



Sristi Foundation

Empowering people with disabilities

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Newsletter 4

March 2015

Dear Friends,

Hearty Greetings from Sristi Foundation!

Welcome to the fourth Newsletter of Sristi Village!

After three months of hard work and many achievements, we are pleased to bring out the fourth newsletter of Sristi Village. We are now well-launched into a promising new year, and like a four-leaf clover, our fourth newsletter is full of luck! Together with many friends, we recently celebrated a Pongal festival and the inauguration of our new bridge. We also celebrated the sweet success of our first harvest! But not too much should be said at the beginning. With pride, we present to you: our four-leaf clover.

First Leaf: Pongal, and a Bridge



On January 15th, 2015, we celebrated the traditional harvest festival of Pongal. One hundred and fifty guests attended. We celebrated to thank the sun, the rain, the farm animals, and also all of our supporters and well wishers who have helped to make our dreams come true in the past one-and-a-half years.

Pongal wasn't the only thing we had to celebrate on January 15th. We also, finally, had a bridge to reach our village! Just in time for the festival! We celebrated the inauguration of the bridge with our friends and supports at Pongal. Huge, special, thanks goes to Creo Homez for sponsoring the bridge and making it possible.



Special Guest at Sristi Village



We were really glad to welcome our long time sponsor and good friend Mr. Loe Koppejan, from the Netherlands! He joined us for this year's Pongal celebration and spent a wonderful day with our inclusive community.

We are really grateful for his support and commitment to the project. We look forward to continuing our relationship with him far into the future.

Second Leaf: First Harvest!

February 8th, 2015, was another unforgettable day: our first harvest! This was a harvest of a millet crop called kolo millet-varagu. After six months of patience and hard work, we are basking in the satisfaction of this tremendous accomplishment. It is a milestone on the road to becoming a self-sustaining community.



There is something about harvesting that brings us closer to the earth and reminds us of the cycles of life that connect us all - plants, animals, and humans alike. We want to thank everyone for sharing this powerful moment with us.

Team Building



On January 4th the entire Sristi Village community participated in a team-building workshop. Thank you Mr Siva, Ms Sidhya, and Unlimited Tamil Nadu!

We will host regular workshops that are open to visitors and the local community as well as to members of Sristi Village. Please join us! Future workshop topics will include capacity-building, management, and sustainable design.

Third Leaf: Temple Visit

On February 15th, 2015, the Sristi Village community set out on its first field trip. We visited the Vallalar Temple in Vadalour, Tamil Nadu. A wonderful time was had by all! We are very grateful to Mr Albert Arivazhgan for making this trip possible.



Fourth Leaf: Irrigation



A very practical but critical achievement: we installed a pipeline for the irrigation of our plants. The purpose of the pipeline is to efficiently deliver water from the new well to the cultivation areas. It will help to reduce erosion, conserve water, and protect the water quality. This will be

key to our success as a working farm. We are very grateful to Mr Albert Arivazhgan, Mr Mukesh, Mr Gopi, and all the members of the Pondicherry Heritage Round Table 167 for their support.

Merci!

A very big, very special, thanks goes to Ms. Elodie from France. Elodie has been volunteering with us for the last six months and has decided to become a permanent part of the Sristi Village Family. She is currently in



France, assisting us with fundraising, but she will return soon. We are truly thankful for Elodie's work and commitment to the project, and look forward to welcoming her back to India! If you live in Europe and would like to be involved in Elodie's

fundraising efforts, please contact Sristi Foundation, or contact Elodie directly at keaucreation@gmail.com

Meet Our Volunteers



Our team recently gained another long-term volunteer, Ms. Dolores Pin, from France. She arrived on February 27th and will be staying for six months. Dolores proves that there is no age limit to volunteering - she is 71 years old! She is working

in our school and helping take care of day-to-day activities at Sristi Village. Welcome, Dolores! We are so happy you are here!

Our Heroes who made a difference at Sristi Village



- ✓ Ms. Petra Ballert from Germany, for her commitment and hard work during the mud house construction.
- ✓ Ms. Vanille Apheloz, Ms. Marlene Schneider, and Ms. Lea Collat from FSL India, for their support to initiate an organic vegetable garden.
- ✓ Ms. Lamis and Mr. Martin for making a wonderful video about Sristi Village.
- ✓ Mr. Damien Pothier from France for his dedicated volunteer service.
- ✓ Ms. Olivia from Australia for her support to create a new brochure for Sristi Village, and for sharing our ideas with potential partners.
- ✓ Mr. Gerad Leyden from England for his great support to install an irrigation pipeline and construct the toilet.



