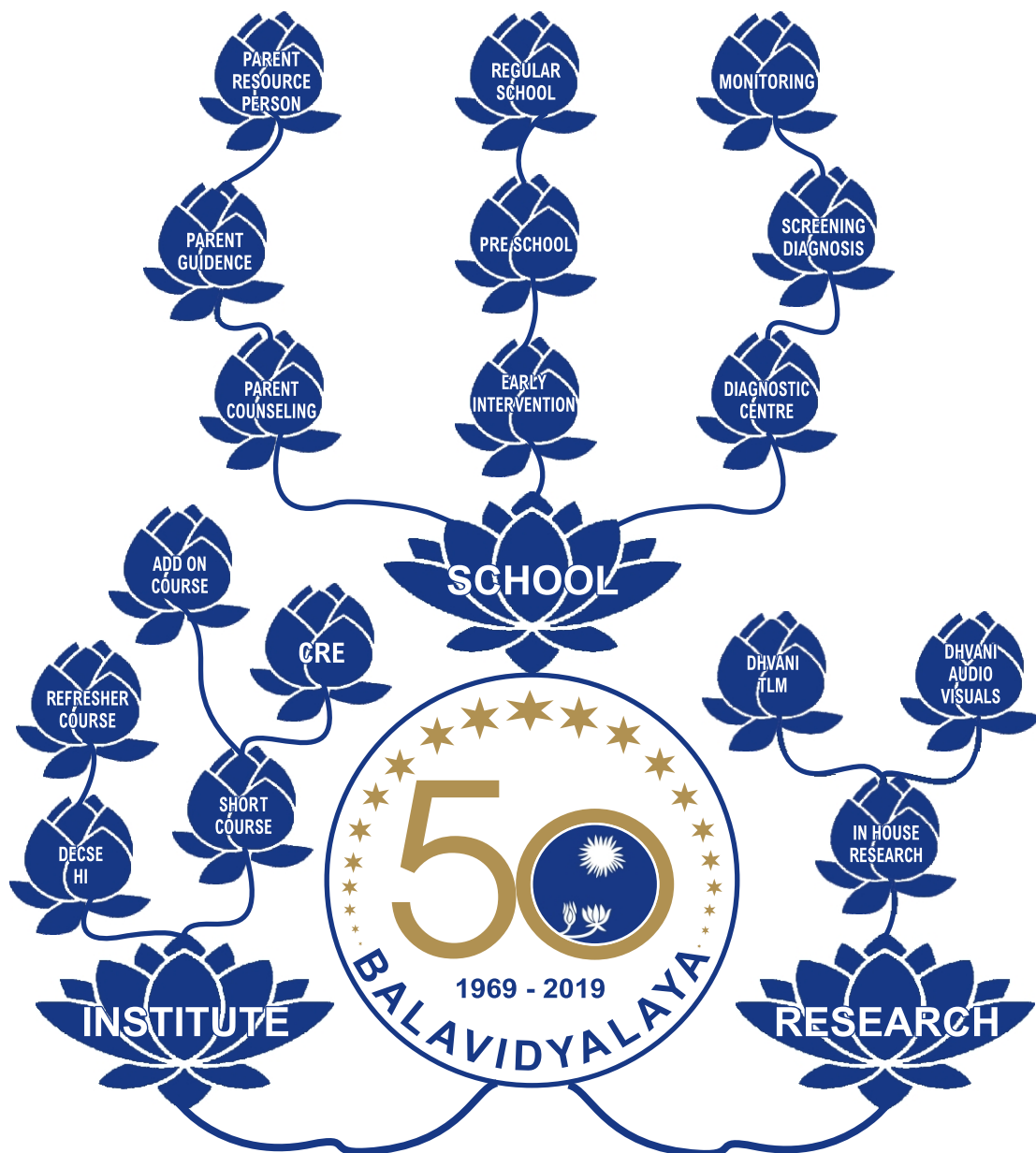


BALAVIDYALAYA

THE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG DEAF CHILDREN
&
THE INSTITUTE FOR TEACHER TRAINING

53 YEARS OF STERLING SERVICE



LISTEN FROM INFANCY & TALK FOR A LIFE TIME

ANNUAL REPORT - 2022 - 2023

BALAVIDYALAYA

**THE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG DEAF CHILDREN
&
THE INSTITUTE FOR TEACHER TRAINING**



18, 1st Cross Street, Shastri Nagar, Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

Ph: 044 – 2491 7199, Fax: 044 – 2498 2598

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Web: www.balavidyalayaschool.org



Prayer

Let us be united ; Let us speak in harmony ; Let our minds
comprehend alike ; Common be our prayer ;
Common be the end of our assembly ;
Common be our resolution ; Common be our deliberations ;
Alike be our feeling ; Unified be our hearts ;
Common be our intentions ; Perfect be our unity.

