

# ThisAbility

Satya Special School's quarterly newsletter

## Yes, Prime Minister!

Parliament at Satya's Village Centre assumes office



One day in March, during lunch at Satya's Muttrampet Village Resource Centre, our student Kowshik approached our staff with a problem: one of the students had brought lunch that had spoiled.

"We cannot let him eat this," he said, "we must tell his parents."

The staff member complied. After all, Kowshik was the minister of health at the newly formed children's parliament at the centre. Kowshik's prime minister Karthick Raja and his cabinet had been sworn in just over a month earlier, as part of Satya's effort to inculcate life skills and an appetite for self-advocacy among students.

The precursor to the children's parliament was the APJ Abdul Kalam Children's Club that was formed in January. On National Voters' Day, January 25, the staff at Muttrampet decided to form a children's parliament, as an opportunity to learn critical life skills and encourage their grounding in self-advocacy and participation in society.

After an orientation, the actual process began with symbols allotted to candidates who filed their nominations. The symbols were selected as things that the students saw everyday and were familiar with: apple, comb, mixie, light bulb, car, clock, etc.

There was intense campaigning as well. Check out this video!

The student parliament is an effort to encourage self-advocacy and inclusion in public life.

## Parliament at Satya's Village Centre assumes office



Voting was held on February 10, and the results were declared on the 13th. The oath-taking ceremony was held on 17th February. The cabinet comprises: Kowshik as the minister of health, Kandasamy and Yugasri as the joint ministers of education, Dharani as the minister of sports, and Anburaj as the minister of child welfare and agriculture.

Since taking over, the parliament has been a bridge between the students and the staff, and also participate in other activities: helping conduct an inclusive science day with the local government school, for instance.

Plans are on to expand the concept of the parliament to the local school, which will be an inclusive children's parliament.

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## Satya enables disability card!

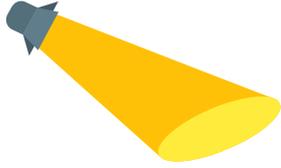


Our outreach program helps the disabled access government schemes as well. Mr. Balamurugan, 20, of Sedurapet village, Villianur, who has an intellectual disability, did not receive any social security benefits because he did not have a disability ID card. Getting a card was proving to be difficult for him.

Satya followed up with the government departments and after two years of continuous followup, he has now received his certificate, which enables him to receive the pension of Rs 2000 per month.



Spotlight



## Mirthula

Happy to be mainstreamed!



Mirthula, now 12, has cerebral palsy and intellectual disability. She was identified by our Mobile Therapy Unit during their services, and has now been receiving therapy.

She has now improved enough that she could get integrated into the local government school. She now studies in Class 6, on par for her age. While she found it difficult to cope with the school environment in the beginning, she now loves going to school and has lots of friends as well.

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## Satya's third inclusive classroom at Karaikal

INCLUSION



Our third inclusive classroom was inaugurated at the Rm A.S. Packirisamy Pillai GHS- Karaikalmedu in Karaikal on 8th of February! Our earlier inclusive classrooms are in Lawspet and Thirubuvanai, Pondicherry.

In Karaikal, a pre-assessment of three schools threw up alarming results: 62% of children were at the beginner level in Tamil,

and the corresponding figures for English and Maths were 49% and 25%. This meant that remedial education for children with learning disabilities and difficulties was the essential first step to creating truly inclusive classrooms. Satya has started remedial education for 25 of these children.

During the inauguration, the chief educational officer Mr. K.Rajasekaran spoke about the significance of the inclusive classroom in creating a supportive learning environment for all students.

An inclusive game session was also conducted to promote inclusion as part of sports for young athletes.



## Through the photography lens



Srivatsan Sankaran is an award-winning deaf photographer whose work has been featured internationally. He is also passionate about creating employment and livelihood opportunities for the disabled. When we approached him for a workshop for our students, he agreed immediately!

So, on Feb 1, Srivatsan and his assistant Aravind took twelve of our students on a journey of light, shadows, perspectives and reflections. Here are a few of those pictures!

“There is a lot of promise in the students and their way of seeing things can sometimes be very different,” said Srivatsan. We are planning follow-up sessions to not just build their skills, but also to ensure that they are able to express themselves in the medium that they choose! This workshop is an important part of working cross-disability, so that organizations are not working in silos.

Glimpses of activities at Satya!

**REPUBLIC DAY**



**OUR  
PRODUCTS AT  
THE WORLD  
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**INCLUSIVE  
SCIENCE FAIR**



**PONGAL  
CELEBRATIONS**





## AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### *Quizzed!*



Our students shone at Quizabled, the annual quiz competition held by the Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu.

Eight of our students qualified for the finals, held in Chennai, and one of our teams, comprising Yugasri and Tamizhselvi, won the first prize in the Cerebral Palsy and Autism category.

### *Drawn!*

S. Priyadarshini won the first prize in the United Schools Organization's annual drawing competition! Competing in the High Support category, Priyadarshini's drawing of her mother as the woman who makes the difference in her life won the judges' hearts and votes!



*Picture shows other drawings by our students*

### *Director wins awards for service*

Our director, Ms. Chitra Shah was awarded by Nandalala Seva Samiti for her service, on the occasion of Women's Day. Ms. Chitra Shah was also awarded the vocational excellence award by the Rotary Club of Madras Pallava, for serving 1000 disabled children with a workforce of 140 people.

