

# ThisAbility

Satya Special School's quarterly newsletter

VOLUNTEER  
SPECIAL

## Volunteers: Bringing the World to Satya

By Chitra Shah



Volunteering at Satya has evolved from a sympathy mindset to a partnership, where the volunteer and Satya learn, share, and experience understanding and compassion.

We have been fortunate to have had wonderful committed volunteers from across the world. From Rodney Maiden from the US who has volunteered with us thrice, to Shruti Ramesh, an American India Foundation Fellow, who worked on menstrual hygiene and health.

Rodney said, of his experience, "Though disability is universal, what makes it interesting is how Satya is managing to not just change life's of CWSNs but also challenge social norms and myths. This mix of social advocacy, activism combined with end-to-end service delivery was both enriching and interesting."



**What makes it interesting is how Satya is managing to not just change the lives of CWSNs but also challenge social norms and myths.**

Rodney Maiden



Satya has learnt a lot from our volunteers. Many volunteers, especially from other countries, brought with them their approaches, strategies, and current trends of their countries such as weight blankets, sensory mats, and visual stimulation, some of which were unheard of in India at that time.

In the last few years, Satya has had many American and French volunteers of Indian origin who come with the double advantage of their professional experiences and their understanding of Indian culture. An example is Shruthi Ramesh, who boldly challenged menstrual myths and practices through her Naanum Penn project.

We have had volunteers and interns, not just from Social Work, Special Education and Therapy streams, but also from statistics and data, such as data analyst Samhita, who has helped develop a Risk Assessment Checklist. This is a valuable tool for Satya to identify parents who are at risk of giving birth to children with disabilities. And the group from 3D Experience Labs are working on an electric wheelchair to help a child with Cerebral Palsy walk his first steps.

The volunteers' interests and skills may be different, but they all had similar feedback. In the words of one volunteer, **"It was life changing. I will cherish these moments forever and consider myself blessed for being presented with this opportunity."**


Amen! We feel the same about our volunteers!

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## **Satya needs you!**

Satya welcomes volunteers and has meaningful offline and online opportunities, both short-term and long-term, for volunteering.

To explore volunteering at Satya Special School, send an email to [admin@satyaspecialschool.org](mailto:admin@satyaspecialschool.org) with details. We will get right back to you!



## VOLUNTEERING: SUMMER 2023

Here's a glimpse into the different activities our volunteers did just this year!

Four medical students from France visited our centres and interacted with our students. Lucas, Rohan, Pauline and Carolina had a great time singing and dancing with our students, even learning a few lines of a Tamil song in the process!

A team of volunteers from Partage Dans Le Monde, from France, conducted art sessions for our students at the vocational centre. They gently guided the students through activities, and a grand art project was the result.

Volunteers from our partner Mancikalalu Onlus visited our centres and volunteered in various capacities. Sometimes, volunteers enter for an activity, and move on to another. One of the volunteers, Giovanna, was a great help in getting new designs for Soolai, the ceramic project at our vocational training centre. Listen in to her experience [here](#).



Apart from volunteers, we have been grateful to have hosted fellows from the American India Foundation for the past couple of years. Our most recent Fellow was Samhita Vadapalli, and her research on data yielded a much-needed Risk Assessment Checklist for disability.

She says, of her experience, **“The Fellowship provided a unique exposure that is not available within the traditional classroom or workplace, as I had the opportunity to work on a diverse range of projects which required distinctly different skill sets. I was able to develop my professional skills in several areas including but not limited to data analysis, survey design, curriculum design, partnership building and grant proposal development....”**

Read the full blog by our American India Fellow Samhita Vadapalli [here](#).



## Satya Turns 20!

### HAPPENINGS



Satya Special School turned 20 on September 9.

Staff of Satya took some time to let their hair down and celebrate the road walked on! It was a time to look back and relive some memories of the early days of the organization, as well as look ahead to the path ahead.

Special attendees went down memory lane. They included the patron of Satya, Dr Nalam, Dr Usha Umachigi, former president of Satya Special School and N. Krishna Babu, general secretary.

Board members and office bearers Chitra Shah, Bindu Modi, Sita Ramkumar, VG Somasekhar and R. Madhavan were also present at the event.

The emcee of the event was RJ Karun, a radio jockey and philanthropist who has been working for clean sanitation. He kept the audience engaged, and also left staff with some food for thought: how does their personal mission connect with their heart, hand, and head?

The most awaited section of the event was the Satya Awards: an annual awards for the different centres, and staff of Satya to acknowledge the exemplary work done by them. A rolling shield for the best centre was bagged by the Mutrampet centre (image, top left).

The entire program was kept in wraps and none of the staff knew what was in store during the celebrations! The program was conceptualized and implemented by the board of Satya Special School.

## A New Dawn for Mothers

HAPPENINGS



Our project to train mothers of children with disabilities to become community rehab assistants has gone on swimmingly well.

At a function to distribute assessment and therapy kits to the mothers, the Australian Consul-General in Chennai, Ms Sarah Kirew and her team visited our Skill Training Centre in Auroville. The instant connection that the Hon'ble Consul General formed with the mothers, beyond differences of language and culture, was truly special. The conversations were filled with warmth, shared stories, and a mutual understanding of the unique journeys these mothers and their children are navigating. Her experience of inclusion also helped the mothers widen their horizons.

## MoU for Genetic Counseling



Satya, with the support of RIST, has signed an MoU with Anderson Diagnostics and Labs, to answer questions related to special needs and genetics.

Through the MOU, Satya will provide genetic counselling not just for siblings of CWSNs but also couples planning to have a second child, and families having queries about genetics and its role. A workshop for parents was also held under this project.

Glimpses of activities at Satya!

**INCLUSIVE  
FRIENDSHIP  
DAY**



**VINAYAGA  
CHATURTHI**



**TEACHER'S DAY**



**INDEPENDENCE  
DAY**



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