பேசாப் பொருளைப் பேச நான் துணிந்தேன்
கேட்கா வரத்தை கேட்க நான் துணிந்தேன்
மண் மீதுள்ள மக்கள், பறவைகள்,
விலங்குகள், பூச்சிகள், புட்புண்டு, மரங்கள்
யாவுமென் வினையால் இடும்பை தீர்ந்தே,
இன்பமுற்றன்புடன் இணங்கி வாழ்ந்திடவே
செய்தல் வேண்டும் தேவ தேவா!

असतो मा सद्गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृतो मा अमृतंगमय ।



**The Lotus represents knowledge.
The Sun dispels darkness of ignorance and makes the lotus bloom.**

**The school Balavidyalaya breaks the barrier of silence in
children's mind, initiates them to the music of sounds and
helps them communicate verbally.**

**Balavidyalaya Institute removes the misconceptions on the
capabilities of deaf infants and young children from the
mind of special schools and special educators and makes
them the ambassadors of oral education.**

“LISTEN FROM INFANCY & TALK FOR A LIFE TIME”

தாமரை அறிவின் அடையாளம்.
ஆதவன் இருளை நீக்கி உலகை ஒளி
வெள்ளத்திலாழ்த்தி தாமரையை மலர வைக்கிறான்.

பாலவித்யாலயா பள்ளி
குழந்தைகளை மௌனச் சிறையிலிருந்து விடுவித்து
ஒலியுலகத்தில் பேசி மகிழ வைக்கிறது.

பாலவித்யாலயா ஆசிரியர் பயிற்சி நிறுவனம்,
சிறப்பு பள்ளிகள் மற்றும் சிறப்பு ஆசிரியர்கள்,
மனதிலுள்ள தவறான கருத்துகளை நீக்கி,
செவிக்குறையுள்ள குழந்தைகளின் திறமைகளை அறிந்து,
அவர்களை பேச வைக்கும் முயற்சியில்
ஆசிரியர்களை ஈடுபடுத்துகிறது.

**“மழலையில் கேட்டு
வாழ்நாள் முழுவதும் பேசு.”**

≡≡≡ **MANAGEMENT** ≡≡≡

BALAVIDYALAYA TRUST

18, 1st Cross Street, Shastri Nagar, Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

Ph: 044 – 2491 7199, Fax: 044 – 2498 2598

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Web: www.balavidyalayaschool.org

Dr. Valli Annamalai

Managing Trustee

Mr. M. Suresh

Trustee

Dr. I. Sathyamurthi

Trustee

Mrs. Meyyammai Venkatachalam

Trustee

Mrs. Sumana Suresh

Trustee

Ms. Reshma Iqubal

Trustee

Mrs. Shrilekha Arun Ramakrishnan

Trustee

BALAVIDYALAYA STAFF DETAILS

HONORARY STAFF

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Dr. Valli Annamalai, Principal | B.Sc, M.Ed, PhD- HI PGDPPEd.
C P Ed (HI) |
| 2. Dr. Meera Suresh, Vice Principal | M.A.M.Ed, PhD- HI, PGDPPEd.
C P Ed (HI) DECSEHI |

TEACHING STAFF

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 3. Dr. Mrs. S. Subbulakshmi,
Headmistress | M.A.B.Ed, Ph.D. DTYHI, KGT |
| 4. Mrs. R. Hemalatha, Asst. Headmistress | B.A. DTYHI, KGT |
| 5. Mrs. V.G. Tharena
Course Coordinator | M.Sc., M.A. B.Ed, DTYHI (Ph.D) |
| 6. Mrs. V. Usha, | H.Sc., (B.A.) DTYHI, KGT |
| 7. Mrs. B. Poovarasi, | B.Litt, DTYHI, KGT |
| 8. Mrs. G. Mahalakshmi | M.A., DTYHI, KGT |
| 9. Mrs. S. Selvi | B.Litt, DTYHI, KGT |
| 10. Mrs. S. Rajalakshmi | M.A., B.C.A, DTYHI |
| 11. Mrs. M. Sridevi | B.Com., DTYHI |
| 12. Mrs. B. Kanniga | M.A., DTYHI |
| 13. Mrs. K.R.M. Valliammai | B.Sc., DTYHI |
| 14. Mrs. Amala | B.Com, DTYHI |

