



New Creation Bilingual School

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Very dear friends of New Creation Bilingual School!

Once again we come to brighten your day with an update on how our school is faring. Of course, with this first issue in 2007, we wish all our readers a good and progressive year and we hope to meet you whenever you are in our neighbourhood! We would love to introduce you to the students and show you our school, the buildings and plans. Because plans there are.., even though we have by no means yet found the funds required for making the changes that we see are needed for the step-by-step development of the school.

Seeing how directly the children respond to the steadily improving quality of education, and encouraged by friends from Auroville International Centres during recent brainstorming meetings with them, as well as by the appreciation in the eyes of the villagers around us, we decided to just go for it and jump, taking some bold steps towards the future. We invite you to jump with us..!

My Family..

While we usually carry a little text on two of our teachers in the newsletter, this time we will introduce you to some of our children, and their parents, so that you may be able to sense the conditions in which they are living, and the challenges that we face.

We have some photos for you taken during a "My Family" project, in which our Kindergarten and First Grade students participated. We wish we could also find a way to convey to you the bubbling liveliness, eagerness to learn, and openness of these more than 200 children. As said before, many of them come from homes where formal education is a relatively new concept.



Jamie Yaman, a young volunteer from USA with experience in work with special-needs children, is shown here in action with first graders. Jamie writes: "Each and every morning that I put foot on the grounds of NCBS I felt as if I were reborn. In the eyes of the children I may have been an educator, yet in my eyes it was the children who educated me." Jamie's care, guitar playing and innovative learning techniques were most appreciated.

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 a day-school under the Auroville Outreach School Board 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.



A picturesque photo of Siva Ranjani, Siva Shakti and Siva Gandhan and their parents at the entrance space of their house. The father is a farmer, mother works at home.



Sevandhi with her grandmother who does house cleaning work in Auroville. They stand here before their house that is in the process of being repaired. Sevandhi's father and mother live in Cuddalore.



Bright little Kavishma ready for school, here with his grandmother in their hut. His little sister will next year happily go along with him!



Bhuvana and her brother Pachaiyappan, both students of the school, with their parents. The father works in the Auroville Electrical Service; mother does half days house cleaning work in Auroville.



Learning about hygiene is an important issue in school, how to wash, and to clean teeth with tooth powder (instead of with brick powder or ashes)..



Sparkling clean, with talcum powder on the face and all..!

In the previous newsletter we highlighted three of the persons who, voluntarily and with so much goodwill and love, have served and inspired the school to become what it is today. They were André Tardeil, his wife Babu, and Roy Wicks from the U.K. We now present those who followed them.

Mike & Sue

As described in our earlier newsletter, after Roy Wicks had to leave for England due to medical circumstances, Mike and Sue Hawthorne came to the rescue. These two highly qualified and educationally experienced persons had first visited New Creation in July 2000. Touched by the potential of the place and its needs, they came again for several weeks in the summer of 2001. Realising that, without their good friend Roy, the school would be at a loss, they returned at the end of that year, agreeing to take over the running of the school and boarding house for the few months that Roy expected to be absent. Mike and Sue ended up staying till May 2004 during which time the school, students and teachers benefited immensely from the presence and expertise of these two lively, dedicated professionals, who were to become role models for many of the teachers. Mike and Sue upgraded the school's library, trained teachers, arranged parents' meetings, introduced phonetic reading, assessment techniques, designed curricula, created learning materials, and carefully saw to it that their ideas and methods were implemented. Even now, practically all of the systems, arrangements and guidelines which they so carefully and painstakingly initiated, are faithfully and gratefully adhered to. Needless to say, their names still surface often in the school, and contact is ongoing.



Anna Bowers



After Mike and Sue departed in early '04 the school was in limbo for a short while, during which time the teachers did what they could to keep the school afloat in quite a remarkable way. Several months later they were joined by the late Mrs Anna Bowers, a British educationalist with 40 years of experience behind her, not the least

of that in London's inner city schools where children were in real need of love, dedication and encouragement. Anna's visits to Auroville were the culmination of everything she had wanted to achieve and she felt that it was like "coming home". She had a real passion for the care and development of the children in NCBS and was deeply inspired by the beauty and spirituality of the place and people and of the children whom she described as being so happy despite having so little. However, during her Christmas visit back home, Anna fell ill, and it was with great sadness and regret that the school's staff and children heard of Anna's passing in the fall of 2005. Contact with her family continues.

Shankar & Support Group

In January 2005, when it became clear that Anna would not be able to return so soon, several long-time Aurovilians were requested by Auroville to look into the running of the school and a 'support group' of several long time Aurovilians was formed. Gradually one member of the support group became more and more interested in the daily management of the school and eventually became the school's first Tamil principal. S. Shankar, originally from the nearby village of Kulapalayam, is a long-term resident of Auroville, has a Master's degree in Tamil, and second language teacher training from the Mysore Institute. He taught Tamil in Auroville schools and as second language to adults in Auroville for more than 20 years, and also teaches Tamil language and culture at the University of Washington in USA.

Shankar has a good rapport with teachers, children and parents and the school is flourishing under his guidance. He says:



"I feel that New Creation Bilingual School is undergoing a big change after the commencement of the Support Group in the beginning of 2005. My dream is that this school will be a model school, where all academic subjects are taught in both English and Tamil. Apart from the academic development of the child, the school also will be a place for learning diversified vocational skills. These skills will be taught systematically so that the children will be competent enough to undertake any outside examinations that they want to apply for in future. The methods used in the school will not only be better methods, they may eventually be accepted as a model by Educational Boards in India. Already now, our school has received more than 100 visiting teachers during the 1st term of this year from different institutions, including AID India and the Government of Tamil Nadu DAJET centre. Those visitors not only gave positive comments on the school, they also wish to establish a permanent exchange programme. In future we may be able to comply."



Looking to the Future

While at the moment work on improving the instructional level continues, and drawings are in progress for a new and renewed campus, with estimates prepared, and time lines in place, we still struggle to get a steady income for the school in order to supplement the funds coming in from Auroville.

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the financial support received from some of you, as well as the weekly 40 loaves of whole wheat bread from the Auroville Bakery, the 4 kgs of fresh and juicy cheese from La Ferme Cheese, the fresh vegetables from Auroville Orchard and

The children grow up into young, conscious adults..., here during a meditation on Global Peace.

the firewood for cooking from various places in the township. Unfortunately, important aspects of the present educational and nutritional programmes as well as general maintenance of the infra-structure are still lacking, and extra curricular activities for students such as summer camps will have to be provided at the most basic level.

A monthly contribution from you, whatever its size, would make all the difference.

You can send your donation via the Auroville International Centre in your country, or send a cheque made payable to '**Auroville Unity Fund**', and send 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.**

If you wish to suggest other arrangements, get in touch with us via ncbssg@auroville.org.in

Thank you!

As always, thanking you most heartily for your interest and care,

The New Creation Bilingual School Support Group

Principal Shankar, and Franca, Janet, Mauna, Suriyagandhi, and Core group members, 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, and Satyakam 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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www.auroville.org/education/village_schools/newcreation_bilingual.htm