



# *Asha for Education*<sup>TM</sup>

*UFlorida Chapter*

Gators for Asha, 300-9 J W Reitz Union, P.O Box 118505, Gainesville, FL 32601

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This progress report is basically compilations of emails sent periodically by the project partner to the project stewards from Nov 2009- May 2010.

## **Nov 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 - Celebration of childhood-clustre level Programmes of Asha for education children by FORWARD**

November is a month of celebration of childhood for children, since this month holds the birth of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on fourteenth. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru loved children. He said that today's children are tomorrow's citizens. He pointed out that right form of attention through education should be paid to children in order to mould them as responsible future citizens. Since education is the best strategy, in moulding the children, FORWARD with the support of Asha for Education, who also believes in the same strategy, has taken up this challenge.

Rural children, even after sixty-two years of our independence, live in deprivation of childhood privileges, which their counterparts enjoy in town and cities. Thanks to Asha for education, U-Florida Chapter. FORWARD is catering mainly to the educational needs of the rural children with pride and pleasure.

### **Kolathur:**

Kolathur is an interior rural area in Madhuranthagam Block of Kancheepuram District. It is a Dalit area, where the community lives in poor socio-economic status. Many of them live below poverty line. They are landless agricultural laborers, who were living on the agricultural activities of high caste landowners. In the recent development of globalization, the landowners had either converted the lands to cash crops or sold them to plot-promoters. In this dire situation, this community mainly lives on the 100 days rural employment guarantee scheme of the central government.

This being the context, FORWARD was earlier invited by some community women to extend its life-giving activities among them also. Using this as an entry point, FORWARD made constant initiatives and fifty women had been organized into three groups. They are covered with awareness as well as activity oriented programmes.

As a next step, the need was felt for helping the children with education. As a result, a coaching center was started here, with Sumathy, a young higher secondary passed girl, as the teacher. There are thirty children from standard IV to standard IX, who enrolled in the Asha center. Academic efficiency as well as attitudinal change, which is the objective of this educational initiative, is slowly dawning among Asha children of this center. Sumathy, like all other Asha teachers, is trained, upgraded and empowered with the needed teaching skills through the monthly upgrading training in FORWARD center.



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Kolathur Children and Children's Day programme -2009

On 14.11.2009 the children of Kolathur center, celebrated Children's Day. They wished to celebrate it as a day of showing their multi-talents, to their parents and to their community. They felt that such opportunities are provided to them only through this teaching center and hence they wished to make full use of it. Honoring the decision of the children, this day was left open for their joy that is a basic human right for any human being. The children's Day celebration started in the evening with all formal openings. Director spoke on education, its need and about the salient features of the programme- Asha Quality Education. Then the cultural events took place.

The children came out with excellent and extraordinary talents in different skills like oratory, singing, dancing, role-play, action songs etc.

Though, rain threatened and drizzled neither, the students nor the community wanted to close it. The programme went on very well. Master Prabhakaran, studying in VIII standard spoke on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The community was astonished and thrilled to watch the talents of their wards. They encouraged the children by giving cash awards, appreciating their talents. It was a day of community celebration.

The youth, who were watching the programme with interest met the team of FORWARD and expressed their joy over it. They regretted that such opportunities were denied to them, in their childhood. They came out with a request to organize them also and to provide them with opportunities to develop and to enjoy the rights of youth hood. The Sangam women also supported this request.

Very soon, a strong youth group is to emerge from Kolathur, thanks to the opportunity given to FORWARD through Asha for Education U-Florida Chapter.

### **Children of Jothi Nagar and Children's Day Programme:**

Jothi Nagar is a Dalit village, which is rapidly affected by the growing effects of globalization. Jothi Nagar being once a small village is now becoming an extended part of Chennai.

Asha Centre is functioning here for the past five years. Mr. Franklin is the evening center teacher, who works in a private engineering college, as a full timer. Because of the children's lengthy association with Asha education center, the children of this center display qualities of discipline, academic efficiency and pleasing manners in interaction.