PART TIME AUDIOLOGISTS CUM SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 15. Mrs. M. Jyothi | M.Sc., (Speech and Hearing) |
| 16. Mrs. Stephy Antony | MASLP |

PART TIME PSYCHOLOGIST

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 17. Dr. Ragitha Radhakrishnan | Ph.D. M. Sc., |
|-------------------------------|---------------|

TEACHER ASSISTANTS:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| 18. Mrs. V. Tamizhselvi | B.A., |
| 19. Mrs. M. Velankanni | B.A., |
| 20. Mrs. B. Varalakshmi | B.A., |

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF :

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 21. Mrs. Bavitra | B.C.S. |
| 22. Mrs. P. Rani, | H.Sc., (B.A) Typewriting, Computer Trg. |

SUB STAFF :

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 23. Mrs. D. Sakuntala | Ayah |
| 24. Mrs. D. Varalakshmi | Ayah |
| 25. Mrs. N. Uma | Ayah |
| 26. Mrs. V. Valarmathi | Attender |
| 26. Mr. D. Shanmugam | Night Watchman |



BALAVIDYALAYA

THE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG DEAF CHILDREN

53rdANNUAL REPORT

It is a great pleasure to present the 52nd Annual Report of Balavidyalaya, the School for young deaf children.

Annual Day Celebration

Balavidyalaya celebrated the 52nd Annual Day on 5th March 2022. This edition was held virtually as there was a lot of uncertainty across the country, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme began with a prayer by the staff and welcome address by Dr. Valli Annamalai, Honorary Principal. We were fortunate to have Mr. YD Srinath, District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO), State Government of Tamil Nadu, as the Chief Guest. The programme consisted of recordings of rhymes recited by three students who had completed the early intervention programme and were ready to join the mainstream. These recordings were screened, and the excitement of the children seeing themselves on the screen was infectious. Mrs. Pavithra Gurumurthy, Manasvini's mother, shared her experiences of bringing up Manasvini in the lockdown. Manasvini had joined us as a tiny tot of 1 year and 2 months and was ready to join the mainstream after having completed the programme in April 2022.

Dr. Meera Suresh, Honorary Vice-Principal, presented the Annual Report of the School. On this special day, we also had the opportunity to congratulate our colleagues, Dr. S. Subbulakshmi, Course Coordinator, Mrs. Hemalatha R, Assistant Headmistress and Mrs. Usha V, Teaching Staffer for having completed 30 phenomenal years of service. We also felicitated Mrs. Varalakshmi D, Ayah, Mr. S. Damodharan, Peon, for completing 20 glorious years of service, and Mrs. Tamizhselvi, Teacher Assistant, for completing 10 years in our organisation. Mr. Damodharan completed his service in our organisation and has since retired. The services of these staff were acknowledged and thanked in an earlier, online programme.



The events concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Mrs.Meena Munusamy, Head Mistress.

Although the event was a virtual celebration with about 100 participants, we thank everyone for participating with wholehearted enthusiasm.

The School

Balavidyalaya, the School for young deaf children, admits only deaf children up to the age of three. There is no lower age limit. The youngest admitted so far was 52 days old. Admission is open throughout the year. All services in the School are offered free of charge. The School has two mediums of instruction – English and Tamil. After having dropped Tamil as a medium of instruction for a few years, it was resumed this year as the School found a substantial number of parents/caregivers struggling with English as the medium of instruction.

We wrapped up the last term of the academic year 2021-22 on April 29th2022. Our School reopened on June 6th2022 for the new academic year 2022-23.

Admissions are open throughout the year, as we believe that not a single day in a child's life should be wasted.

Post COVID-19, our School is slowly returning to the pre COVID-19 stage, both in the number of admissions as well as the progress of the students.

This year, 19 children from different parts of South India joined our programme. The details are:

❖	Chennai	:	12
❖	Dharmapuri	:	1
❖	Ranipet	:	1
❖	Andhra Pradesh	:	2
❖	Panruti	:	1
❖	Vellore	:	1
❖	Thiruvallur	:	1

Six children completed our programme and joined mainstream Schools. The details are:

No.	Name	Mainstream School
1	Manasvini B	Vels Ravindra Bharathi Global School, Mogappair, Chennai
2	Thouwfika S	SAK Nursery School, Triplicane, Chennai
3	Mohammed Shahrukh I	Al-Hira Model School, T. Nagar, Chennai
4	K. Jaswinth	S. M. Vidyalaya, MaraiMalai Nagar, Chennai
5	S. Nakshatra	Narayana Olympia, Madipakkam , Chennai
6	B. ShafeerAhamed	Sholinganallur Government School, Sholinganallur, Chennai

As these children had already started mainstream Schools in January 2022, we were unable to award them their prize books and medals during the Annual day celebrations. So, we closed for the summer holidays, we gave all the six children their prize books and medals in our School.



