



Newsletter

New Creation Bilingual School

Vol. 4, No.1

February 2009



Principal Shankar shares a moment of joy with some of the students

Dear friends, vanakkam!
Everyone at NCBS welcomed the 2009 year with New Year and Pongal celebrations. In particular we celebrated meeting the financial challenges of last year through the support of all of our friends. On campus you see foundations dug for construction of the new library, 'special needs' classroom and science lab, and a large organic kitchen garden is coming up in the

Discussion on the environment and plastic

middle of the school's compound. Thirteen 8th graders went for their state board exams (possibly for the last time, after that we can issue our own CBSE certificates), and our teachers are getting more and more familiar with planning and implementing lessons aligned to the CBSE curriculum through workshops with Professor Heidi Watts who is here on her yearly winter visit.

The Auroville Health Service organised a 4-week course on 'food and cleanliness' for the kitchen team; our 'special needs' teachers followed 'Awareness Through The Body' courses in Auroville's Transition School; all teachers eagerly attended the talk by the Dalai Lama who visited Auroville in January; Auroville's Spirulina Farm decided to give fresh spirulina twice a week for a good, sturdy health drink for students and staff; and guests and volunteers are contributing by giving educational workshops, teaching and assisting in the classrooms and supporting the administration of the school.



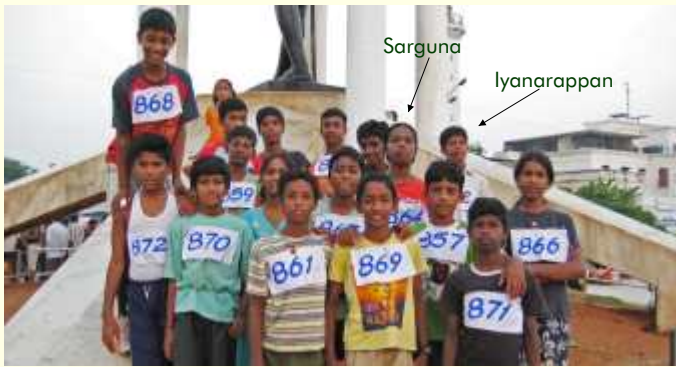
The two words...THANK YOU...seem far too short and simple to express our grateful feelings for all the support which comes our way. Because of your contributions and love, NCBS dares once again to come out with a newsletter in colour, and moves into 2009 with confidence and gratitude.

MISSION STATEMENT OF NCBS

The school's mission is to provide an appropriate kindergarten, primary and intermediate education to children from Kuilapalayam 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 (SAILER) 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 proud NCBS sports at Mahatma Gandhi's statue in Puducherry

Students Run for Polio and Plastic's Pollution Awareness

In November last year, NCBS took 17 students from 7th and 8th grades to participate in a mini marathon organised by 'Education Through Sports' in Puducherry nearby. 1000 students from all around the town had come forward to take part. The marathon promoted polio and plastics' pollution awareness. Sarguna was among the first 20 girls to finish and Iyanarappan finished 5th among the boys. All of our students participated with enthusiasm and skill and could proudly show their photos displayed in local newspapers. Our physical education programme and students' dedication to sports worked together to place NCBS among the finalists.

Technical training facilities at NCBS

Technical training at NCBS begins in 4th grade. Students attend tailoring, carpentry and computer studies for two 45-minute sessions each week. As you may be aware, in 2002, Auroville International UK received a grant from the European Commission to provide vocational training for village youth attending NCBS. Students from disadvantaged families were to receive vocational training appropriate to their age and aptitude, which would prepare students for working in the local area, or enable them to pass on to more advanced courses to achieve vocational qualifications. With this funding, four buildings were constructed on the New Creation campus. These housed programmes for tailoring, carpentry, electrical and metal working training. Two of the teachers hired for the start of the programme, Panneerselvam for tailoring and Rajesh Kumar for carpentry, continue to provide vocational skills in these areas today. The electrical technical skills training has been replaced with computer skills, while the metal working remains as a worksite and potential classroom under the direction of Boomi who has trained many metal work students since 2002. With your help, the school is now putting together plans to expand the training programmes and is seeking a training coordinator who will help improve the quality and range of training offered to students.

Extra vocational training based on IEP

Our tailoring and carpentry vocational programmes generally serve 80 students from 4th through 8th grades. Opportunity to learn computer skills is provided to all 150 of our 1st through 8th grade children. As the school works with 'Individual Educational Plans', whenever a student shows preference for the more vocational aspects of the education offered by NCBS, the programme is individually adapted for them.

We consider it highly important to engage and train the students for the working world according to their abilities and interest.

This year, three students, Murali, Danil and Balu have demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to the vocational programmes, and they receive extra vocational training in tailoring, carpentry and computer. Their progress is remarkable. With continued funding, others could join them, so that these youngsters will depart from NCBS ready for the working world or other training programmes, that would help them develop into confident, capable individuals.



