

Dear friends,

2012 is a year of change. We have been busy this first quarter taking stock of our current processes: curriculum, finances, staffing, and volunteers. All our centers are also bustling with preparations for the upcoming summer camp. This year, we decided to involve our children in the planning process even more than we had in the last few years.

In this issue, you will hear what each of our children dreamt up for themselves: what skills they want to learn, what activities they would like to do the most, and what field trips they would like to go on this summer. We will also take you to *Kodai*, where some of our girls played at a national tournament.

Hope you enjoy going through this issue, and stay tuned for our next newsletter in which you'll hear more about what we did over our second quarter.

Enjoy your summer!





# Summer Camp planning

Every year before the peak of summer arrives (yes, its summer all through the year in Chennai), the Pudiyador ground team is busy planning and organizing the much-awaited summer camp. We always encourage the children to come up with their own ideas, but this year, we went one step ahead. As part of our camp planning, we surveyed our children about what they would like to learn and do at the camp. Every single child in Pudiyador sat by themselves and pondered over these questions:

*Where do you like to go on field-trips?*

*What would you like to learn this summer?*

*What theme should we pick for this summer camp?*

Children who could write their responses did so, and the younger ones narrated their lists to our staff. Everyone had a lot of fun! When asked about ideas for field trips, one of our littlest kids responded breathlessly “beach, boat, park, train, plants, crocodiles, duck, camel, butterflies”! Go ahead and browse through this article for more responses.

# park

# ZOO

# exhibition

# marina

These are some of our children's ideas for the upcoming field trips. We have incorporated as many of them as possible in our scheduling.

We used the children's votes to plan the summer camp activities and field trips. As for the theme for this year's summer camp, Prof. Narayanan, our co-founder, decided to use one of our mottos “Each one, teach one!” to drive the activities. The idea is for different groups to learn from each other and to understand that knowledge is not the exclusive property of scholars.

Weekend 1 Vandalur Zoo, Trip to farm at Tiruvandavur

Weekend 2 Planetarium, Anna Library

Weekend 3 Marina Beach, Egmore museum, railway station

Weekend 4 Visiting PO, learn about life on Elliot's beach

Weekend 5 Theme Park (VGP/Kishkintha)

Weekend 6 Semmozhi Poonga (Botanical park in Chennai)

# ... planning

## We need you!

We are in the process of organizing workshops that will cover the skills that our kids want to master! We are always on the lookout for teachers / volunteers especially during our summer camp. Please give us a shout if you are an expert (near expert) in any of the activities featured in the graph.

As for the second question - *what would you like to learn this summer?* - our kids were full of ideas. Some ideas were clearly popular (see graph on right).

Of course, some others couldn't be stuffed into compartments: "Learn to make electricity from water", "Understand how animals live and what they eat", "Write a book", are a few. The third category proved to be too abstract for the little ones to fully grasp, but we got some cool responses.



### Reunions

As always, all four centers will meet up a couple of times during the summer for a change of pace and place. These meets always tend to be big hits since the kids get to meet with long-lost pals from the other centers.

### Bring a friend

In the last week of May, each child will bring a friend from outside Pudiyaador, and introduce them to a variety of the activities that we engage in.

### Family choice

We have also invited parents to come in for a session or two of their choice to share their expertise/ experiences. We are hoping to incorporate some of what they learn from this exchange into their regular schedules when summer camp is behind us.

### Seniors as Gurus

Pudiyaador Alumni and some of the older children from our longest-running center, Ramapuram, will travel all summer to the other three centers where they will exchange skills and activities with the other children.

Aside from the field trips and classes, in keeping with our theme "each one teach one", we have planned other activities.

In all, this promises to be a summer to remember and our children are bursting to get started!



The last quarter has been fun! Some highlights...



## January

Pongal Celebrations to ring in the new harvest: Colourful rice flour patterns on the ground to thank the earth, decorated potfuls of yummy *sarkarai pongal* (sweet rice pudding) kick-started the new year in every center.