The last working day of the first term was 23rd September 2022. We reopened on 10th October 2022.

We closed for the second term - Christmas holidays - on 23rd December 2022 and opened on 2nd January 2023.



Alumni Corner

As always, we are delighted to report updates from Balavidyalaya alumni.

Ten alumni completed Std X, and have joined Plus 2. Their details are:

1. Hari Prasad P scored 89% and joined the Commerce group.
2. Shafeeka Fathima scored 80% and joined the Maths and Science group.

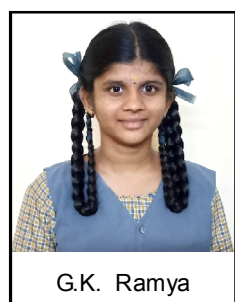


Hari Prasad P



Shafeekha
Fathima J

3. Harini K scored 68% and joined the Commerce group.
4. Mohammad Ajas M scored 66% and joined the Commerce group.
5. Swathi T scored 64% and joined the Commerce group
6. Menagapriya scored 63% and has joined the Science group.
7. G.K. Ramya scored 59% and has joined the Commerce group.
8. Pavithra J scored 56% and joined the Commerce group.
9. Bhuvaneshwari S scored 54% and joined the Commerce group
10. Prabusankar scored 47% and joined the Commerce group.

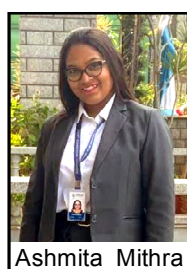


Eight alumni completed Std XII and joined various colleges.

Their details are:

1. Ashmita Mithra scored 90.4% and joined Political Science (Hons) in Christ University, Bangalore
2. Abinaya S scored 90% and joined ECE in SSN College of Engineering Chennai.
3. Monish C M scored 83% and joined B. Com in DG Vaishnav College, Chennai.
4. Priyadharshni C scored 83% and joined B.E. Computer Science in Madras Institute of Technology (MIT), Chennai.

5. Mohammed Ashfaq M scored 82% in Commerce and joined B. Com Computer Applications in Mohamed Sathak College of Arts and Science, Chennai.
6. Geetika V V scored 76% and joined B.Com in MOP Vaishnav College Chennai
7. Janesh Saravanan scored 60% and joined B.Tech (IT) in Madras Institute of Technology (MIT), Chennai



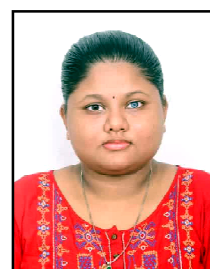
Ashmita Mithra



Abinaya S



Monish C M



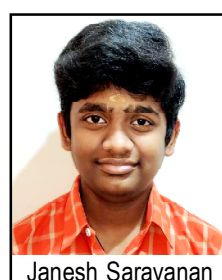
Priyadharshni C



Mohammed
Ashfaq



Geetika V V



Janesh Saravanan

Ten alumni graduated and are doing well in their chosen fields.

Their details are:

- ❖ Pradeep. P completed Bachelors in Design from National Institute of Fashion Technology, Bengaluru. He won the Best Design Collection Award.
- ❖ Mohammed Askar after completing B.E. from St. Joseph College of Engineering, Chennai joined KadhijaSarees.
- ❖ Soumen Gaurav completed BCA in Jain University in Bangalore and is looking for a job.
- ❖ S. Abishek completed BCA from SRM School of Science and Humanities, Chennai and joined MCA in the same college.



Pradeep. P



Mohammed Askar



Soumen Gaurav

- ❖ Tanvi Hemani joined Masters in Textiles Design in National Institute of Design, Hyderabad.



Tanvi Hemani



Greeshma B



Sai Sriram

- ❖ Franka Violet joined Masters in Social Work Human Resource Management in Madras School of Social Work Chennai.

- ❖ Greeshma B after completing MBA joined ForsysInc, Hyderabad, as a business analyst.

- ❖ Sai Sriram Reddy after completing M.Tech from Indian Institute of Technology - Madras, IIT M) Chennai joined as an Executive Trainee in Power System Cooperation Corporation – Bangalore, as an executive trainee.