Danil speaks of his aspiration to become a computer engineer. He learned to work the keyboard, create files, use excel, get information from the internet, draw and paint pictures, search for graphics and study for tests in his classes.

Computer classes

All students express enthusiasm for computer skills class with Karthikeyan, who started teaching in the new Kolam Computer Centre in the New Creation settlement in June of 2008. The 12 computers provide the opportunity for 24 students to work on their skills at one time.

Karthikeyan comes from

Chennai as a trained teacher of the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) curriculum. All students from 1st through 8th grade receive two 45-minute sessions of computer skills per week and are successively led through basic keyboarding and painting skills, logo and drawing, introduction to power point and presentations, excel, basic programming, to internet projects and charts.

An official NIIT certificate for their computer education will be provided at the end of the course. Karthikeyan also works with classroom teachers to instruct them in using internet sites. All classes are generally very much enjoyed and appreciated, and our gratitude goes out to the gentleman from Puducherry who enabled this state of the art set-up to be arranged for NCBS and other school children and teachers in the area.

Tailoring classes

Panneerselvan works progressively through tailoring skills with all students. In 4th grade students learn to



hem by hand and hand-stitch a pair of shorts, which can be used for sports. Students in 5th grade learn to perfect their hand work using smaller stitches for these projects. The sewing machines begin to whirr in 6th grade when students are introduced to stitching bags, handkerchiefs and shorts. In 7th grade students learn the finer skills, which can be achieved either on machine or by hand. The cloth is often provided by Auroville's handicraft units, and the classes are enjoyed by boys and girls alike.

Murali proudly talks of his work in the area of tailoring, where he has made shorts for kindergarten children, uses the sewing machine like an expert, and has learned to take measurements for shirts and shorts.



Carpentry classes

Walk into Rajesh Kumar's carpentry workshop and you will see 4th grade students learning to saw on straight lines, sand on the grinder and make simple toys. Older students, building on these basic skills, make complicated toys like airplanes and dolls. All the children are self directed and able to handle tools with skill. In more advanced classes the difficult job of perfect joint-making is tackled.

Balu enjoys making toys. He has learned to saw wood, drill holes, and use a grinding machine to sand pieces to a smooth finish. The toy airplane, he made, impressed his mother.

Clay work

Although it doesn't exactly fall under the vocational training programmes, the school does have a real clay workshop complete with kiln. Twenty years ago, a lady from Germany provided the school with the funds needed to build a small building for this, and since then the students have been using it, at times with amazing results. In the month of January '09 the school organised a celebration and clay contest to which students of other educational facilities also had been invited. It was a joyful day, commemorating the 20 years of this small, but very much appreciated facility, and heartfelt love and thanks go out to the donor friend, who is still in touch with us today.



Colourful pooja to celebrate 20 years of the NCBS clay workshop

New Organic Garden Project

English teacher Rajan, who recently joined us, has inspired the school's support group, teachers and students to create an active NCBS Eco Club that would work towards the creation of an organic fruit & vegetable garden, using raised beds and permaculture techniques. With the support of Auroville's Botanical Garden, Pebble Garden and Siddharta Farm, Rajan's very comprehensive plan for the future has started off.

We'll surely keep you informed with pictures of the unfolding green wonder in the newsletters to come!



After a lot of work by young and old, the first green seedlings proudly emerge from their carefully built-up beds. The inset shows teacher Rajan discussing his plans with some of the high graders. Students of all classes are enthusiastically participating in the project.



Growing



Growing strong with fresh spirulina drinks, - and green...!

As you may notice, the school is steadily growing, in more ways than one. We are grateful for the regular basic funding and donations in kind, which we receive from Auroville, and the Indian Government via SAIER, - and especially to all of you, who continue supporting us during this time of global economic down-turn.

In an environment where the poor are not given much respect, a proper education is imperative. With your ongoing support, continuing progress is possible.

In order to make things more transparent and (hopefully) attractive for you, we have now itemized our proposed activities in such a way that you can respond as per your special interest. These activities include establishing a professional development fund for teachers; supplementing the nutrition budget; summer camps for the students; upgrading the library collection; repairing leaks; upgrading electrical wiring; making an organic vegetable garden; general repairs and general running costs. Just let us know **if** you wish to specify your donation for a particular activity.

We are delighted to inform you that since short you can transfer your donation to us via the Internet. Unless you wish to take advantage of certain tax benefits which can only be provided by the Auroville International Centre in your country, you can now:

donate online via: www.auroville.com/donate

As always, with much love and thanks on behalf of all the children,

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 Jeanne Korstange, who was with us for some months, and helped with management and this newsletter.

(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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