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# ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

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*Transforming Lives*

SWABODHINI SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN



MANAGED BY SWABODHINI CHARITABLE TRUST

No 21, Rajagopalan 2nd Street, 1st seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, Tiruvanmiyur, Chennai 600041

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# Transforming Lives





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Greetings! Swabodhini School for Special Children is wholly and as a single purpose is managed by the Swabodhini Charitable Trust. Focusing in special education and therapy for students with autism and related challenges, Swabodhini also provides vocational skills training in retail, culinary, computer skills and office administration.

We take this opportunity to share the important milestones for the school in 2016-17.

### Organisational Updates

The most important organizational event that has happened this year is that we have restructured ourselves with well-defined roles and responsibilities, so that we can operate more effectively and efficiently. This was possible only because of the support and guidance that we received from our advisory board members, who took charge from March 2016. Mrs. RadhaGanesan, our managing trustee was instrumental in introducing the advisory board to the trust.

#### Appointment of Director

We have appointed our honorary trustee, Mrs. Anuradha Mahesh as the director of the school. Mrs. Anuradha Mahesh has been on the board of Swabodhini Charitable Trust since 2006. She has more than 20 years of experience in finance and manages the entire financial operations for the school, which includes planning and budgeting, audits and legal compliances. With 10 plus years of experience in special education set up, she oversees the entire operations of the school –both special education and therapy, and also the vocational training centre. She also spearheads the parent interactions.

#### Appointment of functional heads

To streamline the operations, we have identified four important functional areas and have appointed heads for the same, who will report to the director.



**Mrs. Sudha Kartik**, a post graduate in psychology and also holding a Masters in library science is the **Head of Education** at Swabodhini. She is charge of entire education department which covers curriculum implementation, constant upgrading of curriculum, student progress, parent interface, parent counseling, report writing etc.



**Ms. Agila Subramaniam**, a clinical psychologist holds a Masters degree in Psychology is the **Head of Therapy Services**. She specializes in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. She coordinates the entire therapy services viz Speech, Occupational Therapy & Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.



**Mrs. Amirthavalli Rangarajan**, an M. Com and ICWA Inter has more than 20 years of experience in accounting and finance is appointed as **Head of Administration and Finance**. She takes care of the entire Finance, Accounting & Administration services of Swabodhini. She also manages the inventory, sales & collection of the retail unit "Swayam Shop" in addition to taking care of complete accounting, audit, planning & budgeting for events, management of infrastructure and facilities.



**Ms. Aruna VN** takes care of the entire **public relation** affairs of Swabodhini. She coordinates for all outreach programs, fund raising, and corporate communications, creates visibility for the school, manages donor communications, newsletters and social media.

### Trust Board Changes



We are very happy to announce the induction of **Mr. Siva Shankar Ganesan** as our new board member. Based out of Dubai he provides off site support for the future plan of Swabodhini.

Mr. Siva Shankar is the executive director of Crayon Data. He has done his post-graduation in MS–Information Systems from Boston University. He has 18+ years of experience in business / customer strategy, big data, analytics and data intelligence. Having him in our board is undoubtedly a big asset and support for Swabodhini.





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After serving the school for 7 years as a trustee, Mrs. Chandra Nagarajan has resigned as a trustee of Swabodhini Charitable Trust to pursue her passion for teaching accountancy and commerce. However, Mrs. Chandra is ever willing to lend her skills and expertise to the school as a volunteer, whenever we need her assistance.

#### *Appointment of Advisory Board*

As part of Swabodhini's ongoing efforts to better serve its students and their families, as well as to help the School plan for the next decade, the board appointed two professionals as advisors. This advisory board was instrumental in the restructuring process.



**Mr. Sri V Srinivasan and Dr. Chandru Rajam** have been working with the Management Team at Swabodhini on a formal strategic planning process. They are our pillars of support and keep guiding us in the right direction with their valuable experience and expertise. Though the discussions started informally in Dec 2015, the advisory board was formally appointed in 2016-17.

#### *Vision and Mission Statement*

To refocus on our goals and align ourselves to the changing requirements in the field of special education, we have also redefined our vision and mission statements.

