



# VASANTHAM e-Newsletter

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VASANTHAM Special School for the Mentally Challenged  
East Mogappair, Chennai - 600 037. Website: [www.vasantham.org](http://www.vasantham.org)  
Contact: 044 - 26560662, [vasantham89@gmail.com](mailto:vasantham89@gmail.com)

Celebrating 25 years ☺

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Mrs. Alli Murugesan

Editor-in-chief

Ms. Krupa M.

Editorial committee

Mr. B. Suresh Kamath

Mr. Natarajan Raman

Ms. Mathew Grace

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## VISITORS

- Bachelors and masters nursing students from J.V.College of Nursing, Saveetha College of Nursing had observational visits to Vasantham, ranging from one day to one week.
- Twenty one standard XII students from Lalaji Omega International School visited Vasantham on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 as a part of their field visits.
- Thirty students from Chinmaya Vidyalaya school visited Vasantham on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 as a part of their voluntary service activity.
- About 50 students from Kodaikanal International School visited Vasantham on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2013. They spent couple of hours interacting with the individuals with special needs at Vasantham in the classroom and involved in activities such as colouring, drawing and painting.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

Independence day was celebrated at Vasantham in a grand manner. The entire school was decorated with flowers and colour papers. The chief guest for the day, Shri. K. Srinivasan; our long time supporter Shri. Srinivasan, MRL Anbargal Nesakarangal; Shri. R.R.Kubendran, Retd. CMDA Planner, Shri. K. Srinivasan, Founder, Prime Point Foundation; Ms. Hema, Swasam Trust, Shri. Prashanth, Patterns Software Design Institute lit the kuthuvillaku followed by Vasantham's prayer song sung by Vasantham students Mr. Jayakanth and Mr. Pravin Raj. Shri. K. Srinivasan, Editor in Chief, PreSense and Chief Moderator of India Vision group hoisted the national flag and delivered an inspiring speech highlighting the importance of every citizen to be socially sensitive. The dias was also occupied by Mr.Natarajan, Dream India and Mr. Murugesan, Treasurer, Vasantham.

For the very first time at any of Vasantham's events, one of our students delivered the school report. Mr. Balram Vignesh, who is a student at Vasantham, and was trained just the previous night to deliver the school report, did an admirable job for a first timer! Everybody enjoyed the cultural programme that followed the flag hoisting. All the children were made to participate and showcase their hidden talents. Children sang and danced to various patriotic songs, medleys etc. Couple of them even played the drums and enthralled the audience with their beats.

Children dressed as Swami Vivekananda, Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Abdul Kalam, Mother Theresa, Nethaji and other great people impressed the audience. A child dressed as Lord Krishna and carrying the national flag was the star attraction. Mr. Amith, a rock singer sang an old Tamil Song and entertained the audience. Mr.Srinivasan distributed prizes to children and the day ended on a high with the National Anthem. Special thanks to the volunteers from Swasam Charitable Trust (Ms. Hema, Ms. Indu, Mr. Dilli Babu, Mr. Vinoth) who always make sure they are present before any event begins, in order to help in arrangements for the event.



## PARTICIPATION IN CITIZEN'S RUN TRUST ANNUAL RUN

Vasantham children participated in Citizen's Run Trust annual event held in Chennai on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2013. Children from various homes assembled at Queen Mary's college and the run began at around 4 pm. About 80 children and staff from Vasantham took part in the event with great energy and completed the run. It was a delight to witness the way most children with their Citizens' Run t-shirt managed to cover a considerable distance, that too at an impressive pace. Vasantham would like to thank Citizen's run trust, a long-time supporter and well-wisher.



## TEACHER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

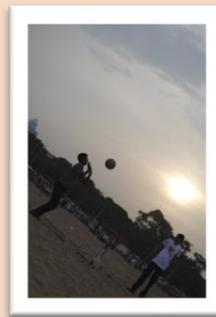
Members from Inner Wheel Club of Chennai Central visited Vasantham on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2013. The members spoke about the role of teachers and appreciated the work done by staff at Vasantham. The staff members were felicitated with gifts. That evening was fun filled with games such as *anthakshari* and dumb charades conducted for staff and children.

