

# ThisAbility

Satya Special School's quarterly newsletter

## Mothers' Day Out



Move over Gordon Ramsay, Satya moms are here to stay!

It was a fun day for the 250 mothers of students at Satya, as they laughed, played, and yes, cooked, at a program "Mother's Day Out" organized by Satya Special School in association with Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives and Rotary Club of Pondicherry.

Mothers of children with disabilities are often stressed, and rarely take time out for themselves. This event, held on a weekday, helped them loosen up and have some fun.

Dr. Vidya Ramkumar, chairperson of Dowry Prohibition Advisory Board Government of Puducherry, Ms. R. Sadhana Rajarajan, Chairperson of Confederation of Indian Industries Women Network, and Ms. Shanthi Debroux Founder of AKKA Foundation, Belgium

were the guests of honour. Around 75 mothers participated in the cookery contest, where mothers prepared healthy dishes made from traditional millets and the like! Some of the unique dishes included blue idlis, ragi adai, and colourful salads!

It also paved the way for one mother considering taking up catering professionally, while Satya Special School is also speaking with the mothers to see how the students' afternoon healthy snack can be provided by a cohort of interested mothers!

After the contest, it was games time, as the mothers participated in games and had a whole lot of fun!

Spotlight

## S. Akhilandeswari

### Inclusion her mantra

S. Akhilandeswari is Satya's teacher at the Inclusive Classroom at Lawspet, and she has travelled a long way!

A special educator with a B.Ed. under her belt, Akhila's entry to special education was merely by chance. She was waiting in a hospital for her mother's surgery, when another attendee was doing some work related to the special education course. She joined a special education course and was hooked!

Over the past eight years, she has worked in many different projects within Satya—from the primary sections to the multiple disabilities centre.

When the inclusive classroom project came about, she was the obvious choice, says Chitra Shah, director, Satya Special School. "She was instrumental in crating and running the school readiness program, and shared our vision of inclusive education," says Chitra.

Akhila says the project gives her a lot of hope. She says it is important for students with intellectual disability to be integrated into society. "It doesn't matter whether they understand everything, it's about getting as much as they can, and a school environment," she says.



## Libraries set up in village centres

*"A book is a gift you can open again and again and again."*

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Satya Special School has inaugurated libraries in its village centres, thanks to a new library program by Jimmy Library NGO, spearheaded by Ms. Sylvia. On 14 September, the library was inaugurated by Ms. Sylvia.

Encouraged by its success, Satya participated in a Donate-a-Book campaign conducted by Pratham Books and received more books in our village centres.

The books were varied—they ranged from picture books to story books, in English and Tamil—and were carefully selected so that our children could use them most fruitfully. There is a general misconception that children with intellectual and developmental disabilities cannot enjoy storybooks, but this is far from the truth.

After the inauguration, our student Yugasri from our Mutrampet centre took on the role of a storyteller! She regaled her friends with a story she read from the library!



## Speaking up, on radio!

Students from Satya's Alternative Inclusive Centre for Education are on their way to self-advocacy!

As part of this, they were invited to All India Radio to perform a variety show! The students spoke about inclusion and accessibility for people with special needs. They sang songs, presented riddles, and had a lot of fun. They also presented a Kural and a story on good habits as well. The program was aired on radio on Dec 26.

SELF ADVOCACY



## New and varied livelihood options



Seven of our adult students from our Villianur Village Rehabilitation Centre are being trained in agriculture since July, thanks to a benevolent gesture.

A well-wisher provided their farm at Poraiyur village in Villianur for our students to learn agriculture as a vocation. They have learnt how to prepare garden beds and have started their farming journey!



Come Monday, and you will find 12 students at the vocational training centre of Satya Special School getting their hands messy with clay! Soon, though, this clay is shaped, coloured and baked in a kiln to create beautiful ceramic objects. This project, called Soolai, is a partnership with Auroville-based artists, and aims to create livelihood options for students and mothers as well.



The project kicked off with Satya's Christmas ornaments/fridge magnets. Guided by artist Indrani Cassime and her daughter Hana, the ornaments were sold online. Next came a corporate order for the new year, which our students completed to the client's satisfaction.

Thirankoodu, the livelihood program for vulnerable women and mothers of Satya, is going strong with training and sample development for several agencies. Two Thirankoodu centres are now operational, where trained women come in, and work on orders per their schedule. After an order of bags was completed, they are now looking at designing and creating more products for home use. All livelihood projects—of the students and their mothers—can be seen on [www.instagram.com/thirankoodu](http://www.instagram.com/thirankoodu)

## Rally promoting inclusion held



To commemorate the International Day of Disabilities, Satya Special School, in association with the Election Commission of India and the Rural India Supporting Trust, organized an inclusive mela to promote the idea of inclusion.

The event was attended by many dignitaries including Mr. B.Thillaivel, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer; Mr.V.Govindasamy, State Nodal Officer Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation; Dr. Cheryl-Ann Shivan, Principal of Kasthurba College for Women and Mr. G. Velayan, Inspector of Police, Villianur. Mr. Kennedy, traffic police inspector, coordinated the smooth functioning of the event.

Nearly 300 members from Kasthurba College for Women and Satya Special School participated in the rally. The participants included college students, children with intellectual disability and children on wheelchairs.

Participants marched and chanted slogans like "Ensure the right to participate in society for all", "Where there is a wheel there is a way", "Some angels have wings, some have wheels" and held placards promoting inclusion.



Over 1000 members of the public saw the rally and heard slogans chanted by the participants.

During the rally a member of the public approached the organizers and said he had a child with special needs at home and asked if he could be admitted to Satya. Overall, the rally was a huge success.

To conclude the event, Karthikeyan, a student of Satya Special School, delivered the vote of thanks.

Celebrations at Satya!

**CHILDREN'S  
DAY**



**KARTHIGAI  
DEEPAM**



**XMAS**



**DISABILITY  
DAY**





## Students excel in cultural program

Our students received several prizes at the Nayagan Sports and Cultural Fest, an event designed to bring out the talents of children with disabilities.



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