## ... quarter highlights...

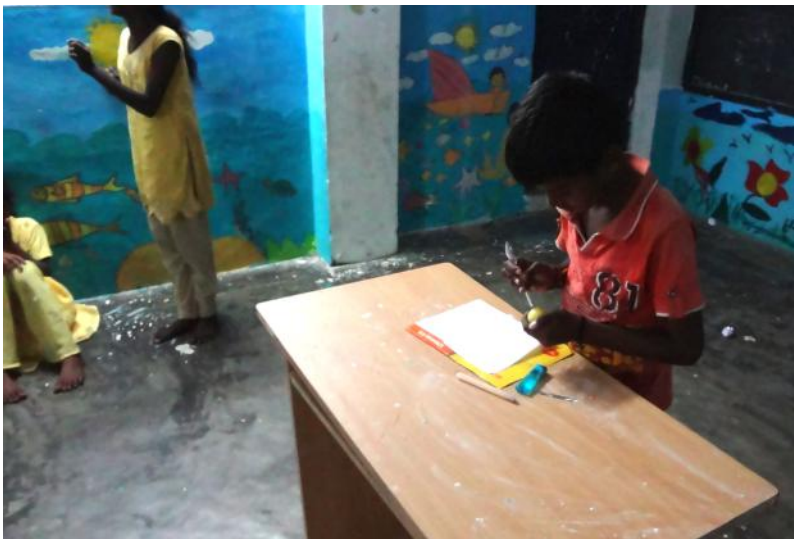


## *January*

A handful of older children from each of the centers also went on a field trip to a village during the Pongal holidays to learn about farming. After learning about crops, irrigation and the farmer's way of life, the trip also included playing games and sunning in the wide-open fields ...



## ... quarter highlights...



# February

National Science Day is celebrated in India on February 28 each year to mark the discovery of the Raman effect by physicist Sir C V Raman. We celebrated Science Month! Our kids from all our centers learnt science experiments and demonstrated cool phenomena using candles, jars, soap, paperclips and everything they could get their hands on!





## ***March***

March flew by with early morning bird walks, gardening outside the centers, trips to the beach on the new metro rail, and a visit to All India Radio station to listen to 14 instruments play simultaneously. We celebrated women's day with music and dance programs and special meetings with mothers and children. The kids enthusiastically made greeting cards!



# Pudiyador girls play pro Ultimate!

Summer is peaking in Chennai and the city is ablaze with Ultimate Frisbee! Having played the sport (simply known as “Ultimate”) for many years, our kids at Pudiyador are not immune to its pull. This is especially true for three girls from the Ramapuram center – Ranjitha, Narmadha and Rathnabooma. In late March, they experienced the ultimate thrill of playing in India’s biggest Ultimate tournament: Fly Baba!

Ultimate which is catching on hugely in India is still a fairly elitist sport and most players are expats, college students and professionals. Some of Pudiyador’s core team members have played the sport in the US and have taught our children the sport during their visits to Pudiyador. Although Ultimate is played at all the 4 centers, our children weren’t exposed to the Ultimate scene outside of Pudiyador.

In preparation for the tournament, they practiced with the Blitz Kreig team for 3 straight days on the beach!

That is changing this year! In the run up to Kodai’s “Fly Baba” Ultimate tournament, one of Chennai’s club teams, Blitz, was running short of women players and expressed interest in recruiting from Pudiyador. Ranjitha, who was in the midst of her 12<sup>th</sup> grade exams at the time, could not pass up the opportunity. And neither could the two younger girls, Narmadha (9<sup>th</sup> grade) and Rathna (7<sup>th</sup> grade). With their parents’ permission and the support of the Pudiyador staff and their friends, the intrepid trio set off to practice with the Blitz players for three straight days on the beach and then it was time for Fly Baba!

The three girls soaked up everything in the bus ride – the excitement, the nervousness, and the new friendships they were making. They arrived at scenic Kodai, nestled in the cool Palani Hills, at an elevation of nearly 7000 ft., after 12 hours on the road. Having lived in hot and humid Chennai, the girls fondly recall that first blast of cold that greeted them when they stepped off the bus. They were well-prepared for the weather and had plenty of warm clothes, not to mention their official gear that the Blitz team had so kindly provided for them. They spent the morning before their first match collecting strange-looking leaves to take home to their friends. Rathna spoke with great excitement about the yellow, red, blue and the “different” green leaves that she had never seen before!



