



# THEERANIYAM

## News Bulletin

Volume 4

30 September 2017

*A Center for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.*

**Brothers of Charity, No.: 18. Govinton Road. Batticaloa. Sri Lanka.**

Our Open School and Learning center "THEERANIYAM" for children with "Autism Spectrum Disorder" was declared open on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. But, the actual classes commenced only from the beginning of Month the of May. In this 3 Months' period of activities we received more than 30 applications for admission recommended and directed by Doctors and other authorized persons. But at present only 10 are attending the school regularly, 3 of them come in the evenings for special speech therapy.

The parents with mild or moderate Autism Children are not prepared to leave their children with us because they give priority and importance to the academic qualifications rather than the speech and other social behaviors. But the parents do not realize that once the children become matured these defects

cannot be rectified as easily as in the early stages of life.

The 4 Lady Teachers are very dedicated and doing their best to reform these severely affected children who are not capable of attending any normal school. Mostly all these children need special attention to curb their abnormal behaviors. Each Teacher is given 2 children under their care to look after, but when attending one, the other brakes away to make some mischief.

Most of them do not show interest either in playing with Toys or doing any activity of their interest or even interact with peers. If activities are given to do, like Building Blocks, Matching and coloring, they push it away or start crying showing their dislike. The Music and Children TV shows keep them interested for some time.

We are trying to create interest in learning and doing various activities through the interest they show. Even parents noticed and commended on the improvement their children achieved during this short period. Almost half of them need assistance in Toileting and other ADL activities. Four of the students never uttered a word in their life span of 5 to 10 years. The staff is learning little by little the moods and characteristics of the children and adapt the plan of activities to improve their training quality.

Our Speech Therapist (Mr. Neelamparam) comes twice a week, in the Mornings till Noon he spends time with the regular students and in the afternoon he takes one hour individual sessions for school going children to improve their speech. We have arranged the Teachers also to be present and learn the art of Speech Therapy and help more children in parallel getting his help whenever needed. In this way we will be able to help the mild and moderate Autism children who are attending the normal schools in the Morning.

Little by little we are introducing “Structured Teaching” and “Individual Education Plan” for every child. There is no continuation of structure we try to

build in the students at home. The children are left alone in most of the homes to do what they like and no



control on their activities. We too declared term Holidays for these children for three weeks from August 4<sup>th</sup> to August 28<sup>th</sup>. We could see that the behaviors of these children have slipped backward.

We conducted awareness programs every Saturday for Teachers, parents and those who are interested from other Institutions, but even though we paid for the resource people for their lectures the beneficiaries did not make use of the opportunities given free of charge.

The parents do not have interest and devote their time in a useful manner in developing their children. Instead they are expecting miracles to happen once they are here with us in the school.

## Visitors for Reformation.

(1)

Ms. Vani, Director of Autism Serendip Children Home, UK, visited our Center on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July with Mr. Adekunle Ogunleye an expert in handling Autism Children. They organized a program to our Teachers and parents, giving their experience and the method of “Structured Teaching” and “Individual Education Plan” for



each student. He was giving ideas on how to make use of the present environment more suitable to reform the children. On his request we gave the statistics of each child for him to draw an IEP for each child to suit its behavior.

Ms. Vani helped financially to send two of us to India to follow a one Month’s course in Chennai at “Sankalp” an Open School and Learning Center for Autism. She donated 2 iPads for the use of the students. She showed her willingness to help any need for the development of the Autism children.



(2)

Ms. Julie Cox, Holistic Special Education Consultant and Teacher (H.S.E.P) in UK, came with a team of specialists to conduct one day Seminar for Teachers, Parents and other people involved in this field of Autism.

The other specialists are:

1. Mr. Kaliugavarathan. Yoga Teacher from Holistic Special Education Foundation.
2. Ms. Samantha Van Eyck. Speech & Language Therapist and Director of Jelly Bean Foundation.
3. Mr. Rajkumar Mahendran. Physiotherapist from the Cerebral Palsy, Lanka Foundation.





About 60 people from many parts of the Batticaloa District, Ampara, Pothuvil, Akaripathu, Kalmunai and Valaichchani participated. The logistic (Tea with Short eats and Lunch) was catered by the financial assistance of UNICEF Batticaloa Branch.

It was a very useful session that could be applied straight on children to achieve better results. Many doubts of the participants were cleared and solutions were given to overcome the difficulties. They promised to pay another visit in November and conduct Seminar for 5 days.

## Our Activities.

### **Boys of age 17 years were put in our "Special Education Center" for Technical Education.**

1. Mas. Sasanthapriyan who joined our center in April is now 17 Years of age and he does not fit into this group of tender age. Since he could speak and write, we put him in our Special Education Center to learn a trade. We find him happy there and doing well.



2. Another new admission Mas. U. Sinthujan is also 17 Years of age and not an Autism affected boy, he could speak well, so we joined him also in the technical center for the betterment of his future.

### **The parents of two Children of Age 4½ joined them in the normal school**

1. Ms. Y. Anushika of 4½ years of age could speak little and do some activities with assistance. The Parents used to bring this child from Kalmunai about 40 Km from our Center. So parents took this child on their own risk to continue in a normal Pre- school



2. Mas. K. Verukshan also of the same age but very poor in speech and behaviour. The mother tells us that she gives all the Therapies we give here, at home by her. She has to bring this child all the way from Akkaraipathu about 80 Km from our Center. Joining the child in a normal Pre-school, he too stopped coming to the center.

**( More news in the next issue )**