- ❖ Sangeeth Shravan joined Accenture as an associate software engineer.

- ❖ Meera Kattukaren joined Ernst & Young, Auckland, New Zealand, as a consultant in Forensic and Integrity Services.

- ❖ Prithvi Sekar represents India in Tennis and has the following achievements to his credit:



Prithvi Sekar

- ✧ Represented India and won many matches
- ✧ Won prizes in the Australian Open Deaf and Hard of Hearing finals
- ✧ Flag bearer, and won medals in the Deaflympics, 2022

- ❖ Sai Akash, a National-level cricketer, represents India in cricket matches for the deaf.
- ❖ Harini K participates in national sports meets for the deaf and wins athletic track and field events and long jump.

We are proud of all the achievements of all our alumni and wish them best of luck in the future!

We extend our warm congratulations and wishes to some of our alumni who got married, and to those who had children this year.

Grant in Aid – Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment

We are grateful to the Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment – Government of India, for giving us the grant under the DeenDayalUpadhyaya Scheme for the year 2021-22.

Donor Updates

Our School offers all educational services free of cost to deaf children. This has only been possible through the support of individuals like you.

We have an annual donor group from amongst our working alumni and parents. The members of the group have willingly come forward and sent in their donations. We invite all of you, belonging to the Balavidyalaya family, to please consider joining this group and helping us. Do get in touch with us.

We also appeal to friends, family, philanthropic organisations and corporations to donate and support our work.

We wish to specifically acknowledge contributions made by a few of our donors.

- ❖ Coromandel International - India
- ❖ The Gupta Family Foundation, USA,
- ❖ Guru Krupa Foundation, USA,
- ❖ Asha for Education, USA.

- ❖ Thursday Charity Club
- ❖ Jayanti Foundation. They sponsored some toys and stationery.



- ❖ Tata Consultancy Services. They donated stationery and play dough to the children.



❖ Ms. Jahnavi Manthena, our alumna, has joined the Customs Department Chennai, and donated her first salary to us. Thank you so much, Jahnavi. It makes us proud to see how you have grown, and now are now standing on your own fee



The first salary drawn being donated by our alumni makes our heart swell with pride and we look forward to more children standing on their own feet drawing their own salary.

To all donors, we are grateful for your support. Your help furthers our mission, and your confidence in our work allows us to stand tall and do so much more. Those who wish to contribute, please visit our website for more information.

<http://www.balavidyalayaSchool.org/appeal-fordonations/>

Awards and Recognition

We are proud to announce that the National Council of the Educators of the Deaf (NCED – India) posthumously awarded Mrs. Saraswathi Narayanaswamy, Honorary Director, 'A Lifetime Achievement Award' for her selfless service in this field, in New Delhi. Dr.Meera Suresh, Honorary Vice Principal, received the award on her behalf. **Pic 17 A & 17**



Seminars, Conferences and Meetings

In September 2022, Dr. Meera Suresh attended the National Educators of the Deaf Conference (NCED) in New Delhi. As the Vice President of NCED, India, she participated in the inauguration and valedictory function.



The details of Dr.Meera Suresh itinerary are:

- ❖ Conducted a workshop on oralism - The way forward to age appropriate language and literacy skills in Oralism.
- ❖ Conducted a workshop on motivation - Why and how are we going to achieve our goals?
- ❖ Presented a program - 'Showcase your School and its methodology'
- ❖ Co-chaired one of the sessions when research papers were presented.

Dr. Valli Annamalai, Honorary Principal and Dr. Subbulakshmi, Head Mistress, attended a stake holders meeting conducted by Mrs. Jacintha Lazzarus, IAS, on the Tamil Nadu Rights Project with the Organisation, working for persons with disabilities.

Dr Valli Annamalai attended the 18th Professor Arcot Gajaraj Memorial Oration by Dr Mohan Kameshwaran on 'Managing childhood deafness – Trials, tribulations and triumphs'.



Workshops & Empowerment Programmes

In the month of March 2022, we conducted a guidance programme for parents on how to provide language to the children. Dr. Subbulakshmi, Head Mistress and Mrs. Hemalatha, Assistant Headmistress observed the parent-child interaction and guided the parents on language input.