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These children celebrated Children's Day Programme on 16<sup>th</sup> of November in their center, itself. Since it was raining, they celebrated it only as a center-based celebration.

Mr. Prasath, Assistant Manager of Cavin Care, Guindy, who is a Teach India Volunteer taught Maths and English to the children, weekly two days, in this centre was invited for the programme.

On behalf of his friends circle, Prasath presented school bags to the Asha children, on this auspicious day.

Earlier, children sang songs and spoke on the qualities of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and expressed their desire to pick him up as role model. There was very good interaction with the children. Many of them expressed their experience of Asha School. To quote Subha a class X standard student", I have been attending to Asha centre, since it's inception, in my childhood. Now I am in X standard. I realize that I am privileged now and am lucky than many of my classmates, thanks to this learning centre of Asha for education. Even when I leave after my school-final class, I will remember my experiences here and will definitely try to touch the lives of other lesser-privileged children, with stress on girl children with care and educational opportunities as I found in Asha for Education.

### **Jan 3 2010 - Teacher training program**

On 02.01.2010, the first Saturday of this month, as per the work schedule for Asha Quality Education, the teachers of ash quality education, attended to the day long upgrading training in the FORWARD centre.

We as a team of FORWARD family are happy to wish you a happy, bright and peaceful New Year 2010.

Three trainers, due to personal problem, could not attend to this training. Mr. Karthick, the Education Facilitator is standing on the left hand side, while M. Shiamala Baby, the Programme Director is seated at the centre.

### **Jan 29<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Republic Day of India and deprived children -2010.**

Sixty years have passed since India became a Republic Nation. But there is no much development in the life of rural children in enjoying their human right to quality education and to enjoy safe childhood. In this context, the children of ash for education,



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in Kudalore and Velamur areas, hoisted our National Flag on 26.01.2010, the Republic Day of India, with a goal to reclaim their lost human right values.

Prabhu Rajan, one of the programme Co-ordinators of FORWARD hoisted the flag in Kudalore, while Karthic, Education Facilitator and Co-ordinator hoisted the flag in Velamur.

Cultural events were conducted to empower the children on self governance and on the right to make decisions for their life.

In short, Republic day was a day of meaningful Celebration for asha children.

## **Feb 23rd - Progress Update**

Our children are preparing for their Third Mid term examinations now and are working hard.

## **Thandaraipettai:**

In Thandaraipettai, Yuvarani, the girl, who was trained to be the teacher, has been handling the class very well for the past two years. On 7<sup>th</sup> of February, she got married and has moved to her husband's house in a far away area. Even prior to that, Mrs.Parvathy who has also done her higher secondary from the same area had been trained by FORWARD to take up the charge of the Evening class there.

Now Parvathy is successfully conducting the evening center, in Thandaraipettai Parvathy, aged 32 is married and has two children. Her children also are our students, right from the beginning of the center in Thandaraipettai.

## **Kuddalore:**

Jeyanthi, the trained girl-teacher from Kudalore center will be getting married in May 2010. We have asked her to conduct the classes up to April, so that the education of the children will not be disturbed. She is also a good and co-operative teacher. She was a shy natured and timid one at the beginning but now had been trained to be a pucca professional one in teaching, thanks to our monthly upgrading programmes for the teachers.

