training and sports, to solely academic studies. Their life was full of studying.

What did being in close contact with Auroville bring into your life?

Anandh said he learned to improve his habits and saw that one could live a different lifestyle. He learned that he wanted to help poor people. Coming from a very poor family himself he experienced the positive impact Auroville had and would like to help others also. Tamilselvam shared that he learned good communication skills which he uses in all areas of his life today. He met many people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds which helped him to

understand different characters. He has been touched by the way Auroville cares for the green areas, and for the environment.

How would you like to participate in the development of Aikiyam School?

Tamilselvam would like to mentor students who are interested in his same field of study. He would also like to be able to help the students to purchase books. Anandh wants to promote and encourage the continuing balance in the curriculum between academics and vocational training and sports. This is very important to him. He wants to help in any way he can all the very poor students from the surrounding villages who attend Aikiyam School.

What do you plan to study in university, and what are your plans for when you graduate from university?

Anandh is studying Mechanical Engineering. After a four year program he can graduate with a Masters in Engineering Technology (MET). Then he wants to go into Marine Engineering, which is a two year program for another MET. After he graduates he would be open to working in either a government or private business involved in designing and building ships. Tamilselvam is studying Pharmaceutical Technology and in four years can graduate also with an MET degree. At this point he could see himself going into a pharmaceutical company after graduation.

Teachers Residence (TR) caretaker house repaired

A wonderful and unexpected gift arrived earlier this year when we were told that from several Auroville projects we had been chosen to receive a donation that would at long last allow us to change the leaking roof on the TR caretaker house. For a few years we had been struggling with what exactly to do, as we had received estimates ranging from Rs. 750,000 to almost Rs. 1,200,000 to change the roof and supporting walls. We were stuck. Then, when we learned about the Rs. 320,000 (€ 3,817.60) donation, we immediately obtained figures to repair the roof in a way that new

walls would not be needed, and the cost was comfortably within the donation amount. We commenced with the work at the end of May and it was finished just after the first week of school. The caretaker, who is our teacher Selvaraj, and his family moved into one of the TR apartments while the work was being done. Now they're settled back into a home that will provide a dry and secure shelter for many years to come. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the donors; we are truly blessed.

Before repairs



After repairs



Dear friends,

You may have noticed that we are more often including one or two student essays in the newsletter. We just want to remind you that English is not the mother tongue of our students and they are in the process of learning how to express their own feelings through this medium. We hope you will enjoy their sharing.

About my school

V. Jayam, 8th standard



For a child praying, studying, working etc.. are important. But most important in these years is studying. We can't work in an qualified office, in a school, in a department, and etc.. so for me, studying is the most important work that I want to do in this age. But I am not saying that praying and working are not important. To be released we need to pray and make out body strength we need to work. At the same time we do also want to study so what I want to say is that in the passage is that we need to do every activity and we need study also.

By the given passage you can know that I love to study a lot. And I am also in the lucky persons list who were present in the world because I have got a pretty nice school where I can get any job according to my studies in my future. I could be a dancer, or a dance teacher, singer, artist etc...

Aikiyam means 'United' that you all know so our school is a united place where people of all religions could study. In my experience in this school I have more knowledge and more ability here with less money. And I love to go to assembly every day because there, from several students, I could know some information about birds, trees, monuments, poets, authors and many. And this could help me in the future for my job or other things.

When there is a competition or other games at my school, I would like to join in because some could know that I do have some ability in these activities also. When I was in fourth standard we made a play [Alice in Wonderland]. That was a nice play to see that we students also have every ability to act in the stage without any fear. And our teachers are also kind with us and when we tell that we didn't understand any subject they are ready to teach us any time.

Our school surroundings also make me very peaceful and to love the nature. There is no plastic garbage around the school and no air pollution. Only the natural air, nice buildings, pretty and kind teachers, nice volunteers and interested students.

By this I say that it is a nice and beautiful place where we can study with less money. There is a tree drawn on one wall of the kitchen where some very helpful students names are written. This is the last year for me in this school. I think that I am going to love my kind teachers, nice surroundings, and every thing. And I want say great thanks for my kind teachers and for my pretty nice school also.

A great thanks for you, my best school.

My School

A. Kavishma, 8th standard



I love my school Aikiyam so much. This is because I can say about Aikiyam in some words the following: peace, unity, independent, equality, beautiful. The school's surrounding makes me happy. By saying all my opinion to anybody of our community people makes me independent. By speaking to everybody having friends of both reach and poor makes me equal. This is a community in which it is trying it's best to teach all the students of their day-to-days life style situation as subjects comparing to other schools. Aikiyam is not telling the students to memorize. It says to think about it, read the lesson many times so you can understand it very well and write in your own words.

Aikiyam offers a vast variety of programmes in which it provides us to develop our extra curricular activities such as drawing, clay, carpentry, computer, tailoring, dance, embroidery, and music classes. These classes are with well qualified teachers. I also like these ordinary class like Maths, Science, History, Geography, Political life, Tamil and English. I love the teachers. This school is offering so many things in which it is to build to the better growth of the village students who are all from Kulappalayam and nearby villages. Also this school gives free lunch at 12.45 pm and snacks and 10.30 am. This community is making me to study a lot and learn a lot from them so I like Aikiyam school.

You can send your donation via the Auroville International Centre in your country, or send a cheque made payable to 'Auroville Unity Fund', Town Hall, Auroville, 605101 Tamil Nadu, INDIA indicating clearly that the donation is for Aikiyam School, or you can send it electronically by going to auroville.com/donations/ and following the instructions.