Let's Join Hands

In June 2022, we held a meeting with all the parents to get their opinions on different ways of helping them. The outcome was another meeting in August 22 where we conducted an empowerment programme, 'Let's join hands'. For this meeting, we invited some of the parents of some alumni. The current parents and parents of alumni had a healthy interaction without the staff around. We felt this would give them an opportunity to open up, get all their queries and doubts cleared, and motivate them to work with their children with more confidence. We take this opportunity to thank the alumni parents who pitched in enthusiastically. This programme was attended by all the parents of the early intervention programme as well as the pre-school programme. We feel this is an effective empowerment programme and would like to conduct it every year. We invite volunteers of alumni parents to join us in this venture.



After this meeting, we approached the alumni parents and asked them for articles about their journey and shared them in social media to create awareness and motivate our current parents.

In the month of July 2022, we also had a parents meeting with our audiologist and supervisory staff. The parents were given further inputs on ear care and care and maintenance of hearing aids and implants.

Parent Workshop

In the month of November 22, we conducted a workshop on 'How festivals can be a language-rich environment', for current parents. We have made and printed new 'Let's talk about festivals' books on various religious, regional and national festivals. Parents read the books and participated in discussions on providing language to their children using role play. In this process, one parent pretended to be a child, while another parent described each festival.



Spoken English Fluency Programme

During the month of March 2022, with the help of Mrs. Sanghamithra, a parent of one of our alumni, resumed spoken English fluency classes twice a week. She has been volunteering her time since 2019.



Since the month of December 2022, Dr Meera Suresh, Honorary Vice Principal, has also pitched in by taking spoken English fluency classes daily. These sessions are recorded and shared with the parents of the early intervention programme, who are unable to leave their children at home and attend the programme.



Motivational Workshop for Staff

In February 2023 Dr Meera Suresh presented a motivational workshop for the staff. There was a healthy interaction amongst the staff during the workshop.



Visits by Alumni

We have more than 1400 children who have completed our programme and joined the mainstream. We derive immense pleasure when they visit us, and we are able to see them bloom into remarkable adults.

This year, Sathish Subramaniam from Canada, and S Aravind, Vyagula Mary V, Jahnavi Manthena, Adhila Akbar, Shraddha Agarwal, Shyam Siva Sankar, Pramithi B, Mohammad Aafiq, from Chennai visiting us. All of them are between 8 and 50 years of age. It makes our heart swell with pride when we see our alumni and hear about their lives.



AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

World Hearing Day 2022

As part of an awareness programme during World Hearing Day, Dr Meera Suresh spoke to audiologists, speech therapists, ENTs and paediatricians across a few states to build awareness on the importance of early identification and early intervention. Dr ValliAnnamalai and Dr Meera Suresh visited Dr Subramaniam, a paediatrician, as part of the awareness programme.

We appointed AdFactors, an advertising agency, to specifically advertise our School and its programmes, to build awareness in North India. Many regional publications of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Odisha, published articles about Balavidyalaya.

Dr. Meera Suresh, was interviewed by AIR Rainbow – Hyderabad for a live show. She spoke about hearing loss and early intervention.

World Hearing Day 2023

We made a presentation to create an awareness on Importance of hearing, early identification and Early Intervention. The members of the PTA from across Tamilnadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh pitched in presenting this to create awareness amongst high school students, college students and medical staff of colleges and hospitals



ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Balavidyalaya Trust

We have inducted three youngsters into Balavidyalaya Trust. We welcome them and look forward to new thoughts and ideas.

Mrs. Meena Munusamy, Headmistress, and Mr. S Damodharan, Peon, have attained superannuation and retired. We had a tea party to celebrate their tenure and wish Meena and Damodharan all the best.

We welcome Dr. Subbulakshmi, who was earlier our Course Coordinator of our Teacher Training Institute, to take up the role of Headmistress of our School. We wish Subha all the best in her new role.

We welcome Mrs Anusha Ramji a teacher volunteer and Mrs. Amala K, a teaching staff, back into our fold. She had left us a few years back and has now re-joined.

Dissolving of PTA

The Parent Teachers Association of Balavidyalaya the School for young deaf children was dissolved as a registered body and the Associations account in the Bank was closed. The



Balavidyalaya Parent Teachers Association was again formed, with an agreement that it will not be a registered body.

Visitors & Interns

Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan, Guru Krupa Foundation, US, visited us and spent some time seeing us at work.

Many institutions bring their teacher trainees to Balavidyalaya as part of their study tour. This year saw Graduate trainees from Ali Yavar Jung National



Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (D) Regional Center, Odisha, Helen Keller Institute of Research & Rehabilitation for Disabled Children – Secunderabad, and Post Graduates of the Madras School of Social Work.

Speech and Hearing interns from AaruPadai Veedu College and Shri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research come in batches to spend time in the classrooms and the diagnostic centre.