Many of our children are excelling in education. To name a few;

1. J.Gayathri from Elapakkam, she studies in Std VIII in the Government higher secondary school in Elapakkam. She is the daughter of Jayakumar and Kanagavalli, poor illiterate and Dalit landless agricultural labourers, she is a regular student of our asha centre. To quote her, "At home, though my father tells me to study, I never concentrated on my studies. I was more after friends and play. When my parents go for coolie work,



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often I used to skip classes and play with my friends. But after coming to the asha evening coaching centre of FORWORD, I have got motivation to study. I like my evening centre. Here we have less students and our teacher Mrs.Gomathy pays individual attention. I am highly motivated by our madam and education facilitators who often visit us and encourage us to study well. Now I am studying well. I am happy to have come first in my class. My father and mother are happy now. I want to study well and become a doctor". This Gayathri is the 1<sup>st</sup> rank holder of her class. In this centre twenty three children are studying. Vignesah, one of the leaders of this centre and Rakesh, who are also studying in VIII standard of the same school (Government Higher secondary school, Elapakkam), but in different Sections have also got II and III rank respectively. Vignesh due to his ill health had come down from his first position to 2<sup>nd</sup> rank position in the IInd Mid Term examination in his but has challenged to come first in this III Mid Term examination.

Gomathy, the trainer of this centre, is a higher secondary passed candidate. She is married and has got one little daughter, she also comes from the Dalit community and is a talented and committed teacher.

## **March 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 – Short Activity Report**

### **Education centre in Vilankadu:**

Vilankadu is a Dalit and remote village in Achiruppakkam Block of Kanchipuram District, which is not connected by transportation facility. For transportation, the villagers have to walk two kilometers, to take a bus, which plies only one or two times a day. There is a Primary school (up to Std V), run by the Government of Tamil Nadu, in Vilankadu. For middle and high school, the children have to travel to Achiruppakkam, which is eight kilometers from Vilankadu. Vilankadu is situated in a forest area. The dalits who live in an aloof area are landless agricultural coolies.

One of the asha quality education centres is functioning in Vilankadu. There are three women sangams, having a total membership of 55 women organized by FORWORD in Vilankadu. The sangam women are covered by programmes of, livelihood initiatives and other rights-based activities like struggles to establish their rights over land and livelihood. There are around sixty five thatched huts in Vilankadu, where the community families are living.

In the asha quality education centre of Vilankadu 27 children from IV standard to VIII<sup>th</sup> standard are studying, apart from nine children from 1<sup>st</sup> standard to 3<sup>rd</sup> standard. This centre is in its third year. No girls have reached up to higher secondary in this area so far and Sudha is the first girl to reach higher secondary class in 2009, in the history of this village. Sudha was moulded along with other adolescent girls of her village by the



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reach programmes of FORWARD under the Project ash a quality education, like adolescent motivation trainings, leadership trainings, capacity building classes in English grammar and spoken English, counseling sessions etc.

### **Asha quality education centre in Vilancadu:**

in 2009, when she was waiting for her result of her higher secondary examinations, she fell sick-a kind of severe skin allergy. Her parents who are illiterate agricultural labourers, as per the custom of their village, took her to different temples and made her to live there thinking that she was evil-possessed. They were so superstitious; they will not listen to any reasonable ideas of healing. In the end, she became depressed and started behaving in a strange way.

Her parents intensified their superstitious treatments and they termed her as a mental girl. The villagers were supportive of the parents. It is to be noted that already, the younger brother of Sudha named Subash is a born mentally retarded boy.

FORWARD could not sit idly for long using this situation as an entry point, we had to do some severe counseling to the parents and we stopped the “temple and paojari” treatments to the girl. After a period of continuous and patient interventions, we could bring the girl back to normalcy.

By this time, her results came and she had passed in her higher secondary examinations. Though we tried to help her with further studies, it was not successful, since by the time she recovered the admission time for all regular courses is over.

In the meantime our evening centre trainer Deepa could not continue due to her pregnancy and hence Sudha is appointed to conduct the evening classes of ash a centre. This had a very great effect on Sudha. Sudha is now an entirely different person with self confidence and having a deep sense of self dignity. In addition to it, her payment makes her an important member of her family. Now she is helped to pursue her training in computer education in Achiruppakkam town.

Her handling of the class is excellent. Depression and all forms of skin disease has gone away. She looks forward for her higher education in the coming year, through the scholarship of ash a education programme.

The children of this centre are showing good results in their academic as well as attitudinal out puts.