Ms. Luisa Weyers from Germany also recently joined our community. She is assisting our management team with newsletters, updating social media, and finding new partners and supporters for Sristi Village. She also plans to help us initiate a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Project to generate income for our inclusive community. Thank you, Luisa! Your skills and commitment are highly appreciated.

Life transformation



With our four-leaf clover newsletter we would like to introduce a new member of our community. This person has many stories - some funny, some very sad. All are very real life stories. We introduce to you: Mr. Sugumar.

Mr. Sugumar is 39 years old and has mild intellectual disabilities. His parents were unsupportive, and growing up he struggled with school and the demands of family members. The situation was not sustainable, so he ran away from home. Sugumar had nowhere to go except the streets. He spent the next fifteen years living on the streets, facing many challenges, including severe food shortage, abuse, and time in prison.

A few months back we came to know about Sugumar through one of our volunteers. We invited him to join Sristi Village. We cannot offer him much, but we accept him as he is. "The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love."

We would like to specially acknowledge

GRATITUDE



- ✓ Leon, Brigitte, and Kinderlachen (Germany), for their tireless support.
- ✓ Ms. Barbara Grieblinger, for her regular and committed monthly contribution.
- ✓ Mr. Arulmurugan and his family, for their dedication to Sristi Village.
- ✓ Mr Jean-Louis Cardin and Mr Sekar (France), for believing in us from the beginning.
- ✓ Mr. Saurin Nanavati (USA), for his valuable guidance and support.
- ✓ Mr. Albert Arivazhagan, Mr. Mukesh, and the members of Pondicherry Heritage Round Table club 167
- ✓ Mr. Mahe (France), for his wonderful commitment to Sristi Village.

Sristi's Best Friend

During the celebration of New Years Eve, Sristi Village was happy to welcome one of our best friends: Ms. Djoelan Everts from the Dutch Aparna Foundation. She was part of our inclusive community for two weeks and participated in our daily activities and celebration to welcome the New Year. We are very happy and grateful for her long collaboration and support!



Today, Sugumar is one of the happiest people in our village. He is very interested in working the land and caring for others. He is particularly excited about our plans to start a dairy farm. We are very glad to welcome Sugumar to Sristi Village!

Our stories will continue...

Coming Soon to Sristi Village

Construction of a Toilet and Bathroom

To improve the sanitation facilities at Sristi Village (which until now have been non-existent), we are constructing a toilet and a bathroom with 24-hour piped water. This facility will increase sanitation, allow privacy in proximity to our work activities, and reduce time spent fetching water.



Sristi Farm Academy:

According to the 2011 Census, approximately 1.6 million people with intellectual disabilities are living in India. Of these, about 75% are living in rural areas where the predominant industry is agriculture. Responding to this situation, Sristi Foundation is initiating a Farm Academy.

The mission of the Farm Academy is "to provide systematic farm and agricultural-based training to people with intellectual disabilities and the marginalised non-disabled, empowering them with the confidence and skills they need to initiate their own entrepreneurial projects. The Sristi Farm Academy provides training and start-up assistance to help participants fulfil their dreams of becoming self-reliant and contributing members of their communities."



Challenges... Joshua J. Marine rightly said, "Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful". From the beginning, Sristi Village has faced many challenges. Along the way we also find meaning in our lives. We find meaning through struggle as well as through success. We wish to share with you that, sometimes, this project is very hard.

People with intellectual disabilities can experience numerous barriers, including negative attitudes, lack of access to training, and inaccessible work places. Livelihood programs which are disability-inclusive can play a valuable role in addressing these barriers.

We at Sristi Village try our level best to provide high-quality, inclusive, and accessible livelihood training and residential care. Due to limited funding, however, we are facing many constraints to fulfill this need. We invite all of you to join with us in this work. Any contribution you can offer - even the smallest amount - will go a long way towards ensuring the continued development of Sristi Village.

From everyone at Sristi Village, many greetings and thanks. We wish you the best of luck in all your endeavours!

Please send your contributions to:

For Indian Donors

Name of the Account : Sristi Foundation
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 sincerely

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"Together let's build an inclusive and sustainable village"