

thamarai

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



PARTY TIME... BIRTHDAY TIME

Thamarai's third birthday was a blast! All were spurred into action before preparing the space; drawing a colourful welcome Kolam, lighting loads of candles and hanging the decorations prepared by children during the week. Then chocolate cake arrives and people started filling the space...

Boobalan, the master of ceremony, stood to welcome the jam pack room of children, parents, team members and visitors. The offerings from the children started with songs, poems and Prakash's beautiful dance aided

by the voices of Bharati and Savitri and then a surprise!

The sound of bells came from all corners of the room and young men attired in white with red sashes started walking forward to the stage, they were the youth from Mohanam Cultural Centre, a program to keep original cultural heritages alive through youthful interest. The team of ten performers gave us a mesmerizing experience, using instruments made by themselves from natural materials. The vibration filled the space with such intensity that they captivated one and all. We were guided through their program with explanations of the variety of instruments used, the traditions around the music and dance and how these youth were like our children, local villagers who have mastered this art through discipline and sustained practice and were role models for our kids to follow.

The lights went out; birthday cake with its three bright candles was presented by Balu and Priya and all went home chocolate cake in hand; deeply touched by the experience.

We would like to thank Balu and the Mohanam Team for giving us a very special experience which will be remembered for many more birthday's to come. 🍷



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EDITORS' POND

We are delighted to be bringing you the first edition of the quarterly, Thamarai newsletter. We can hardly believe three years have passed since our burning aspiration to bring a closer connection between Edayanchavadi Village and Auroville first materialized into the Thamarai Community Centre.

This indeed has been an abundant year with wonderful volunteers joining the project, the launch of the Thamarai CD and culminating in the approval of the project for German Ministry funding that has helped support and expand many aspects of the project including a new village playground.

This letter will give you a flavour of what we have been up to. We plan to issue on a quarterly basis to help keep us in touch with the ever growing field of friends and family that make up the Thamarai Community and to offer us an opportunity to reflect on the beauty that is our daily reality.

Wishing you all progress and harmony for this New Year ahead, much love and thanks,

Kathy & Bridget

THAMARAI COMMUNITY CENTRE

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THAMARAI TELEGRAPH

After School Program is enhanced with the addition of weekly stories from around the world, Karate & Bharat Natyam dance programs.

Playgroup has extended to a five hour day and had the pleasure of hosting Kim (Living Routes Student) while Uma (teacher) has had a second son and Malliga is expertly managing the group.

Thamarai is building a village playground thanks to funding from the German Government, land given by the Adventure Community, Auroville and the hard work of Johnny, Ponnamm, Ulli, Lucas and Murugan.

We celebrated Diwali, the festival of light with Jeurgan, Auroville's magnificent Magician.

Boobalan, (Aurovilian volunteer from Edayanchavadi) has got admission to a five month internship on the American Universities Living Routes Program based in Auroville.

Friend and Chennai based consultant Satheesh has taken the Thamarai team through a month long envisioning process which will help to shape the projects future.

Tiago and Ana are back from Europe and Africa full of enthusiasm and ready to start a new Children's Land Project.

Sathya and The Saral Youth Club have lodged a Public Interest Litigation case in the high court in Chennai against Pondicherry Municipality for the illegal burning of waste in the city dump next to the village and Auroville.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

A day trip around Auroville by bullock cart went down a treat with the children recently. We started with a sharing circle at the Visitors Centre to explore what did the children already know about Auroville,

dia and UN recognition in bringing hope after the tsunami by promoting gift economy and employing hundreds of women from fishing communities. Next, the Auroville Wind Systems where the big plane, wind-



the responses varied from "growing plants" to "helping the disabled" to "hmm...?" What is Auroville's vision? "Shanti!" (peace!).

With shanti in our minds we went to meet Vinodhini at Matrimindir who helped us learn more about the heart of Auroville and a lively, discussion ensued with the clever Thamarai children having their own standpoints on subjects like happiness and meditation. Following a good laugh at Saboura toppling over the bullock cart and singing along with the smiling bull cart drivers, shouting out hearty hellos to passers-by on to our next stop Upasana, the Textile Design Unit, here we learnt about their work to revive the craft of weaving in Varanasi and the story of the 'Tsunamika' doll which has received international me-



mills, solar panels and company tools caught our attention. With all this fresh knowledge in our heads, our stomachs were calling so we headed off to the sports grounds. Everyone enjoyed the yummy sambar, rice and veggies. Boobalan and Sundar exhausted us with fun games on the sports field. Then we got together for another circle to reflect on the days discoveries and listen to the children's stories about their village.