### **Subash:**

Subash is a mentally retarded boy, when ash a evening centre was opened in Vilankadu, Subash was a neglected and dirty looking child, with flowing noses and very



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arrogant character. He could not speak but only make some sounds. He was attending to the regular school but the parents and others were neither serious nor interested on his growth. He will eat the midday meals and for that he went to the school and the remaining time, he will be playing alone in the mud or quarrelling with other children.

FORWORD started its intervention in his life. The first step was to treat him alike, along with other children, by equally distributing the accessories like note, pen, Pencil, though he did not know to handle them with drawing materials and eatables to him. We took pains to drill his tongue to speak basic words like “appa, amma”, we made him to be cleaned and counseled his parents to see that he is clean. He was our “pet” child in Vilankadu. We used to double the number of eatables even to three to four times to him. He started liking us and loves us. Then it was easy to mould him. To make him sit in the center quiet was a real challenge, during the coaching time, previously but now his showing enormous development.

We also talked to his regular class teacher to pay special attention to him. After two years of our loving intervention, now Subash is a neat boy with lessened arrogance. He is a regular comes to the evening centre. He loves to read and write. He joins other children, while saying common prayers, though with no clear words.

He can improve well if he is put up in a special school but his parents are not willing to part away from him. On the whole, Subash is developing to reach the tip of normalcy.

## **Mar 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 - Education Trainers upgrading Meeting**

On 13.03.2010, 21 staff members of FORWORD, including 13 Education Trainers, assembled in the Scripture Union Center, Mahabalipuram for a motivation cum exposure programme. Mr.M.Chidambaram having 23 years of service in the field of Training was invited to conduct the training. The Trainer M.Chidambaram, is the General Secretary of Exnora International, Chennai. Through different methods like team games, drawing exercises, sharing of experiences and other related interesting learning activities he brought out the inner hidden talents and power of the participants which lies unearthed within them.

It was amazing to see the different talents of the teaching and other staff in display. Each one exhibited her or his uniqueness in thinking, doing collective activity, group planning, implementing, articulation and other positive and empowering skills.

In the feed back, it was found out that the programme has served the participants positively in different ways starting from healing of their psyche to motivating them to move forward, as more committed and self confident.



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## **To quote a few:**

Vijayalakshmi, Teacher in Kudalore centres:

“I am 23 years old, having 3 female children. I had been working as a quality education teacher of asha evening centre in FORWARD, since 2006. My husband passed away suddenly in October 2009. Since then I was completely broken. Through this programme, I feel I had regained my strength and I look forward to meet this challenging world in a positive way”.

To quote Sudha, Trainer of Vilankadu centre, “I was so nervous and tensed before entering into the programmes of this day. But as they developed, even without my knowledge, something made me to involve myself in them. Slowly and slowly my fear went of. At the end of the day, I am happy, confident and empowered with the thought that I am privileged to have such a number of friends, along with me in the area of educating the children. I thank FORWARD and asha for education for this opportunity. This is my first experience in meeting and mingling with others”.

Education Facilitator and Programme co-ordinator Karthick along with Prabhu, the programme co-ordinator of women, health, land and livelihood organized and successfully conducted this programme. M.Shiamala Baby, the Director of FORWARD spoke on the importance of rights-based education in the life of the deprived children and the responsibility of the teachers as catalysts in the society.

In the end, the group spent some time on the beach enjoying and playing in the sea water and left for their destination

## **Evening Education Centres- Series:**

Name of the Educator Mrs. Vijayalakshmi.

Name of the Evening Education centre: Pudhunemilikuppam.

Pudhunemilikuppam is a small fishing village, on the East Coast Road in Kanchipuram District. This place is closer to Mahabalipuram, an important tourist spot. There are a total number of forty two houses, comprising fifty five families. Adults are illiterate or partly illiterate who live on fishing. Women work in fish related activities like drying the fish, selling the fish in fish market or as headloads etc.

