



Sristi Foundation

Empowering people with disabilities

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Newsletter 3

December 2014

Dear Friends,

Hearty Greetings from Sristi Foundation!

Welcome to the third Newsletter of Sristi Village!

A truly blessed year!



Best wishes for the New Year 2015!

Time to take a short break, have a cup of tea or coffee, and reflect together on our journey: on the blessings and challenges of the past year, and on what the New Year may bring.

At Sristi Foundation our mission is to create an inclusive village where people with intellectual disabilities and marginalized non-disabled people live and work together with

equal rights and opportunities, leading dignified and self-supporting lives. This year we brought this mission to life. It all began, in early 2014, with the purchase of a piece of land - a purchase we hardly dared dream about in the not-so-distant past. Once we acquired land, the blessings truly began to flow.

This newsletter highlights the construction of our first eco-friendly hut, installation of a solar water pump, and a story of personal transformation. We hope you find the newsletter informative, and Sristi Village worthy of your continuing support.

Eco-friendly hut at Sristi Village

In line with our values as an eco-friendly, self-sustaining, and inclusive community, we recently constructed a Kerala Tribal house for our community. This project was lead by Saji and Babu from Kerala, who helped us build the eco-friendly hut using mud and bamboo. A sincere thanks to them, and also to the FSL India volunteers who contributed their energy and enthusiasm to the project. Soon our community members will move into the hut, and we will begin living full-time on our land!



Diwali celebration at Sristi Village

In October we celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights - one of the most significant festivals in Indian culture. We observed the day with new clothes, a feast, sweets, and a temple visit. As an inclusive community we recognize the importance of celebrating the many and varied cultures that enrich our Sristi Village community, exploring and honoring all the major faiths of the world.

Water well and farm pond

"Water is the driving force of all nature," Leonardo da Vinci rightly said. Sustainable agriculture requires natural methods for accessing and storing water. With the help of experts and the invaluable guidance of local farmers, we determined that we needed to construct an open well and farm ponds on the Sristi Village land. For 2 months we worked to recharge our ground water and prepare the well using rotary drilling rigs and a blasting process that opens cracks in the bedrock so that water can bubble up. We also constructed three ponds for rain water harvesting.



Sristi Village blessed with rain



Sristi Village has been blessed with heavy rain; our three new farm ponds and our deep open well are full! The past few months have brought record rainfall and widespread flooding across the state of Tamil Nadu. Our millet and vegetable crops are swamped. It looks like we will be blessed with a little more rain... But the rainy season will end, and when the weather changes and water is scarce, we will be very glad for our new well and ponds....

Solar water pump at Sristi Village

Great news! Do you remember that in our last newsletter we expressed a need for a solar water pump? We are now the proud owners of a solar pump, and are able to pump our own drinking water as well as water for irrigation and livestock. With this solar pumping system we can access water at near-zero operating cost using clean, renewable, energy. We are very excited about the pump. A big thank you to Ms. Charlotte for her support with installation.



Meet our guards:



We now have two wonderful dogs, Bhairav and Basha! We are very happy about their presence in our community. Bhairav takes care of our land while Basha looking after our home. Both of them support us emotionally as well as physically.



Our Community

During this time of reflection it is easy to point to and celebrate the physical transformations we see at Sristi Village - the progress that we have made, from purchasing land to planting our first crops to building our first hut. We are deeply thankful to all of our partners who made these successes possible.



There is a different kind of success that is not as easy to talk about. A kind of success that is not easy to summarize in a few words or a picture. The success I am talking about is the transformation of lives. We hope that Sristi Village touches the lives of many people - of people around the world - but most importantly, we hope that Sristi Village is a home and a loving community for the people who inspired the project: people with intellectual disabilities. I would like to share with you the story of one person, one member of our community, as an example of the transformation that is at the heart of our work.

Sendhil's story



Sendhil recently joined our Sristi Village community. He is 31 years old and has intellectual disabilities. Growing up he was enrolled in a special education program and received vocational training in electrical work. Upon completing his training, Sendhil was eager and ready to work, but he couldn't find a job. He had skills, but no one would hire him. Sendhil's family had no income and was unable to continue supporting him, so his mother placed him in a home. Unfortunately the people in this homemade Sendhil's life miserable. They locked him in a room for three years, preventing him from going out at all.

At Sristi Foundation we heard Sendhil's story, and contacted his mother. We were able to rescue him from the home and brought him to live in our community. When he came to us he had forgotten how to speak. He showed unusual behaviours that were coping techniques from his time locked in the room. Today Sendhil is beloved in our Sristi Village community and is surrounded by friends who are helping him recover from his trauma. Slowly he is healing and re-discovering his place in community. He has taken a keen interest in our farming work.

Coming Up, It is with great pleasure that we forecast...

First building and bridge

Creo Homes, a Chennai-based civil engineering company, will help us design and built the first building for our community. We are currently engaged in planning with the company. Creo Homes will also work with us to construct a bridge to cross the water canal on our land.

Mushroom cultivation

The Sristi Village community is always thinking about how to become self-sustaining. Towards this end we are planning income generation projects based on available resources and the interests of our community members. At this time I would like to introduce you to Ms. Sivagami, a member of our community and the first Sristi Village entrepreneur. Ms. Sivagami is interested in mushroom cultivation. Soon she and other community members will receive training and will begin a mushroom cultivation project to generate income for Sristi Village.



Gratitude

Sristi Village - our community members, parents, staff, and neighbours - would like to express our sincere gratitude to our volunteers around the world who are donating their kindness and tremendous efforts to Sristi Village. A million thanks... for everything. We would not exist without you. Particular thanks to the following volunteers who are working with us directly in the fields, day in and day out: Elodie, David, Samuel, Petra, Charlotte, Damien, and the volunteers from FSL.



We would also like to specially acknowledge:

1. Leon, Brigitte, and Kinderlachen (Germany), for their tireless support.
2. Mr. Arulmurugan and his family, for their dedication to Sristi Village.
3. Ms. Charlotte, for her huge help with installing the solar water pump.
4. Mr. Pradeep and Mr. Paul Rajan, for their support to purchase the vehicle for our village.
5. Ms. Barbara Griebinger, for her regular and committed monthly contribution.
6. Ms. Sylvia Antognarelli & Ms. Petra for their contribution to purchase hearing aid machine
7. Mrs. Chitra Sha, for her commitment and support to our inclusive community

Special Request

Sristi Village was founded to provide a home and fulfilling vocational opportunities to intellectually disabled young adults so that they may lead independent and dignified lives. It is our vision that we will become totally self-sustaining within 3 years, meeting all of our needs (including monetary needs) through farming and other entrepreneurial projects. But we are not there yet. As you know, we are depending on you, our friends near and far, to help us develop our community to a point where we are self-sufficient.

With this newsletter we request assistance to cover the overhead expenses of the project. Currently it Takes € 900 a month to keep our community fed, housed, and operating. Any contribution you can offer - even the smallest amount - will go a long way towards ensuring the continued development of Sristi Village and the transformation of lives within our community.

Thank you, our dear friends and partners! We could not realize the dream without you!

**"Before we wind up this newsletter, we wish you
a very happy Christmas, and all the best for the New Year!"**

Please send your contributions to:

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Account Number : 33435575197
Name of the Bank : State Bank of India
Branch : Ariyankuppam, Puducherry
IFS Number : SBIN0016563

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If you need more information please do not hesitate to call or write us.

Thank you.

With warm regards

Yours gratefully,

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