Rathna and Narmada happily snacking on fruits between plays

When the first match began, after a few minutes of initial nervousness, they slipped into their roles on the field. The girls played every point with great intensity; their teammates appreciated their stamina and rapidly improving frisbee skills. Narmadha set the stage by playing hard defense in the first match and proved herself as a solid, dependable player. Rathna, being the youngest, was asked to play in two matches, and she fully used the opportunity with great gusto! Ranjitha played the most points and was instrumental in many of the team’s victories. By the end of the tournament the three girls had charmed their ways into the hearts of their teammates and many of the other teams as well.

Although they lost that first match by merely a point, over the next couple of days they went on to play 6 more matches, out of which they won four and lost two to place 6<sup>th</sup> in the tournament and become part of the tournament “Gold Pool.”



Ranjitha and Narmada get ready to take their places on the field



## ... pro Ultimate!

All three of them speak with equanimity about their losses even as they show a spirited desire to win. We are incredibly proud of the way our girls upheld the spirit of the game both on and off the field.

“The leaves in Kodai are so colorful—red, yellow, even shades of blue! And you should see the shapes!”

As soon as the girls got back home, other pressing matters like final exams beckoned. Ranjitha, still had her last board exam to complete. She mentioned that as she was thoroughly prepared for her academics throughout the year, the tournament was a break she was able to take on easily. She is hoping to showcase an equally impressive performance in her board exams as well, when the results come out next month.

Now the girls have started their summer vacations while awaiting the results of their final exams. The girls, along with their Pudiyaador teacher, have signed up for a month-long ultimate coaching camp, which will culminate in a tournament. They are part of a large class of 120 new ultimate players! The Pudiyaador team is awake at the crack of dawn and takes 3 buses on an hour-long trip to the beach on weekend mornings! Once they get there, they get begin a fun practice session with drills and scrimmages with their new pals. We hope to put together a Pudiyaador team for the Chennai newbie summer tournament in June.

All three girls’ parents have been extraordinarily supportive of their daughters. We expect the other centers to follow suit, when our three disc advocates meet up with friends from other centers over the course of the May summer camp. Buckle up, folks! Pudiyaador is poised for an eventful, action-filled “ultimate” summer!





Have you been wondering what *you* can do to help?

Here are our *current and specific* needs →



### YOU CAN TEACH ONLINE!

Using Skype, you can connect with our children during weekday evenings and weekends (IST) to:

- Help with academics
- Impart any of your skills
- Demonstrate science experiments
- Hold discussions about relevant and important topics
- Simply chat with the children about their lives and yours

Sign up for a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly slot at:

[www.pudiyador.org/signup](http://www.pudiyador.org/signup)



### We welcome donations

([PayPal](#), [Google Checkout](#), Cash, or Cheque)

- One-time or monthly
- We're a 501(c)(3) organization
- We also have FCRA clearance
- **All donations are tax-exempt**



### Spread the word

- Partner us with other NGOs
- Ask your employer about CSR
- How about matching donations?

### 1. Doctors!

- Need doctors to volunteer at our weekly community clinics. Any kind doctors you know of who would be willing to help?
- Need contact information for a child psychologist who speaks Tamil. Know any?

### 2. Projector and speakers

- Skype classes are clearer on the big screen
- We also screen educational/fun movies

### 3. Educational material

- Books in English for ages 3-10
- Illustrated books for non-readers
- Picture cards for innovative story telling
- Dictionaries (English and/or Tamil)
- Puzzles/activity books, board games

### 4. Music and sports equipment

- We urgently need *veenams* and guitars
- Any other musical instrument
- Bats/balls/frisbee for group sports
- Carrom boards / Chess boards

### 5. Cameras and Camcorders

- Digital cameras to record activities and share between centers
- Camcorders for curriculum development and documentation

### 6. Others

- Computer tables, storage cupboard/bureau

Contact our Program Manager

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### We would love your feedback!

Our newsletter team would love to hear from you—after all, you are the reason our team exists! Please let us know what we can do to make this newsletter more informative and enjoyable. Or just drop a line to say hello :)

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