Up to 2004 the community lived with riches and happiness. Like other fishing community people, they were also dignified people. The tsunami of December 2004 changed their life. Houses and all the belongings like boats, nets and other household items were wiped away by the sea and they were left alone, with only their life.

FORWARD had been involved in the reconstruction activities of this community since tsunami. Providing them with livelihood materials, food and grocery items,



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conducting psycho-socio counseling, helping the children with study materials and educational opportunities are among a few life-fostering activities, FORWARD had been rendering to this area.

### **Adolescent and youth:**

In order to save the adolescent and youth from frustration, we had been running different activities, among them in the form of games and sports activities, youth counseling, community celebration, etc .

### **Built-houses with no electricity connections:**

In 2008, an international service organization built 42 houses for the community people. Though the community started living there, electricity connection was not given to the houses by the Government electricity department. It was understood that the business enmity with the neighboring coastal land area Pattipulam is the reason behind it. The fishing community in Pattipulam, who are more powerful and politically influenced had influenced the Government officials, in not delivering electricity connection to this area, with whom they had a strife.

On getting the request from the community of Pudhunemilikuppam, FORWARD, along with them represented their case to the highest government officials. After a long struggle for rights, we successfully got electricity connection for the community. This made an impact on the community, who were living in darkness for almost eight months.

### **Education to children:**

FORWARD had been helping the children of this area with scholarships, enabling them to pursue their education. Ten school going children, from standard VIII to Higher secondary level had been helped with. Raj Kumar who was helped to finish his ITI with our scholarship. He is now working in a private concern. Stephen another scholarship student is studying in the community college.

### **Evening centre of asha for education:**

The asha for quality education centre, which runs here, is taken care of by vijayalakshmi. Vijayalakshmi comes from this community and had passed her 12<sup>th</sup> standard. Now she is doing her under graduate through University Distance Education.

In this centre, a total number of 33 children are benefited.

### **Students' particulars:**

S:No	Standard	No. of students
1.	Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> std	6
2.	4 <sup>th</sup> std	5
3.	5 <sup>th</sup> std	5



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4.	6 <sup>th</sup> std	6
5.	7 <sup>th</sup> std	1
6.	8 <sup>th</sup> std	2
7.	9 <sup>th</sup> std	1
8.	10 <sup>th</sup> std	3
9.	11 <sup>th</sup> std	4
	<b>Total students</b>	<b>33</b>

Children show very good development in their academic efficiency and in sports. The community looks at it as a great support, since their life and livelihood are getting through critical time, due to poor catch in the sea.

## **March 29<sup>th</sup> 2010 - A short write up on the PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2010.**

On 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2010, around 150 rural women from the service areas of FORWARD in Achirupakkam Block assembled together in the Government Primary School in Ramapuram to celebrate the International Women's Day.

“Stop Child Marriage and Stop Child Labour” was the campaign theme, set by these collective women, for the Women's Day of 2010. M.Shiamala Baby, the Project Director, presided over the programme. In her address; she put forward a data of the level of violence against women and girl children, even in this age of human rights existing in our society. She said that the growing number of cases of female child marriage is posing a threat to the survival of women in our society. Child marriage and child labour deny the basic human rights of the children of their right to live a dignified life.

Right to study, right to play, right to relax, right to make decisions, right to health and right to dignity are some of the basic human rights which are denied to the children during child marriage and child labour for the simple reason that they are weak and vulnerable. Adults take advantage of this situation and exploit them on economic and cultural grounds.

Mr.Vanni Raja the Panchayat President of Velamur panchayat, felicitated the women on this happy occasion, Saridha, Ward Member of Elappakkam Panchayat spoke on the occasion. Therasa, Renuka, Saritha, Anandhi and Jeba Malai, who proved to be strong women leaders, were honored as strong women of 2009, by FORWARD.

