

Pudiyador Times

Issue 17 Jan 2014





A long time ago, Pudiyador's journey began as a volunteer-run non-profit organization, beginning with its Volunteer-in-Chief, Prof. Narayanan. To this day, volunteers drive Pudiyador's major initiatives. The integrated arts programs, the teenager sports sessions, our English curriculum, even the Pudiyador board... they're all run by volunteers.

Akka! Akka! Current vandhudichu!

That's the sweet sound of electricity being restored at the Vannandurai Learning Center in the middle of January after 5 months of heat and darkness. Until then, our kids had to work by emergency lamps, despite our repeated appeals to our municipal office to help with the situation. One of Pudiyador's ardent supporters is a civil servant with a heart of gold. When he heard about the electricity issue at Vannandurai, he became our star volunteer by pressuring the municipal officials into action, and literally brought light back into the lives of our kids :)

In the next few pages, you will get to know more about our volunteers through their own words. We hope you enjoy hearing their stories and the rest of this issue. Happy New Year! As always, write to us with your ideas and questions: newsletter@pudiyador.org



Yo yo yo!



The kids love Liz: one shares a fist-bump while another hangs on her hip

Liz Haynes is the Sports Coordinator for Pudiyador's Teenager Outreach Program. She has been a multi-sport athlete since age 6 and has played competitive soccer, basketball, lacrosse, and recently ultimate frisbee. After a 7-year stint on Wall Street, she worked on the Hurricane Katrina reconstruction in New Orleans and has been volunteering at Pudiyador since last September. Liz manages the teenager outreach activities in Urur kuppam that include soccer, ultimate, art sessions and academic schoolwork support. Here's Liz, telling us about her typical day at Pudiyador.

Every day is different at the teenager program - some days we play ultimate frisbee, some days soccer, sometimes we're at the community center watching films or doing an arts project. But, pretty much every day I can count on seeing Prem walking towards me from his house with a couple of teens in tow and when he gets close enough saying "ha-lo, Liz" in his high-pitched voice, giving me a warm smile.

On the days we're at the beach playing ultimate, Prem and I wait for the teens to show up, either talking about our days, listening to a new Tamil song on his phone, or throwing the disc with the teens who've come early. While we're throwing, Prem convinces me to try out hucks or forehands, throws he knows I'm not confident in but genuinely wants me to improve at. He's a natural coach. Rahul, a.k.a. Chennai Bagwan, the other coach, always comes a bit later. I used to call Chennai every day to ask when he'd join us but I always got the same reply - "I'm taking a shower and eating - be there in 15 minutes". He eventually shows up and I hear a "yoyoyo", the American slang he's picked up. I respond with "yo macha," one of the Tamil words they've taught me.

Yo yo yo!

Sometime after 5 pm I see the teens start filtering in, rounding the corner of the community center and walking down the sand path to the beach. They come by and greet us with high fives, fist bumps or a combination of the two.

The beach becomes a mass of teens in brightly colored clothes, bandanas tied around their necks, throwing long hucks and laying out in the sand even if the disc is nowhere near catchable. Because we have limited discs Prem, Chennai and I end up throwing to a crowd of teens who race each other, timing their verticals so that they can catch the disc and huck it back. The three of us banter back and forth for a bit until the teens are all there and ready to start the session.

We round up the group and begin a drill. Recently, we've been teaching the teens drills that we've learned the previous night at our own ultimate practices since Prem, Chennai and I play for the same ultimate club team, Airborne. The teens pick up the drills pretty quickly and I think about how far they've come in the short time I've been here. Their confidence has grown tremendously and each week we see someone new showcasing their improvement.

Our Ultimate sessions usually end with scrimmages and I'm not sure which I like better: watching the teens play or hanging out on the sideline with those waiting their turn. The sideline is chaotic – guys and girls breaking out into dance, singing, doing backflips or chasing after a friend. Sometimes they get into fights or someone gets injured but it's always a fleeting moment and we're back to the game. Before I know it, it is 7 pm and time to send the teens home. Prem, Chennai and I stay on the beach to meet up with our ultimate team for practice and I see the teens lingering by the corner of the community center, watching Airborne play and looking forward to when they can join as well.



Liz with her Ultimate gang

Logo go!

We have amazing volunteers that help us design and implement some of the fun activities for our kids. Gayathri, a graphics design artist, has helped our little artists at each center conceptualize and design their team logos for the inter-center ultimate frisbee tournament this summer. Let's hear what she has to say about Pudiyaador and our kids.

I first heard about Pudiyaador from a Facebook post by a friend asking for volunteers to work with kids during the summer of 2013. I jumped at this opportunity. I have been longing to do community work ever since we returned after spending a decade in the US. Given my background in visual arts, I came up with visual arts projects that I could teach to a mixed age groups of kids once a week. The goal was to let children express themselves freely and understand them in the process. Initially I tried projects that I thought would let the kids think freely and creatively. Some were a hit and some were not! It was a challenge catering to the interest level and focus of such a varied age group (5 to 16 years).



A couple of weeks later, I was asked to work on a specific project: to help the kids create a logo/identity for each of the 5 centers. The logo was to be based on values that the kids are proud of or would love to have as a group. (More details in our summer camp article [here](#)). I had no idea I was in for one helluva fun ride!

I haven't worked with non-profits before, but my work with Pudiyaador has been a life-changing experience for me. I see such lovely traits in the children: creativity, pride in their creations, hard work and team work. The most striking thing is the love and affection they showed towards me and how much they longed to be loved back. At the end of each session, they would sit close to me and ask me when I'll come back.