##### **Vision Statement:**

We aspire to be the leading institution in special needs training and education

##### **Mission Statement:**

Swabodhini provides high quality education and structured training and therapy services. In partnership with parents and society, we empower individuals to reach their potential for all –round development and transition them to sheltered or open employment, thus enabling them to lead an independent life with dignity in mainstream society.



## Academic updates



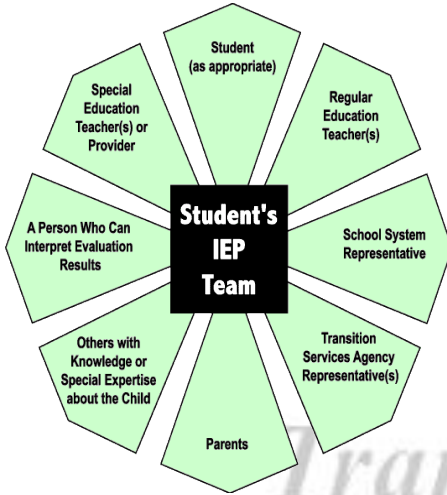
### Special Education

#### Student Regrouping

We have also extended our organizational regrouping to our students also. We have regrouped our students based on their strengths and learning abilities. This kind of grouping brings about a homogeneity in teaching and makes it easier to plan the curriculum and set timelines for improvement and review, as the students have similar learning abilities. We now have 3 sections in primary, 3 sections in pre vocational.



## Individual Education Plan (IEP)



Inspite of trying to create homogeneity in teaching, we understand each student is unique. Hence, we have also drawn up individual education plan for each student. It involves the special educators, therapists, parents, the school system and many other components of their environment, all of which contribute to their learning.

One of the key features of this IEP is **theme based learning**. We take up a theme every month and teach the students the verbs, nouns and adjectives related to that theme. We also have activity based learning based on the theme.

## Experiential Visits



We organized extensive Experiential visits for all students to various places in Chennai –Egmore Museum, Metro Station and train ride, DakshinChitra, ValluvarKottam, VGP, Horticulture Society etc, based on which we have themed our Annual Day.

Experiential visits are a very vital and unique feature of Swabodhini. It reinforces classroom learning to the students. It involves a lot of planning, preparation and effort by our dedicated staff members.





### Graduation Day



We celebrated our first graduation day on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2016. Six of our students graduated on this day.

- Dharshini & Lokesh - from Primary II to Pre-Vocational I
- Surya – from Pre-Vocational- I to Pre-Vocational II
- Vaishnavi – from Pre-Vocational to Vocational
- Fathima – completed her Retail skills training and was promoted as Vocational Intern
- Valli - Completed her Retail skills training and joined a departmental store as a trainee

### Collaborations

To constantly upgrade ourselves and to implement the best practices in special education, we have collaborated with **Mirra Charitable Trust**. We now have Ms. Lakshmi Satish as the consultant from Mirra, who visits us every Friday to evaluate our lesson plans and teaching methodology and train our special educators on best practices.

We have also signed an **MOU with AIMS Media**, New Delhi. 10 of our students will now undergo an 18 month **certificate program in Multi Media**. On completion of the course, the students will be given projects in multimedia by AIMS.



### Therapy updates

#### Collaborations



Therapy is as vital as special education for our students. In our endeavor to provide the best therapy services, we have collaborated with Mr. Saravanan Sivanithi. His areas of specialisation include sensory integration and pediatric neuro development apart from physio therapy. With 16 years of experience in the field of therapy for special needs, Mr. Saravanan lends his valuable guidance to the therapy team for the overall improvement of the students.

#### Group Therapy for Communication



This year, we have started conducting group therapy sessions for our students. In this mixed group, we try to improve the communication of our students through role modelling, peer to peer communication and social interaction. The students are being very responsive to this therapy.