Some interns from Shri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research did a study using a screening tool to diagnose hearing loss in the children, as part of their research project.

Anganwadi workers measured the height and weight of all our children as part of their 'Healthy Child Campaign'. They offered our parents healthy porridge, in a powdered form.

A team from the Rangammal Memorial Trust, Thiruvannamalai, visited our sound-treated classrooms and watched the school at work.



Excursions & Celebrations

The staff, parents and children from the early intervention programme went for an excursion to Children's Park in Guindy. The children enjoyed seeing the various birds and a few of the animals in the park.



Parents accompany pre-school children for their excursion every three years. This ensures that the parent gets a turn at least once, while their child is in our programme, as the children take 3 to 4 years to complete our programme. This year, it was the turn for parents to join the excursion. The staff, pre-school children and their parents went to the Chennai Rail Museum. They had a good time getting a lot of exposure to the growth of Indian Railways, and seeing many model trains in the museum.



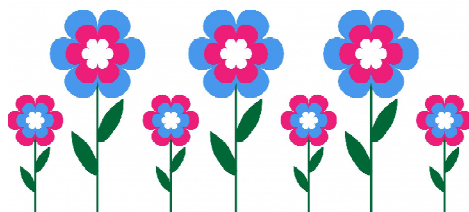
**The following
celebrations
were held in the
School premises:**

- ❖ The School's birthday
- ❖ Independence Day
- ❖ Republic Day
- ❖ VinayakaChaturthi
- ❖ Teacher's Day
- ❖ Children's Day
- ❖ Navarathri
- ❖ Christmas
- ❖ Pongal



We hope you enjoyed reading our Annual Report.

Thank you.



Speech by Ms. Jayanthi – Pugazhendhis Aunt

A warm welcome to everyone present here. First I would like to say few words about myself. I am Miss. Jayanthi Pugazhendhi's aunt / caregiver. I was a very quiet and timid person. Pugazhendhi is my sister's son. My sister passed away when Pugazhendhi was 5 months old due to an accident. Pugazh does not know this. He thinks I am his mother and refers to me as Amma.

My parents are illiterate and I was given the responsibility of taking care of Pugazhendhi. At that time I was studying in my 2nd year in evening college. When I went to college my parents took care of him. The rest of the time he was my responsibility. When he was 9 months old we had a doubt if he could hear all the sounds. We felt as we were talking to him he was not responding to anything at all. We decided to go to a Doctor.

We went to many Doctors in various hospitals. They all diagnosed that he was hearing impaired. Everyone suggested I ensure Pugazh undergoes a cochlear implant surgery followed by rehabilitation. All our relatives talked ill about Pugazh's disability. I took it up as a challenge to prove to my relations that Pugazh will develop well inspite of his disability.

When Pugazhendhi was 2 years and 5 months he underwent the cochlear implant surgery. I took him for all the rehabilitation sessions. Due to the pandemic the rehabilitation sessions became online session. I attended them with Pugazh.

One day while browsing the net I saw the website of Balavidyalaya. I telephoned to the authorities. They took our details over the telephone and admitted Pugazh. By then he was 2 years and 8 months old. Pugazh and I attended the online classes. Finally after the pandemic eased and Balavidyalaya resumed off line classes I brought Pugazh to Balavidyalaya.

I had enrolled Pughzhin the English medium. My parents spoke very little English, my fluency was also not too good. When my parents talked

to Pugazh they mixed English and Tamil. I tried to speak English as much as possible. Pugazh progressed and started understanding what we were saying. Gradually he started saying a few words. In March 2022 Balavidyalaya resumed spoken English Classes with a volunteer Mrs. Sanghamitra a parent of an alumni during the last hour of the day, twice a week. I attended the classes.

Then in December 2022 Dr. Meera Suresh the Honorary Vice Principal also started taking spoken English fluency classes every mornings. I attended these classes too. I found with the help of these classes my fluency was improving. I found Pugazh also improving.

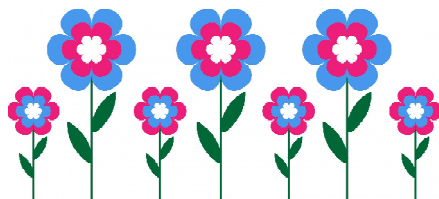
Now Pugazh is able to talk to everyone, his reading and writing levels are above his age. He is ready to join a mainstream school. I am very happy that I have been able to help Pugazh develop like a normal child in spite of the various hurdles my family and I have faced. When my relatives visit us they are surprised to see Pugazhendi's comfortably chatting away.

