



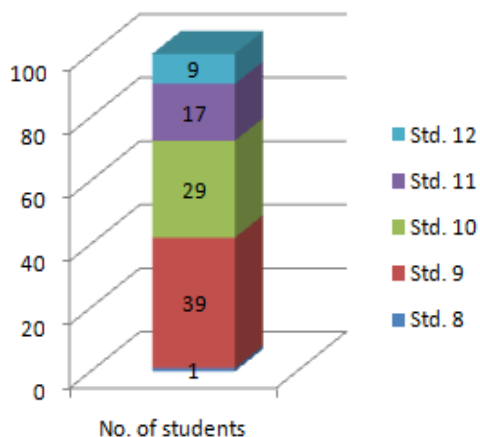
# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2009-2010

# CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

## STUDENTS' SELECTION – 2009-'10

This year, a total of 95 students was selected based on the regular survey of economic conditions, interest to pursue education and the student's performance in academics . Of these 95 students, 46 were girls & 49 boys. The class wise distribution of students is shown below.



## INAUGURAL PROGRAM AND PARENTS' MEET

On June 7th, the inaugural program, involving a meeting with the parents and students, explaining the goal of the scholarship program, the criteria for participation and the nature of activities, was held. 95 students and 90 parents participated in this program., which was presided by Ms. Maheswari, Assistant Elementary Education Officer (AEEO), Nilakottai Block and facilitated by Mr. Kathiresanprabu, Trustee and the Co-ordinator, Mr. Ravichandran.

Notebooks, uniforms and stationery were distributed to all the students. A program was conducted for parents to get to know their children. Some snapshots are below.



## SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Skill development programmes were conducted to improve and foster students' skills in communication, logical reasoning & creativity and to enable them to assess their strengths and weaknesses. 95 students were divided into 4 batches and programmes were conducted separately for each batch. On an average, each student participated in 7 to 8 programmes.



## FIELD TRIPS

This year, 5 field trips were conducted to help students relate their subject knowledge to real life concepts and processes.

The first trip was to Vaigai Dam and Suruli waterfall on June 27<sup>th</sup>. At Vaigai Dam, an engineer explained the process of electricity generation through the hydro power station. At Suruli, the students were taken through the herbal plant cultivation and explained the various species and their uses.



The second field trip was on Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> to the Aavin Dairy Unit in Madurai and Alagarkovil. The students were taken on a tour around the factory and shown the various steps involved in milk processing and packaging. This included processing of milk into palgova. At Alagarkovil, it was a botany lesson for the students as they saw the variety of tree species & refreshed their memory.



The third field trip was held on Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> to Parle-G Biscuit Factory, Keelakkoilkudi samar madam (historical place) and Mannar Thirumalainayackar Mahal in Madurai. On Feb, 13<sup>th</sup>, students went on the 4<sup>th</sup> field trip to the prison in Coimbatore and also visited V.O.Chidambaram Pillai's oil mill. The 5<sup>th</sup> field trip was to the Thalaiyar Tea Estate in Munnar on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. They children were taken through the entire stages of tea processing from plucking to packaging.





## CAREER GUIDANCE

Our Std. 12 students were taken to Velammal School in Madurai to participate in the career guidance program and education fair organized by the Dinakaran newspaper. In addition, a workshop was conducted to provide useful tips to students on how to prepare for the Board exams. Resource persons included retired officials from the Education Department as well as current teachers from Government schools.



## SPORTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS

Preliminary rounds of sports events were conducted in clusters and the final rounds comprising 45 students were conducted at the annual sports meet held on Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>. Both indoor and outdoor games such as cricket, kabadi, chess and carom were conducted. The winners were given prizes.



Similar to sports, an annual cultural program was conducted. 59 students were short-listed for the final cultural event, comprising dance, drama, poetry recitation and oration. 4 chief guests presided over and judged various performances. Prizes were given to all the participants.



## HEALTH PROGRAMS

On Sep. 30<sup>th</sup>, a dual health program was organized. Sister Jane Ann Sarojini, the chief of Damien Hospital at Nilakkottai counselled the female students on adolescent health and clarified their doubts in a closed session. Mr. Nagasundaram from the same hospital explained in detail about eye care and leprosy.



## EXCURSION

Another important program this year was the 2-day excursion to Chennai, Mahabalipuram & Vandalur on Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. 82 students participated in this tour. We were warmly greeted by the team at Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Mylapore, where the students were given breakfast. The main locations visited on Day-1 were the AVM Studios, the Coco Cola Factory near Thiruvallur and Marina Beach. That day, students were hosted at the homes of donors and well-wishers. The next day, we went to Dakshinachitra, Mahabalipuram and Vandalur Zoo.



## PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP



A new initiative this year was the photography workshop held on Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> at Perumal Malai, Kodaikanal with professional help from Madras University students. The resource persons made a presentation on the history of photography and the key aspects in taking a photograph, namely,



composition, aperture and shutter speed. Students enjoyed their first chance to use a point & shoot, as well as a digital camera.

