



# New Creation Bilingual School

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"My name is Manjula. I am studying in 6th grade in NCBS. I live in India and this card shows my photo.."

*This is Manjula, and it is with her fresh and innocent presence that we start our first newsletter of the new year. We send you our best wishes for 2008 and pray that things may progress for you and your families, and for the world at large. We also bring you news of an important new feature in our school..*

*As you are, by your caring and support, directly co-creating what is now possible here at NCBS, we wish to start the year by extending, once more, our sincere appreciation for your help and encouragement.*

## **New feature**

Most of you are aware that NCBS mainly serves children from villages in the school's neighbourhood where malnutrition, disease, domestic violence and general neglect still do occur. These unfortunate circumstances may lead to traumas that are most often not addressed or treated. Hence a fairly large percentage of our more than 200 students have some learning problems.

Manjula is one such student. Since an illness in her early youth, Manjula experiences difficulties with walking and cannot concentrate very well. This leads to delay in her general development and studies. It is to children like Manjula that we would like to give special attention. In order to prevent potential cases from getting worse, we need to identify at an early age children with nutritional concerns, developmental delays, and physical or learning disabilities.

**Therefore, we are most pleased to inform you that a therapeutic facility is being set up in NCBS. Through this we hope that proper help can be provided or suggested at an early stage and that our children become better equipped to handle both the visible and invisible limitations that exist in their lives and the lives of others in their immediate surroundings.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT OF NCBS**

The school's mission is to provide an appropriate kindergarten, primary and intermediate education to children from Kulapalayam and other villages, which are geographically connected to Auroville, based on the principles of integral education, as defined by the founders of Auroville, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The school strives to maintain a creative and joyful atmosphere, where the uniqueness of each child is respected and nurtured.

The school's aim is to provide a high quality bilingual education in Tamil and English, covering all of the standard academic subjects, physical education, and a wide variety of vocational options to prepare children for life in a rapidly changing world, while still maintaining contact with their Tamil cultural heritage. In the near future, children may also earn equivalency certificates so that secondary education can be continued in a school which is recognised by the Tamil Nadu Government.

New Creation Bilingual School is an Outreach day-school under the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIR) for more than 200 children, with classes which range from pre-kindergarten to the eighth grade. All tuition, educational supplies, nutritious snacks and mid-day meals are provided free of charge.

## Special Needs Programme



It often happens in life, that when a need is clearly seen and defined, the answer is provided 'out of the blue'. This was the case when we made an appeal for help in the Auroville 'News&Notes' and a reply came from Ms Stacy Friedlander, a young, South African occupational therapist, who is joining Auroville. Offering her services, Stacy has been working since November last year with NCBS: *"My passion for working with the child spirit brought me to NCBS where I'm now in the process of sharing my experiences gained from working with diverse adults and children in the South African health & special education sector. I trained as an Occupational Therapist at the University of Cape Town, focussing on children's health and wellbeing, and on adult education. In India, the blessing of complementing this with the knowledge of ayurveda and yoga is an exciting new dimension to the work."* Stacy also followed hatha yoga teacher training at the Art of Living Foundation, and is involved in NGO work for the International Vedic Society.

Culturally deeply sensitive, with her African background and training, Stacy started by identifying the children who are "getting lost in the system" and needing individual attention, kindness and understanding to fuel their

potential. Her focus is on developing a 'Special Needs' team and on training a Tamil teacher in this special education, as the latter is crucial to the success of the programme along with the overall involvement and education of the school's teacher body.

### Individual Education Plan

Parallel to the Special Needs Programme, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for each 'special needs' child will be created in collaboration with the child (if possible), his/her parents or caretakers (if possible), his/her teachers and the special education staff. In this way everyone who works with the child will have a basic understanding of his/her interests and needs. 'Special needs children' are identified as having one or more of the following: learning disability (such as dyslexia), physical disability, socio-emotional disturbances, nutritional deficits or other developmental delays.

In addition to the direct contact with the children in need, the Special Needs team will work with the teachers of each child, interpreting and explaining the particular disability, and helping the teacher provide appropriate learning opportunities for the student. Naturally, therapeutic modalities are needed to enhance the therapy space and experience, and appeals for materials have been sent abroad. Once a good formula of working has been established, it could be adapted to other schools as well.

We are open to any help from your side and will surely keep you updated!

Stacy in action..





For this issue we have spoken with some of our alumni.., looking back at their time in the school, and how they have fared since leaving it.. While most students who went through the school do not choose to formally join Auroville, we introduce you here to three of those who did, and who have become active and much appreciated residents..! Their journeys also give you a further idea about Auroville..