#### Yoga Therapy Workshops

Every day, we have a 45 minute yoga session for all classes. Yoga therapy has been very effective for managing the behavioural challenges of our students. We conducted a yoga workshop for our parents, where our yoga therapist, Mr. Jagadeesan and his colleague from Satyananda Yoga Centre, Triplicane Ms. Padma gave a refresher course for our parents in Feb 2017. This is a follow up of the Integrated Yoga program workshop that was conducted in July 2016 for the parents.

#### Communication workshop for Staff

To effectively translate our curriculum into learning, Mr. Satish, one of the co-founders of Mirra conducted a workshop in general communication for our teachers, therapists and office staffs. It was an extremely useful and practical workshop





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on how to effectively communicate with children who are non-verbal. Workshops such as these will now be a regular feature at Swabodhini.

### Vocational Training Updates

#### Retail Skills Training



The retail skills training, which is a brain child of Swabodhini, has proved to be a grand success. To take in more students for training and to simulate real time environment, we are shifting the Swayam Shop out of our school premises to a bigger area. Additional space for training and direct interaction with public will immensely help our students.

#### Swayam on Wheels

What started as a pilot project has now become a regular feature. Yes, I am talking about the Swayam on Wheels, where we set up mobile shops in apartments and gated communities. This gives our students a chance to work on their social skills. We conduct the mobile shop once a week and we cover Tiruvanmiyur and Neelankarai areas.



## Events

All that the students learn in the school is reinforced when they participate in various cultural and sport events. Let us quickly take a look at where all our students spread their cheer this academic year.

### *Sport Events*



Students of Swabodhini participated in various sports events and won many prizes. Cognizant's sports outreach program, vegam 2016 at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium conducted by State Govt of TN, Kreedha Sports organized in collaboration with Rotary Inner wheel are some of the major sports event that our students participated this year

### *Cultural Events*



Swabodhini never misses an opportunity to showcase the talent of our students in art, craft and performance. This year, Swabodhini added its unique flavor to the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Day celebrations of Williams Lea. We gave a scintillating dance performance at DG Vaishnav college for their world mental health day celebrations, drew art and created rangolis at Asan Memorial College's event "Punnagai", sang and danced our way to prizes at "Rota Talent Show for Special Children" at Kamaraj Memorial Hall, conducted by rotary Club of Madras T. Nagar in association with Neeta Memorial Charitable Trust.





## Outreach Programs



We also have had several outreach programs throughout the year, where we set up stalls in corporates, invite corporates to visit the school, collaborate with other schools, give presentations, conduct autism screening camps –all in an effort to create more awareness about autism, special needs and the work that Swabodhini is doing in the field of special education. We thank Sterling holidays, Apollo Hospitals Cenotaph Road, Apollo Hospitals Greaves Road, Grundfos, APL Global School, Harman, Chettinad Vidyashram and World Bank for the opportunity.

## Festival Celebrations



The most fun way to learn is through the joy of celebrations. At Swabodhini, we celebrate all occasions –Independence Day, Children's day, Navratri, Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturti, Christmas and Pongal. We make special lesson plans, role plays and programs in relation to the festival and use this opportunity to make the implementation of our curriculum fun and enjoyable. It shows the dedication and the effort that our special educators and staffs put in at Swabodhini.



## Food Carnival



This event was ideated and conducted by Swabodhini to provide socialization and life skill training to the students. Parents of all our vocational students were invited for the event. Our students conducted games and shows for the parents. The highlight of the event was the elaborate lunch that was prepared for the parents by our vocational students. It was a truly beautiful day, when we were reminded again and again of why we do what we do here at Swabodhini.

## Project Day



Project day for this academic year was conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. Primary class students made projects about addition and environment. They displayed plants grown and nurtured by the students during the gardening sessions. They also made a story sequence with pictures related to gardening. Prevocational students did project on rain water harvesting and animal homes. Retail and culinary students prepared bhelpuri and channachaats for all the visitors. It was a very memorable day for all at Swabodhini.





### Cooking and cultural show



Institute of Hotel Management, Tharamani had their inter college culinary competition on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb, in their college premises. Our vocational students, who are undergoing culinary skills training were invited as special participants.