Teacher's day celebration was held on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Mr. Arulprakash, a prominent Tamil orator (of Vijay TV's 'Tamizh paechu engal moochu' fame) and Mr. Natarajan Raman, representing Patterns Software Design Institute and Dream India presided over the function. Mrs. Alli Murugesan, Founder & Director of Vasantham, welcomed the chief guest, parents and all the well-wishers of Vasantham. Mr. Arulprakash, in his speech, passed on wonderful messages about life, role of teachers, parents and society in shaping a student's life. He delivered this message in such a fun filled way that the audience were completely entertained. Mr. Natarajan appreciated the teachers for their role in teaching not just concepts, but skills required for daily living and shaping their personality in terms of discipline, promptness, etc. Parents and well-wishers shared their thoughts on the great service being done by the staff of Vasantham. All the teachers were honoured with mementos and gifts from Vasantham, Patterns Software Design Institute and Dream India.



## EXCURSION

The children of Vasantham were taken on an excursion to Marina beach on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, following the Citizens' Run. Various games including cricket, kho kho and throw ball ensured the children spent their time with immense joy. The children simulated a huge train by following each other and moving around in a pattern. Children enjoyed their time at the beach with delicious servings of hot bajjis and various snacks. Volunteers from Dream India joined Vasantham kids to entertain them.



## PARENTS TEACHERS MEETING

The second quarterly programme plan meeting was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2013. Mrs. Alli Murugesan informed the plans for the 25<sup>th</sup> year celebrations and sought the support of parents in spreading the message about inclusive education. Discussions on the rules, regulations, updates on events that happened between June and August 2013, plans for the next 3 months regarding celebrations and holidays were discussed. Further, parents had the opportunity to discuss about their children's progress and plan for the next 3 months with their class teacher, therapists and the director. The event ended with National anthem.

## ART WORKSHOP

As a part of the Joy of Giving week, Chennai Volunteers collaborated with Mr. Abhik from Dear Imagination to conduct a half day art workshop at Vasantham on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2013. All of them were instructed to draw a tree with colourful leaves. Though the exposure to English is not much, the kids left everyone dumbstruck by understanding and repeating the instructions provided in English. They continue using words such as 'beautiful', 'very nice' which they learnt during the art workshop. It was wonderful to witness the kids trying their hand on the colourful tree. One of our students, Mr. Jayakanth even came over to enquire why the volunteers were asking them to shade each leaf of the tree with different colour when tree leaves are infact green. Many of them who finished their piece of art early continued drawing until they were forced to stop. All the kids enjoyed the way the volunteers interacted and motivated them to express their talents. Thanks to Chennai Volunteers, Dear Imagination & Give India team. Special thanks to Ms. Rinku, Mr. Abhik, Ms. Meera, Mr. Ashwin, Mr. Prateek, Ms. Vidya, Ms. Janani & Mr. Tamilarasan.



## SUPPORT THROUGH MUSIC

Director Mysskin has consented to contribute the entire collection generated from the distribution of audio CDs of a movie released recently to Vasantham. The original sound track CDs of the movie 'Onnaiyum Aatukuttiyum' directed by Director Mysskin is free of cost. People buying the same have an option of contributing any amount to Vasantham. These CDs are available at Vasantham's premises; online in 60024.com and at various districts of Tamil Nadu where the Director himself is campaigning.

## CHILLING SUNDAY

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, children were thrilled to see the road outside the school campus look like a park with rides and goodies put up for a programme at the nearby temple. Kids in the hostel made the best use of it by taking turns to go on the rides and enjoy the pink cotton candies.



## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

- One of our supporters, an auditor Mr. Murugavel's son Mas. Karthik's birthday was celebrated with family at Vasantham. They cut a cake, distributed sweets and cake, sponsored food and spent time with children. They have always celebrated his birthday at Vasantham
- Student Manikandan's nephew's birthday was celebrated by his brother celebrated where they distributed cake, snacks, and gifts to each kid and sponsored food for the day.
- One of our students, Ms. Gayathiri and her sister Ms. Jayapradha's birthdays were celebrated at Vasantham. Cake, sweets and snacks were distributed to all the kids.
- Birthdays of the children of our constant supporters, Dr. Dinesh Kumar & Dr. Krithika were celebrated at Vasantham. They cut cake and distributed sweets, cake and snacks to all the children.
- One of our supporters, Mr. Prashantha Reddy's son Mas. Babloo's first birthday was celebrated at Vasantham. They donated therapy and teaching materials to Vasantham kids. During the celebration, Mas.Siddharth, Mr.Naveen's son donated his toys and games to Vasantham kids.
- Baby.Suganya, Mr. Padmanabhan's daughter's first birthday was celebrated at Vasantham. They sponsored food for the day and uniform material for the students in residential care.
- One of our celebrity donors, who always walks in like any other person without any airs about himself, Mr. 'Blade' Shankar celebrated his son Mas. Pappu's birthday at Vasantham, as they do every year. Sweets were distributed to all the kids.



