



VASANTHAM e-Newsletter

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VASANTHAM Special School for the Mentally Challenged
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Celebrating 25 years ☺

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STALLS

Stalls of products prepared by individuals with special needs at Vasantham were displayed at various corporate offices such as KPMG, L&T Insurance, CRISIL, HSBC and at Guild of Service during Seva Mela 2013. Special thanks to friends from R R Donnelley for supporting Vasantham in setting up our stall at the Seva Mela. Furthermore, a stall with Onaiyum Aatukutiyum CDs was displayed at Sathyam Cinemas and Director Mysskin contributed to the donation through the sale of CDs to Vasantham.



SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS..... A 365 DAY AFFAIR!!

It has been 24 years since Vasantham was incepted and on the 2nd of October 2013, there was an event to commemorate stepping into the 25th year. The 25th year year long festivities was inaugurated by lighting the traditional lamp by one of our first student Mr. Karthik (one of our first student's) mother, another student Mr. Jagadeesh's father, Mr. Naveen (Patterns), Mr. Samikannu (Senior Artist), Ms. Mozhi (Dream India). Two banners were flagged off by two of our long time supporters and parents Mr. R. Kubendran (Mr. R. K. Karthik's father) and Mr. Ajay Kumar (Mr. Jagadeesh's father). Further, we had other guests such as Mr. Prashanth and family, our student Mr. Gowrishankar's mother and sister in law.

The Dream India team along with Patterns Software Design Institute conducted drawing and quiz competitions for the 120 individuals with special needs at Vasantham. The drawing competition began with four topics from which kids chose their best. Mr. Naveen Shenoy and family sponsored the materials required for the drawing competition - chart paper, crayons, colour pencils. The children took us all by surprise with the way ideas and colours were shared amongst them. Mr. Naveen's son, Mast. Siddharth, friends from Dream India, Mr. Natarajan, Ms. Mozhi and family; some of our students' parents along with our staff went around helping the kids if required. Refreshments were served on the go. This was followed by an energetic performance by our alumnus Mr. Ashley Lenin and his sister Ms. Sarah for a song from a recent Tamil movie. The quiz competition had questions ranging from current affairs, history, science to an exciting movie round as well.

Various plans for celebrating the 25th year were announced. Following the events, lunch was served for all the children and well wishers. With gifts for all and delicious lunch, the children had a great day celebrating Gandhi Jayanthi, marking a momentous beginning to the 25 year jubilee.



JOY OF GIVING WEEK

Commemorating the Joy of Giving week, about 8 employees from ITC Grand Chola visited Vasantham on the afternoon of 7th of October 2013. They spent couple of hours interacting with the children, and distributing fruits and sweets. Special thanks to Chennai Volunteers for linking us up.



PARTICIPATION IN INTER-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Every year children from Vasantham participate in the inter-school education competitions conducted by the Dream India team to celebrate Gandhi Jayanthi. This year our children participated in the event conducted at Sarojini Vardappan Destitute home on the 6th of October 2013. Vasantham children competed with children from mainstream schools: Udhavum Nanbargal Home, SV Home, as well as corporation schools at Alapakkam and Ramapuram. Our children took part in various competitions such as drawing, essay writing, quiz, thirukural reciting, elocution and cultural events. The way Vasantham kids performed in the quiz competition was much appreciated and kept the audience spell bound throughout. Children were served with breakfast, lunch and snacks by the Dream India team. Winning various prizes and trophies, our children were absolutely thrilled with the day. Vasantham thanks the DI team for the opportunity to showcase our talent.



POOJA

Ayudha pooja and Saraswathy Pooja was celebrated at Vasantham's premises on the 11th of October 2013. Prior to this, a Golu with several miniature models of various avatars of Hindu gods, toys, etc was arranged on the 2nd floor. Further, children from each classroom were expected to prepare a model with their respective teachers' help. These models included that of a hospital, park, railway station, airport, bus terminus, schools, places of worship, forest, etc. On the day of the Pooja, these models were evaluated and prizes were distributed for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Flowers were distributed by our student Ms. Krithika. As done every year, the Pooja was conducted by one of our student Mr. Jayakanth's father, Mr. Natarajan. Parents of many of our children joined us during the day. Pooja was performed for all books, equipments, teaching aids, vehicles and classrooms.



DIWALI CELEBRATION

Diwali celebrations were held on the 30th of October 2013. The campus was decorated colourfully with dupattas, papers and other decorative things. Children were glowing in colourful new clothes. The evening began with lighting of the lamp by Mas. Siddheshwar, Ms. Gayathiri, Mr. Sabhareesh, Mr. Mimicry Murugan, Ms. Shenbagavalli and Mrs. Seetha. A mimicry show was organised by Mimicry Murugan and our kids enjoyed the way he imitated comedian Vadivelu's style of speaking and body mannerism. Further, he entertained the kids by conducting several games that facilitated eye-hand, motor, cognitive co-ordination. There were dance and music shows by our kids. Later in the evening crackers were lightened, everyone had a wonderful dinner and left with goodies in hand.

On the 27th of October 2013, Vasantham kids participated in the Anandha Diwali organised by Udhavum Ullangal at T. Nagar. They provided the kids with new colourful clothes, lunch and snacks. The day was filled with a variety of entertainment shows. Vasantham kids enjoyed the day with kids from other NGOs in and around Chennai. Vasantham expresses its heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Shankar Mahadevan, Ms. Rajeswari & team from Udhavum Ullangal.



PARENTS TEACHERS MEETING

The second quarterly programme plan meeting was held on the 7th of December 2013. 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.

CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION

On the 13th of November 2013, Children's Day was celebrated at Vasantham. Children were excited to have a 'no-uniform' day. They were all dressed colourfully in a variety of clothes. The hall was decorated with lots of balloon and colour papers. The day began with a fun filled lecture 'Wild Walk' by Ms. Shrilekha Venkateshwar. She displayed wildlife photographs of animals, their foot/nail prints, etc. clicked by herself and explained about each picture patiently. It was surprising to see Vasantham kids ask specific doubts about certain photographs. Following this, lollipops were distributed to the kids. The remaining day was filled with numerous games such as balance walking, soft ball throw, shape identification and quiz competition. Children had energy drink, snacks, lunch and take away gifts and chocolates. The evening concluded with a music concert by Mr. Amith Sivashanmugam and Mr. Isai Amudhan from White Lady Rock Band. Children thoroughly enjoyed the day. Vasantham thanks Ms. Shrilekha and Mr. Amith for volunteering and entertaining the kids inspite of the short notice. A special thanks to our friends from Klemmen Engineering Private Limited for sponsoring gifts for the day and visiting the kids; Wheels India for donating the lunch for the day.

The afternoon of the 14th of November 2014 was another treat with BPLL organising a half day fun filled game time for children with special needs at Vasantham. Various games were conducted. The team from BBPL distributed pencils, notebooks and sweets to all the children. Vasantham thanks BBPL team for their overwhelming support.



PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

One of the staff at Vasantham, Ms. Elamathi attended the 4th International Conference on Early Intervention in children with mental retardation held at Chennai between the 20th and 23rd of November 2013.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Christmas celebrations were held on the 23rd of December 2013. The day began with Ms. Jemie James and team singing carols and telling Christmas stories to Vasantham kids. Children enjoyed their presence, listening intently, waving and singing along with them. The treat was having four Santa Claus', the youngest being 4 month old Mas. Siddheshwar. The three other Santa Claus' were one of our students Mas. J. Praveen's cousin and our students, Mr. Abdul and Mr. Jamshed. They came in with a bang and a huge bag of chocolates, danced with kids and entertained all. Videos of story and songs related to Christmas were played. Pastor. Paul Murugaiah and his friend delivered the Christmas prayer and sang songs which kids sang along to. One of our alumnus, Mr. Ashley's parents offered banana flavoured cakes for all children. A special lunch was organised and kids carried home a bag of gifts.



MAINTENANCE

Renovation work was carried out on the flooring in the ground floor classrooms and corridor. The mosaic was replaced by vitrified tiles and the walls painted. During this 3 week work, the classes were conducted in a cluster form in the 2nd floor multipurpose hall. This project is funded by United Way of Chennai.

Considering the need for precautionary measures against communicable diseases, Netlon was installed at the ground, first and second floors at Vasantham premises in the last week of December 2013.



GLIMPSES

SUPPORT

- Extension from art workshop: **Ms. Meera Sridharan** and **Chennai Volunteers** have been kind enough to frame and display the art works by individuals with special needs at Vasantham, at an exhibition. As promised these paintings were sold and the funds forwarded to Vasantham. Special thanks to **Ms. Meera Sridharan, Mr. Karthik Iyer, Ms. Meenakshi Ramesh & Ms. Rekha Ramachandran** for supporting Vasantham.
- Special thanks to **Mr. Nagarajan** from Koyambedu market who is donating vegetables to Vasantham consistently on a weekly basis.
- About 4 individuals with special needs from Vasantham and staff attended the Christmas celebration at **Spartan group of schools** on the 6th of December 2013. Thanks to the management, children, parents and staff for their contribution this year. Spartan group has been supporting Vasantham consistently for several years in all possible ways and we greatly appreciate their kind gesture.
- An alumnus of Omayal Aachi College of Nursing provided financial assistance to Vasantham.
- **Ms. Sarvamangala & Mr. Hariharan** purchased products prepared by Vasantham kids as a return gift for their daughter's Ayush Homam.

VISIT

- Trainees from **Little Hearts fun home** visited Vasantham on the 19th of November 2013 as a part of their curriculum. Further under graduate and post graduate students from various nursing colleges in Chennai had one day observational visit to Vasantham.
- On the 8th of December 2013, friends from **AG church** visited Vasantham and sang carols to celebrate the month of Christmas.
- On the 12th of December 2013, our long term constant supporters from **Citizens' Run Trust, Mr. Ranvir Shah and Mr. Eric Auzoux** visited Vasantham in the evening and had a quick review of the activities and projects.

OUTING

- About 20 children from Vasantham attended the wedding of our well-wisher and supporter **Mr. Subramaniyan, Punnagai Charitable Trust** in the morning of the 12th of December 2013. They were accompanied by 4 staff members. Mr. Subramaniyan was thrilled to see the children. We wish him a happy and blessed life ahead!!

CAMP

- A dental camp was organised by the **Community Dentistry department of Chettinad Hospital** on the 20th of November 2013. During this they screened about 100 individuals with special needs and 30 staff. They have promised to have another follow up camp conducted in the end of January or early February 2014.



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

- One of our students **Mr. Sabhareesh** on the 8th of November 2013 (Gifted pencils and sponsored dinner) and **Saran** on 7th December 2013.
- One of our long time supporters, **Dr. Sundari's** (ENT Surgeons) son **Mr. Suraj** on the 11th of December (Distributed sweet and spent time).
- One of our support-a-child donor **Mr. Abhishek Venugopal** on 28th December 2013 (Bought cake for individuals with special needs at Vasantham who do not have a family). Vasantham kids surprised him with a cake.