At the end everyone got a Small Steps bag promising to use it instead of plastic bags and a beautiful Tsunamika as a souvenir for the day! After a long day all jumped back onto the bullock carts to head back home to Edayanchavadi eager to tell their families about the Auroville that they discovered today. 🌸



Eco STRUGGLE



Spurred into action by the the ever growing toxicity of the air quality, due to the burning of waste 24 hours a day in the city dump, the Saral Youth Club lead by Edayanchavadi resident and newcomer to Auroville, Sathya and social activist Sathyamoorthy have taken a Public Interest Litigation Case to the High

Court in Chennai against the Pondicherry Municipality. Their struggle started over a year ago when smoke and foul smells, impacting health in Auroville and the village, drove them to go door to door in the villages of Edayanchavadi and Mooratandi seeking support for action. Over eight hundred local people signed a petition asking the authorities to stop the burning of waste, this was delivered to but ignored by all the local authorities.

Undaunted, the youth felt compelled to keep going and decided to take their case to the high court. Currently, the cases on both sides have been presented and it is at argument stage. We are all eagerly watching and praying for a positive outcome. Saral Youth Club uses Thamarai Community Centre as its base and focuses on building social responsibility and ecological awareness, as well as empowerment and support for young men of Edayanchavadi village. 😊



PORTRAIT



Hi! My name is Lucas, I am 20 years old, volunteer at Thamarai. I have come to Auroville on a German government program named "Weltwaerts".



It sends about 10.000 Volunteers to different projects all over the world every year. Also it substitutes the German social or military service. I finished school in Germany and decided to do some social work abroad before going to university.

Thamarai exceeds all my expectations. I enjoy working with the playgroup kids in the morning and my reading circle has become a regular activity in the evening program. Besides that, I had the opportunity to help in the building of a new Playground for Edayanchavadi, another very exciting experience! After the monsoon, there will be more Thamarai activities on the Thamarai Roof, and I am looking forward to joining them.

The only thing that really scares me is that the year passes very quickly! :-)

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

N. Pavithra - Age 11

 Thamarai 
Thamarai is a beautiful place like a palace. We are reading library books, painting, clay work, writing my home works, dramas, dances, songs and English class with fun. Thamarai is my favourite place for me.....





HEALING CENTRE BLOOMS

Muthu-kumari has admirably sheered Thamarai's health education & healing centre through its first year. A qualified yoga teacher and assistant nurse she provides daily health education program, yoga classes and healing treatments for adults and children of the village. Working closely with the local government school whose children come for a daily health class that is now part of the school curriculum. In January she starts a body awareness education for the schools teenage girls.

The children learn how their body functions, how disharmony and disease manifests and practices and remedies to rebalance health. The centre offers a herbal garden and a weekend course for children on garden manage-



ment, nutrition and herbal remedies. Thanks to funding from the German Government, the centre has been expanding its facilities and now offers acupuncture treatments as well as integrative healing. We look forward to it expanding in the new year. ☺

THAMARAI A TEAM EFFORT

We see Thamarai neither as an Auroville nor an Edayanchavadi project, rather as a co-creative learning experiment. Our volunteer team is made up of people from both places, as well as

the wider world. We strive to build relationship, understanding and mutual respect in our working process and celebrate our unity, diversity and multiplicity of energies. ☺



(front row, left to right) Malliga, Anbu, Raji (back row, left to right) Jasmine, Lucas, Bridget, Balu, Kathy, Priys (missing) Uma, Michelle, Boobalan, Sundar.

SHARING THE ADVENTURE...

If you wish to get involved please visit the "How to Help" section on the Thamarai website www.thamarai.org or send us an E-mail on thamarai@auroville.org.in

Thamarai is self supporting therefore we gladly welcome financial support and volunteers. Why not contact us to receive the Thamarai **Children's Songs CD** or become an ambassador promoting it around you ! **All funds raised** will be spent on programs for the village of Edayanchavadi in South East India. All donations are acknowledged with **official receipt**.

THAMARAI PROFILE

Thamarai

"Thamarai aspires towards the ideals of Human Unity and Evolution of Consciousness by providing spaces and opportunities that support relationship building , progressive learning and growth" between Auroville and the surrounding villages.

Thamarai Community & Learning Centre

Founded in November 2006, offers daily play group sessions for pre school children, after school programs for school children and special weekend programs including educational tours and exchange programs for children, youth and women. The lively Centre, hosted in a restored traditional Tamil house, is also a meeting place for Aurovilians and village groups.

Thamarai's Health Education Centre

Now a year old, offers daily health education and yoga classes and basic healing facilities in its own premises.

Both Centers are run on donation basis and activities are offered by a team of thirty volunteers from the village and Auroville as a co-creative, cross-cultural learning adventure.