Miss.Banumathi, one of the students of the Asha quality education centre, in Ramapuram run by FORWARD sang a song on the sufferings of a girl-child labourer. Some of the participants were seen crying on listening to the woes and straggles as



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expressed in the song sung by this girl. Followed by this song the participants, voluntarily made a commitment to keep their area Child Marriage and Child labour free. They took an oath and signed the paper to keep the commitment alive.

Women sang folk songs and made the day happy and meaningful. At the end of the programme, Anandhi, the cluster level leader of women sangams proposed a vote of thanks. With the National Anthem, the programme came to an end.

## **May 11th 2010 - Upgrading Training for student's trainers**

On 8<sup>th</sup> of May, Trainers upgrading meeting was conducted, in the women's centre of FORWARD. The agenda was set like a) Staff Review and requirement b) Sharing of experiences by the teachers, sharing of experience by Thulasi, a child of Jothi Nagar centre. c) Planning of programmes for May. d). Felicitating Jayanthi, the out going teacher of Kudalore.

The programme went on as a collective team activity. Leaders of the Teaching team Mr. Franklin, Trainer of Jothi Nagar and Mrs. Sivagami, Trainer of Mathur, along with the education Facilitator led the reviewing exercise and discussions. It was one again framed and stressed that the teaching time should be strictly observed i.e. between 5.30p.m. to 8 p.m. and the self determination and commitment to serve, should be kept always burning within. The trainer's team collectively took a decision to renew their commitment to the future of the deprived children and come out with a renewed dedication to work along with FORWARD and Asha in creating a Just society.

## **Sharing of Experiences:**

There were mixed feelings in their sharing of experiences as trainers of ash children. A sense of sadness was felt when Vijayalakshmi shared the experience of her widow-hood and later regaining her strength through the teaching opportunity in ash through FORWARD. The majority of the trainers shared the process of empowerment; they had gone through after entering into the realm of teaching in their community. The timid women had emerged as a power. It was recorded that the applause they get from the regular school teachers were empowering. All the trainers agreed with Rekha, the Trainer of Thandarai Pudhucheri, when she shared that she has developed a feeling in her heart that all the children of her centre belongs to her and not the two kids alone whom she has given birth to. Here unanimously, it was felt that each trainer has a burden of the development of all the children of the centre and not only of their own flesh and blood. The Director pointed out that it is "looking beyond" and "building a new society of relationships, which is not based on blood and flesh but based on need". The building activity of the trainers was collectively celebrated. Their faith in bringing out a new generation of successful adults with quality in thoughts and actions was re-affirmed.



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## **Planning of activities in May:**

May, being the period of holidays, useful programmes were collectively planned. To make good use of the days, three activities were planned.

1. Grammar and spoken English programmes.
2. Stress management programmes.
3. Tour and relaxation programme.

It was planned to carry on the learning programme on a cluster level process. In each clustre, two days will be dedicated for this teaching. The aim is to empower the children with knowledge in simple grammar and basics in English speaking. In the context of growing number of suicides among youngsters, it was planned to conduct three stress management programmes, with an aim to save our youngsters from brooding on stress. On 12.05.2010, 19.05.2010 and on 27.05.2010, SMP will be conducted in Vilankadu, Kudalore and in Ramapuram respectively. This programme will cover the youth and adolescents of the given areas, in addition to the senior children of asha for education. On 21.05.2010 a relaxation cum tour programme was planned. Children will be taken to the beauties of Mahabalipuram.