In the process of helping Pugazh my self-esteem and confidence has improved. Indirectly Pugazh has helped me to grow.

I would like to share an important lesson I have learnt to all the other parents here. Don't lose hope. Work as a team with Balavidyalaya. Your child will definitely bloom.

I would like to thank Balavidyalaya for giving me the opportunity to talk to all of you today during the 53rd Annual Day Celebration.

Thank you.



Speech by Prithvi Sekhar – An alumni

I am Prithvi Sekhar, born with a hearing disability, I would like share my experiences as a differently abled person, challenges faced, and how they were overcome. I will share my thoughts on how success comes when you focus on what you have and never think about what you don't have. Chase your passion was my mantra.

I will also say something on the Decision-making Challenges I faced at each stage of my Life. I am using my life story just to highlight the path that is open to all of us, not to highlight my achievements.

If I can do it, anybody can.

I will start from the very beginning, my life changing moment – I entered Balavidyalaya as a 20 months old child. It was Balavidyalaya that shaped me into what I am today. Every bit of my success today has its roots in Balavidyalaya. It was Balavidyalaya which gave me the education, verbal communication and hope for the future. My salutes to the School and all my teachers who shaped me, without them I will not be standing here today. It has helped thousands of needy children.

The School gave my parents the hope and teaching methods to truly believe that their child would be able to speak and communicate without using sign language. This trust and hope along with great support from the school shaped my initial life. At the end of 4 years stay in the school I was able to get into the main stream Bala Vidya Mandir as recommended by Balavidyalaya.

My first challenge in Bala Vidya Mandir was on how to get along with other friends as none of them were wearing any sort of hearing aids. With my friends and teachers support, I got along well and no one treated me differently or as a special child. I started believing that nothing is wrong with me and I am like others.

At this stage my parents noticed my natural sporting abilities and wanted to find if I have a passion for sports. I must have shown enough evidence

so my parents chose to put me into individual sports like TENNIS at the age of 9.

I had big challenges as I had to play with the hearing aids on and at times missed the trainer's commands in the court. It was sweaty and irritating to play with the aids and the sounds of the ball hitting the floor was not fully audible. I had to put in extra efforts to overcome these difficulties.

Initially, it was difficult. In due course of time, I learned to deal with it. My family's support in all these years was exceptional. My mother used to accompany me to every tournament in the early days. My parents gave me a free hand to choose a path that I believed was right for me.

My sporting talents dramatically changed my status. I was a known, popular person and made lot of friends. It was hard to decide the future course once I passed out of my 10+2 from Kumarani Meena Muthiah Matriculation School.

I have had 3 major decision-making challenges so far and hopefully I have solved them.

Challenge 1- What to do after 10+2

With 82% score I was eligible to choose an Engineering course in Anna University. But my Tennis passion had grown strong and I wanted a college that will encourage my Tennis and allow me to study. By that time I was already an established Tennis player in the regular steam in Under 18 category in India. SRM University was the first to offer me Engineering seat with full scholarship.

I joined B.Tech (IT) course in SRM University under normal category sports quota. I played a lot of tennis there and was the captain of the University team for more than 2 years. I was winning GOLD medals in All India Tennis tournaments besides University tournaments.

Challenge 2- What to do after BTech

After completing B.Tech with Distinction, my mind was still on Tennis. I was again offered an MBA seat in SRM University with full scholarship and continued to represent the University. I actively played All India Inter University and All India Tennis Association (AITA) Tournaments. I completed my MBA with good grades.

Challenge 3- Job or Tennis

After MBA, I still wanted to keep playing tennis but definitely needed a job. I was picked up by Integral Coach Factory (Railways) in 2017 based on my University level and All India level achievements in Tennis. I have been representing Railways winning many medals for Railways including GOLD medal in International Railway tournaments.

Some of my best moments in Life.....

I started representing INDIA on Deaflympics in 2013, and won my first Deaflympics medal in 2017 in Turkey. This is also the First ever Medal India achieved in Tennis. I made India proud by becoming the World **Champion** in 2019 and being nominated as the **Sports Person of the year 2019**.

My best year was in 2022 when I won 3 medals across all categories in the 2022 Deaflympics in Brazil. I was honoured by the Honourable Prime Minister of India and the Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. It is a great personal achievement for me.

My concluding words will be

Never stop trying. You only start failing when you stop trying. Because one day, you will achieve it. You must not lose hope but keep faith in yourself.