Five of our students, under the able guidance of our culinary training staff prepared vegetable rice and raitha in the college kitchen and served other participants and judges. IHM, Tharamani also kindly extended an invitation for Swabodhini to perform at their alumni meet. Our students did Surya Namaskar and Mr. Kaustav and Mr. Venkat Naren enthralled the audience with their singing.



## Fundraising Events



We would like to take this opportunity to thank our kind hearted patrons, who supported Swabodhini with their time, talent and generosity. We had the following fund raising events at Swabodhini this academic year.

Noted theatre artist and film actor, **Mr. Karthik TMK** and the annets of rotary club of Madras north west, under the guidance of **Mr. Venky Waran** for organizing a stand up comedy show and raising funds for swabodhini

Members of **Pioneer Music Gym**, for the amazing fund raising concert that they did for Swabodhini in Nov 2016 and enthralling us with lovely music.

**Srinivasa Ladies Club, Mylapore** for visiting the school and raising funds for our cause.

**Ms. Ratna Krishnan** for being a big pillar of support for Swabodhini and helping us tap the right contacts and resources for various projects, and also helping us participate every year at the Rota Talent Competition for Special Children

12 years old **Ananya Krishnan** from US, who raised funds for Swabodhini. We are proud and inspired to have such young minds to support us and this goes a long way in spreading the awareness and inclusion of autism

**Dr. Dinesh Jothimani** for raising money by running for a cause at the Wipro Chennai Marathon. Thank you Doctor for choosing Swabodhini and running a full marathon of 42.2 kms for the cause of spreading autism awareness.

An alumnus of Swabodhini, Mr. Vaishnav's parents have donated Rs. 50,000 as an endowment fund to the school. Mr. Vaishnav finished his vocational training and was working in Grundofs Pumps India Pvt Ltd since Aug 2010. Mr. Vaishnav passed away in July 2016. He was diagnosed with stomach cancer 4 months back. He was a very quiet and well behaved student and had earned a very good name from all. He lives in the hearts of all of us. We pray for his soul to rest in peace.





## Success Stories 2016-17

Being a school for special education, every small progress in our wards is celebrated. But for us, true success is when our students step out of the school and into the main stream society and lead a life of independence

### Placements

Two of our students, Mr. Meeran and Mr. Yuvaraj are now working as full time employees in Grundfos Pumps assembly line.

### Internships

Mr. Kannan is working as an intern at BigBasket's backoffice

Mr. Murugan is starting his internship at the The Beach Club in ECR

### State Government Registration for Swabodhini's Vocational Centre

Swabodhini's vocational training centre has been given a separate registration and recognition with the state govt of TN

### Awards and Recognition

Our special educator, Mrs. Srikala was awarded the Best Teacher Award by The Inner Wheel Club of Madras Central

Our director Mrs. Anuradha Mahesh was awarded the prestigious Lady Sivabogham Award by ICAI Women Empowerment Committee for service to Swabodhini

### Support and Guidance

Swabodhini always believes in helping other NGO's in every possible way.

**Om Muruga Special School & Vocational Centre** is one of the beneficiaries for the grant given by United Way, Chennai.

We are so happy to share with you that we extended our help in terms of preparing their project report, budgets etc and presenting the same to United Way.

This will facilitate the school to avail the grant from United Way.



## Corporate Sponsors



One of the main reason for our continued success and sustained progress is the support that we receive from our corporate partners.

Apart from helping us financially, they also provide us with opportunities for internships / placements, experiential learning visits, professional help with some of our operations and volunteering their time.

Apart from the existing corporates who assist us year on year, we are very happy to have started association with Lenox and Redington foundation.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to them all, who stand with us and believe in our cause .



## Impact in numbers

Here is a quick glance of the academic year 2016-17 in terms of impact created in numbers.

Swabodhini's Parameters	Numbers
No. of new admissions	7
No. of graduations	6
No. of placements	2
No. of internships	2
No. of Swayam on Wheels (mobile shops)	30
No. of events / outreach programs	25
No. of corporate sponsorships in last 3 years	11
<b><u>Number of students impacted this year</u></b>	<b><u>47</u></b>

A journey of thousand miles begins with a single step. The first step that we took in 1989 has brought us this far. This wouldn't have been possible if not for the shared vision of all the staff and the management. We feel proud to wrap up the annual report with these numbers. May the almighty help us keep marching forward and scaling new heights.