## **Felicitation & Farewell to Jayanthi:**

Jayanthi who has completed her two years of teaching in asha quality education centre will be getting married on 24<sup>th</sup> of May. She was felicitated with gift and memento by FORWARD and a gift by her colleagues. Jayanthi while speaking on the occasion was broken with her deep feelings and some of her colleagues also cried, while thinking about her parting off. "I was a shy natured and easily intimidated- typed young girl, when I was called to shoulder the responsibility of teaching in FORWARD's evening centre in Kudalore. "I can not do" was my first response but due to the persuasion of the Director, I agreed to. In the beginning I used to weep on every unfair circumstance like the disobedience of the children. During the initial days of monthly upgrading training in FORWARD's office, I always used to keep my head down. I was too shy to look at the face of others. I was silent and answered in hushed voice. Slowly and slowly I got confidence, as I attend to the monthly upgrading programmes. I became a changed person. From a silent and shy natured girl, I rose to a person with self confidence, articulative and informative. Now, I love my job and I love my children. More than anything I love the companionship of my colleagues, the staff and the Director of FORWARD. I used to dream for the first Saturday of every month. First Saturday became valuable and precious to me. In our community, festivals are the only season when we come together as relatives and friends. So we used to yearn for festivals. In the same way, I used to yearn for the first Saturdays, because on that day I get a chance to come out my locality, come to FORWARD office, where I can see my dear colleagues and all the staff team of FORWARD. I am so happy in these two years, I had never missed an opportunity to come to office.



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After attending to the training programmes in FORWARD centre, I was motivated to study further. I remember that one of the volunteers of asha, during their visit also encouraged me to study, in addition to the Director's persuasion. Hence, I decided to continue my education. Now I am a B.Com student of the University of Madras through correspondence course. I had done my first year course and am doing my II year I hope to continue my education, even after my marriage.

I thank all the brothers and sisters of asha for education, for having given me this wonderful opportunity. Kudalore is an interior village and I come from a poor Dalit family. But for FORWARD, I would not have got such an opportunity and my life would have been differently inferior. But now I feel, I am an entirely different person with a sense of belongingness, ability to take up responsibilities and challenges and an ability to look at life with positive glasses.

I tried my level best to put off my marriage. I am twenty two years old. I dislike getting married. But I am satisfied with the thought that through marriage. I am going to serve a sick patient. My mother in law, who is my paternal aunt, is a cancer patient. My proposed husband is her only son and hence, the two families want me to be married to her son, so that she can be served. After coming to FORWARD, I had developed a liking for social service. A strange satisfaction is living with me in the thought that through marriage, I will get a chance to do some good thing to another person, who is in need. But for this, I don't like getting married to. I want to speak more. But I stop here. Thoughts clouds upon me and I feel like crying out", so saying she stopped. There was a big silence with only the frail sound of sobs.

Personally, I was moved very much. The great impact that had made on an individual, through this education programme is amazing! To sum up, I can swear that each child and each trainer can speak out in this same vein only.

Franklin one of the senior trainer, in this context brought out a resolution to record our thanks to all the volunteers of asha for education of U-Florida, for their hard work in mobilizing the support to run this useful programme in a successful way all these years. Thanks had been recorded to all the volunteers who took pain to visit and encourage the children during different periods. Special thanks had been recorded for all the programme in-charge like Palani, Prasoon, Sanketh and Shiva. Thanks had been recorded for all who had taken pains to be part of the different teleconferences and especially to Palani who did the field visit this time.

During this upgrading meeting, being the last one for the academic year 2009-10, Thulasi one of the students from Jothi Nagar had special permission to participate in this meeting. At the end of the programme, Thulasi, 8th standard (will be going to 9<sup>th</sup>



# *Asha for Education*<sup>TM</sup>

*UFlorida Chapter*

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standard) student shared her experience of academic efficiency and talents, development, which she had attained through her opportunity, to study in the asha quality education centre in Jothi Nagar. She said that she comes from an illiterate Dalit family. In the beginning she was not very clever in her studies. She joined asha classes 5 year back. Slowly and slowly she picked up the interest to study. She attended to the evening classes regularly. In spite of her sickness, she studied well. Today she stands first in her school and in addition to it, she is a regular winner of talents in oratory, essay writing. On behalf of the student community she greeted the out going teacher Jayanthi with a beautiful hand made greeting card. At the end of the programme, it was unanimously decided to send a thanking greetings card made, to our dear overseas volunteers.