## GLIMPSES

### Volunteers

Eight French volunteers from ICAM institute, in collaboration with Loyola College spent a full day, once a week, for a period of one month between mid July and mid August 2013 at Vasantham. The volunteers were involved in classroom, vocational and recreational activities. It was indeed a pleasure to watch the interaction between them and individuals with special needs at Vasantham inspite of the language barrier. Special thanks to Chennai Volunteers for facilitating this collaborative volunteering task.



### Poojas

Vinayagar Chaturthi and Krishna Jayanthi were declared holidays for the school. The students in the residential care celebrated the events with kozhukatai, seedai and other snacks.

### Medical Camp

Ortho camp was conducted by Mohan Ortho Clinic on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. They have also provided individual reports with details on the orthotic equipments and aids (such as calliper) required for each individual. We are looking in for sponsors to support the same.

### Inspection

The District Differently Abled Rehabilitation Officer visited Vasantham for inspection on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. Comments on the existing services and suggestions were provided. This was conducted for the renewal of recognition under Government of Tamil Nadu and Persons with Disability Act.

### Home visit

Founder & Director, Mrs. Alli Murugesan and a staff visited homes of students receiving services at Vasantham in the month of August 2013. This surprise visit was conducted to gain an insight into how the children are behaving and performing at home, involvement of parent and other family members, facilities available at home and the financial status of the family.

### Joy of Giving Week

Mrs. Alli Murugesan, Founder & Director, Vasantham attended a workshop on preparation and presentation of needs for the Joy of Giving week celebrations scheduled in October every year.

## PILLARS OF STRENGTH

Vasantham thanks all the donors and well wishers for their support, without which we would not be stepping into 25<sup>th</sup> year this October 2013. Few donors who have extended overwhelming support are:

- **Mrs. Sivagama Sundari, Mrs. Brindha and Mr. K.S. Kalidas** for their financial assistance
- **United Way of Chennai** for sanctioning funds towards purchase of desktops, CCTV and renovation of flooring and wall in the ground floor. Thanks to **CIOSA** for mediating the same.
- **Mr. Ganesan** for donating an LCD television, fan, 5 carrom boards. Kids are enjoying their evenings spending time playing carrom board. It is fascinating to watch them aim and strike with wonderful accuracy. Special thanks to **Mr. Ganesan** for just walking into the school and purchasing the needs and getting them delivered immediately that evening.
- **Mrs. Shruthi and Mr. Prasanna** visited Vasantham, spent time interacting with the children. As always when coming down from the USA, they donated teaching and therapy materials which are of great use. They have always provided innovative ideas and materials to be implemented and used in classroom and therapy sessions.
- Our long term supporter, **Bank of Baroda Workmen Union** donated fan and rice during their anniversary celebration.
- One of our donors, **Ms. Hemalatha Madathil** was accompanied by **Mr. Vasanth**, our web designer one afternoon who spent time with the kids and distributed sweets.
- A new desktop was received as donation from **Sukra Jewellery**, one of our long time supporters.
- Students from **Vel Tech College** donated teaching and therapy materials to Vasantham.
- One of our constant 'support-a-child' donor **Mr. Abhishek** visited Vasantham when he came down to Chennai and distributed chocolates to all kids.
- As done over the last few years, vegetables were received from **Koyambedu market** couple of times in a month.
- **Mr. Balaji**, from Trend Setters & iNautix visited Vasantham with his friend and bought some gift vouchers and donated towards food sponsor. He is one main supporter who makes sure he gifts only Vasantham's gift voucher to family and friends during their special occasions.
- **Mr. Ekambaram**, Karpaga Vinayagar Printers, the one who takes care of our printing sponsored food on his wedding anniversary as done every year. He visited along with his wife and spent time with the children.

Special thanks to some of our regular supporters who have been contributing towards support-a-child scheme, food sponsor, medical expenses, training a child, etc.:

- **Vinayaka Road Lines**
- **Dr. Dinesh Kumar**
- **Ms. Jerin Mary**
- **Mr. S.M.Parthasarthy**
- **Mr. Abhishek**
- **Mr.Rm.Ramesh, Mr.Rm.Suresh & Ms.Vasanth Thirunavukkarassu**