Computer classes to acquaint students with basic computer operation skills and MS Office were conducted. In addition, a 6-month Spoken English course was conducted for 20 students in the higher classes.

## OTHER PROGRAMMES

**DEBATE** – We organized a debate on Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> on the topic “The reason behind individual excellence – teacher, parents or students themselves”. In all, 321 people, including students and parents participated in this program, which was presided by the Assistant Elementary Education Officer (AEEO), Nilakottai Block. Students and parents participated in this program and presented their arguments convincingly.





## STORY WRITING AND STORY-TELLING COMPETITION

Aspire Foundation collaborated with Nalanda Way, a Chennai-based NGO and organized a story telling and story writing competition in 20 villages in Nilakottai and Batlagundu Blocks, as part of Art, Arattai, Arpattam. The best story writers and story tellers from these 20 villages were selected based on village level competitions and given certificates from UNICEF. The final round was held at Nilakkottai on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, commemorating Children's Day. The prize winners were given medals.

Aspire Foundation won the second prize for good implementation of the story writing and telling competition and on behalf of Aspire Foundation, the Managing Trustee was commended and given a prize at a state level event in Chennai by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Shripathi.



## SUMMER CAMP

A summer camp was conducted in 120 villages in Nilakottai and Batlagundu blocks. The goal was to sustain children's interest in Tamil reading, Math & English through new activities and materials during their summer school break. In each village, volunteers were identified & trained to conduct reading, math & English classes. Most volunteers were school students, who were interested in improving the learning levels of children in their village. These volunteers conducted classes 3-5 days a week.



## EVENTS

### Bicycle rally and drama on the need to abolish child marriage

Sevugampatti is a village where child marriages still happen. Children in the S. Thummalapatti village learning centre initiated a rally to abolish child marriage. Children from Sevugampatti & 3 other neighbouring villages also participated in the rally. They drew the attention of parents and youth. As a culmination point, the children enacted a play on the problems arising from child marriage and the need to do away with the age-old practice. Parents appreciated the message conveyed by the rally & the play and took pride in the fact that some of their children had participated in these events.



Left - Bicycle Rally protesting against child marriage



Right - Drama by children on the evils of child marriage

### Bicycle rally and drama on the importance of sanitation & hygiene

In Thoppupatti village, the Village Learning Centre students conducted a bicycle rally and drama on the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation. Issues such as contamination and diseases that arise due to open defecation and spitting in public places were highlighted in the banners and children's slogans in the bicycle rally. The drama portrayed an unhygienic village that understood the problems associated with lack of sanitation and got transformed into a health-sensitized village. Children from 5 villages participated in the rally.



Left - Children taking an oath at the end of the drama on the importance of sanitation



Right - Bicycle rally on the ill-effects of lack of hygiene & sanitation

### Village cleaning day

Students at Andipatti, a village extremely backward not only in education but also in public sanitation & hygiene, got together and organized a camp. 77 students brought cleaning materials from their homes and cleared the streets in their village of rubbish. These students were given certificates in recognition of their commendable voluntary efforts.



### Village Education Watch Committees formed



In Thopupatti and Sengatampatti, meetings were held to discuss with village elders and youth the need for a Village Education Watch Committee and the functions it could perform. In Sengatampatti, 25 people, comprising mainly parents & youth interested in children's education participated in the meeting. This served as a forum to discuss the functioning of the local school and the problems faced by children in accessing quality education.



### Volunteer selection for students' clubs

We have selected 146 volunteers from almost 20 villages on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Competitions were conducted to encourage them to exhibit their talents. These students were divided into clubs, and office bearers selected for each club. Each club undertook to meet once a month and discuss programs to improve their skills as well as activities to undertake in their village.



### Grama Sabha Meeting

Noothulapuram Grama Sabha meeting was held at Viralipatti on Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Several students mobilized by Aspire Foundation participated in this meeting. Submitting to our request, Mr. P.A.Selvaraj, President of Noothulapuram panchayat explained the duties, responsibilities and functioning of the grama sabha in detail to the students.



### NSS Camp

During the half-yearly examination holidays, students from S.Thummalapatti and neighbouring villages tied up with NSS students from PVP College near Batlagundu and conducted a camp. This camp, spread over 5 days, involved village street cleaning, household survey and 2 rallies – one, sensitizing people on the importance of sanitation and the other on the need to prevent AIDS.



### Science train

Our students were taken for a visit to the 'Science Train' making its rounds around Tamil Nadu, when it came to Dindigul railway station on Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>. Students spent a lot of time looking at the interesting science exhibits inside the train and posed questions to the resource persons regarding the concepts presented.





# PRESS COVERAGE

Below are some of the events we conducted/ participated in, which attracted media coverage.