## Swabodhini – An overview

Swabodhini Charitable Trust wholly and as a single purpose manages the special school and the vocational training centre of children with autism and developmental delay. We currently have 47 students in our school.

A focused approach and the school's growth in quantitative and qualitative terms has resulted in the school being granted Government recognition in 2006- a major milestone in itself. In 2016, our vocational centre has also got a separate registration and recognition from the State Government of Tamil Nadu. A bright, stimulating and attractive learning environment has been created for these special children, particularly with high standards of cleanliness and maintenance.

### **Methodology**

Swabodhini imparts special education, occupational therapy, speech therapy, yoga therapy and vocational training to the students depending on their functional ability and their age.

**Special education** is designed to ensure that students with special needs are provided with the environment that allows them to be educated effectively.

**Occupational therapy** is a skilled treatment that trains a student to achieve basic independence in all facets of their life.

A **speech-language** pathologist performs a comprehensive evaluation of a child's ability to communicate and designs and administers appropriate training. The goal of therapy is always to improve useful communication.

**Yoga therapy** which is a profound therapeutic tool, addresses all the needs of the child – physically and mentally, in a holistic manner.

**Group communication therapy** aims at promoting the verbal, social and interactive skills of our students in a peer group setting.

Sports therapy is a fun way to help improve the gross and fine motor coordination of our students and make them physically more adept.

**Training in vocational skills** prepares students to be mainstreamed into society. This training is targeted on the "young adults" in the age group of 14 years and above in the following areas:

**Retail activity-** The Swayam Shoppe set up in 2009 is an on-the-job training shop open to the general public managed by the students and staff of Swabodhini. This shop deals in the sale of groceries, stationery, and general supplies. In short a simulated small departmental store.

**Office administration skills:** a simulated workstation imparting skills such as filing, photocopying, scanning of documents etc to enable work in an office environment.

**Computer training:** a simulated workstation with computer and printer to train in skills such as data entry, word processing, familiarization with world wide web (www), browsing, etc.

**Culinary skills:** a kitchen environment to impart skills such as cutting of vegetables & fruits, dish washing, basic cooking.





### How can you help?

1. Spreading awareness about the school and its facilities in your circle. We welcome you all to visit our school to see the work that we are doing
2. Donations can be made by favouring a cheque to "Swabodhini Charitable Trust"
3. Transfers can also be made directly to our account. Our account details are

Name: Swabodhini charitable trust

Bank: State Bank of India

Abiramapuram Branch

Account number: 54008542412 (INR)

Account number: 54008547873 (Foreign currency)

Branch code: 40203

IFSC code: SBIN0040203

4. Placing orders for diyas / gift bags and covers / paper bags and cups. It is all being made by our students
5. Do your grocery shopping at our Swayam Shop, where we train our students in retail skills. We also do door delivery of groceries. (Ph 9884746102)

### Swabodhini Charitable Trust – Board Members



Mrs. Radha Ganesan  
Founder and Managing  
Trustee



Mrs. Anuradha Mahesh  
Director and Trustee



Mr. Siva Shankar Ganesan  
Trustee

Donations to the Trust are exempt under Sec 80G of the Income tax Act. The Trust is also registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act in the year 2001 & Section 12 A of the Income Tax Act, 1961. Every rupee that you donate goes towards helping our students lead a life of independence and dignity.



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## **SWABODHINI SCHOOL FOR SEPCIAL CHILDREN**

### *Transforming Lives*

#### ***Vision***

We aspire to be the leading institution in special needs training and education

#### ***Mission***

Swabodhini provides high quality education and structured training and therapy services. In partnership with parents and society, we empower individuals to reach their potential for all round development and transition them to sheltered or open employment, thus enabling them to lead an independent life with dignity in mainstream society.



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## **SWABODHINI SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN**



*Swabodhini – Our best for their future*

# THANK YOU