### Kalya

Kalya was born in the Auroville Health Center in 1976. One of seven children of parents from Kuilyapalayam, he was the only one who, exceptionally, was sent to New Creation School (which at the time had just barely started in the Fraternity settlement). *"It was the best thing that ever happened to me..!"*, he grins. Kalya studied in NCBS till he was twelve, after which he proceeded through Transition and other schools in Auroville, and then did his Tamil Nadu State Board exams. Having enjoyed working with some of Auroville's seasoned greenworkers during school holidays, he discovered a love for the earth, which started to shape his direction in life, *"I always dreamt of doing gardens.."* Being a bright and open-hearted fellow, he got the opportunity for a two-year training in an Aurovilian granite-cum-landscaping workshop, and after a short 2-month exchange programme in USA, Kalya started working with a Puducherry-based French architect involved in the New Creation settlement. Kalya, now full-fledged Aurovilian, married and father of 2 children, runs a granite workshop and a 'Progress Landscape' design studio catering to major cities in south India. *"My time in NCBS was the best part of my life"*, he says, adding, *"I will always support NCBS and Transition School in whatever way I can..."*. He does...

### Renuka

Three months after Renuka was born in Kuilyapalayam village in 1977, her parents joined the Auroville Aspiration settlement and have been living and working in Auroville ever since. Renuka joined the school at its very beginning (then still in Fraternity). Later she continued her education in other Auroville schools and after completing her State Board Exams in 1995, she got married and for three years worked in the billing section of 'Pour Tous', the Auroville food distribution unit, and later for several years in Auroville's Central Kindergarten. Presently she is the proud mom of two children and works as a much appreciated teacher in Auroville's Nandanam Kindergarten. *"This was my one wish and ambition, and I love it. Because I have gone through so many schools with different mixtures of cultures, I can work with the varied mixture in Nandanam. I remember NCBS as a playful place, with a lot of freedom.., and all was centered around the Banyan Tree. That tree was the centre of my life..! I'm happy that the school is coming up now and progressing.., it may be a first step in Auroville for bringing up the children from the village in a way that is needed..."*



### Tixon

Tixon was also born in the Auroville Health Center, in 1982. As his mother worked as a mat weaver for one of the Aurovilian units in the Fraternity settlement, and later for Aurovilians in the New Creation settlement, it was but natural that young Tixon joined the school. *"I loved the school so much.., there was a lot of liveliness, activities, regular swimming... , but lots of homework as well..!"* he remembers. When in 4th standard, Tixon joined the boarding facility provided by Roy, the then principal of the school. After graduating from NCBS, Tixon went through other Auroville schools and did his State Board exams, after which a student exchange programme allowed him to study for two years in the U.K. When Tixon returned, he continued to stay in Roy's Boarding and started working in the graphic section of Auroville's town planning department, where he is presently one of the main graphic designers.

Tixon's heart remains with Roy's Boarding. By the time that Roy and subsequent principals left the School & Boarding to return to the U.K., Tixon was old enough to take over the management of the Boarding and has been doing this for the last 4 years, supported by a team of other Aurovilians. NCBS students in need of proper accommodation find a disciplined and loving environment there, directly overseen by this friendly and conscientious Aurovilian. At present 10 children, ranging from 7 to 23 years old, bring a bubbly presence in the house, - and Tixon smiles..



Giorgio, friend of the school, made this artistic photo of our beautiful kitchen cum dining area, waiting to be completed..

### **Kitchen cum Dining**

While we had hoped to present here photos of a completed and celebrated new Kitchen in action, it is yet not to be.. Tamil Nadu experienced extraordinarily heavy rains in December accompanied by long stretches without electricity, and work could hardly proceed. Although the main work is finished, we still have to find funds for the finishing touches, such as the flooring and seating arrangements. In an effort to help things along, we will organise, together with staff, parents, students and artists from Auroville, a special 'grand school fair' in the last week of February, which is the week of Auroville's 40th anniversary when many friends are visiting. In our next newsletter we'll tell you all about it!



### **How to...**

**In case you want to be part of NCBS's general Quest, or more specifically, help us finish the Kitchen complex - and this would be ever so much appreciated - you could send a donation via the Auroville International Centre in your country, or send a cheque made payable to 'Auroville Unity Fund', and address it to: 'Auroville Unity Fund', Town Hall, Auroville, 605101 Tamil Nadu, INDIA. Please indicate clearly, on an accompanying note if needed, that the donation is for New Creation Bilingual School.**

To give you an idea of the school's needs apart from the planned construction: the overall monthly cost per child in the school amounts to approx. € 24, \$35, £18, IRS 1400. If you would want to receive breakdowns, project proposals, budget overviews, a 5-mnt DVD documentary, powerpoint presentation, or other documentation, you are most welcome to get in touch with us !

**Thank you! And may 2008 see a better world for all!**

*The New Creation Bilingual School Support Group*

***Principal Shankar, and Dianna, Franca, Françoise, Janet, Mauna, Suriyagandhi, along with all the school's children, teachers, other personnel and friends.***

*(Dr. Heidi Watts of Antioch New England Graduate School in USA, Martin Littlewood of Auroville International UK, Satyakam Karim and Devasmita Patnaik of Auroville International France, all long time friends and supporters of the school, attend our meetings when present in Auroville.)*

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