Each center has its own character! The two centers in Besant Nagar are filled with the noisy ones but the older kids take on the responsibility to help manage the center. Saligramam and Ramapuram have some of the best behaved kids. But I was amazed each time I interacted with the kids: how creative they all were. While I helped them tweak their designs a bit, they came up with the logos all by themselves.

If I could do things differently, I would work with smaller groups. I would love to have them work with lot of paint and clay. I wish the kids also had watercolors or paint of some sort other than just color pencils and crayons. It would be interesting to see them work on their brush strokes. I hope this is just the beginning of my journey with Pudiyaador!

Quarter's Highlights

Throughout this quarter...

- Home visits were conducted in all centers
- Collaboration with V-excel has begun: a school for differently abled children and children with learning disabilities and difficulties. Currently, seven children who have behavioral issues and face learning difficulty from our learning centers work with V-excel counselors.
- Streamlining of the homework support process is in progress.
- Staff training workshop targeted to help staff be more effective and empathetic towards children with behavioral issues was run at our office.
- We have begun using theater to express emotions of characters in a stories enacted in commonly spoken English as part of the spoken English program.



Quarter's Highlights: September



First Term holiday camp was organized over 10 days in all the centers. The theme “our environment” was explored through visual art, dance, art and theater. Our kids carried out exciting studies on Saligramam’s urban ecology and Urur Kuppam’s ocean ecology.



Quarter's Highlights: October

Gardening at Saligramam started.

End of AID India's Basic Tamil program: expected learning outcomes were not met. We're looking into the causes and planning the next steps we can take to implement a different program.

Teens painted the walls at Urur Kuppam with the seven wonders of the world.



Documentary filmmaking workshop began as part of the teenager program. The teenagers explored topics of identity, group dynamics within their community, and influence of sports in their lives.



Soon, we should have our own short films!



Quarter's Highlights: November

Completed Math Assessment: improvement in numeration and basic math operations across all centers.

Magic Bus, our sports partner, conducted a meeting with Urur Kuppam community to identify youth leaders for training.

Field trip as part of the teenager program to see a hip-hop performance at a local school was organized.

Circle time to discuss the theme of gender disparity - 17 teenagers (3 girls and 14 boys) watched two short films on the subject and shared their own experiences on gender inequities.

Brand new Tamil curriculum framework was started, with more activity based modules including "koothu" (folk dance).



Quarter's Highlights: December

Five girls from the Ramapuram Alumni club played in the *Free Spirits* women's ultimate frisbee tournament in Bangalore.



Pre community event at Ramapuram to build rapport with families - photography workshops for fathers and teenagers, artwork & pot painting for mothers.

Second term "winter" camp continued the theme of "our environment".

Homework support sessions began as part of the teenager outreach program.

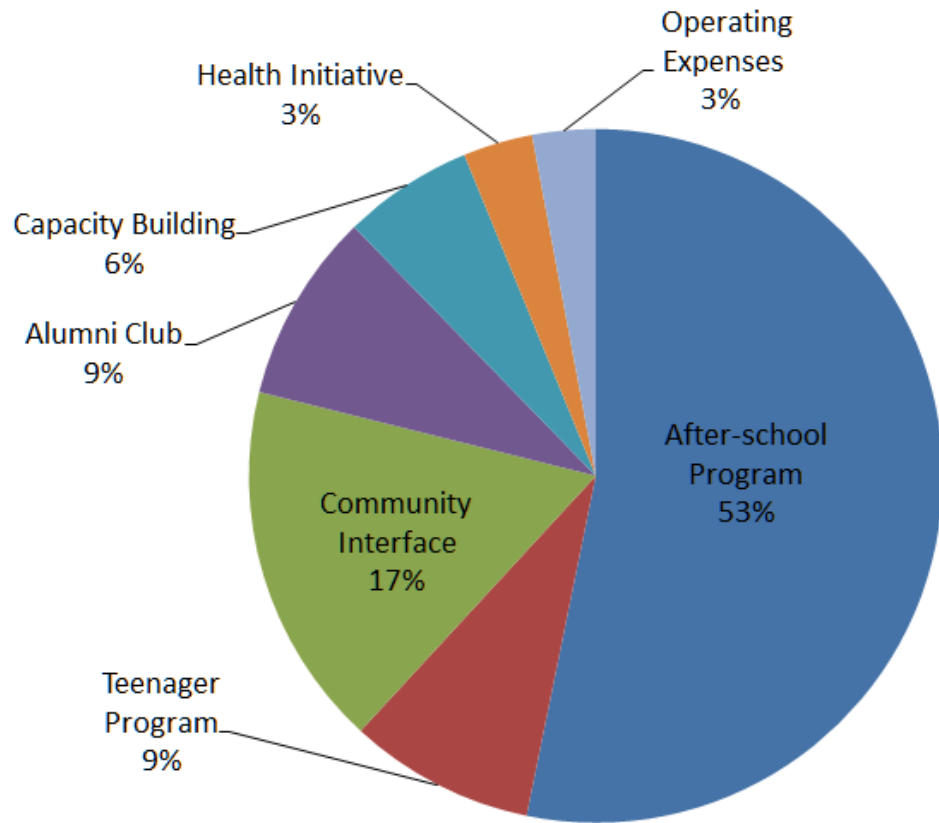


Making sense of our Dollars in 2014

2014 Budget

Our budget increased from last year's \$86,000 to a projection of \$109,000 in 2014 for the following reasons:

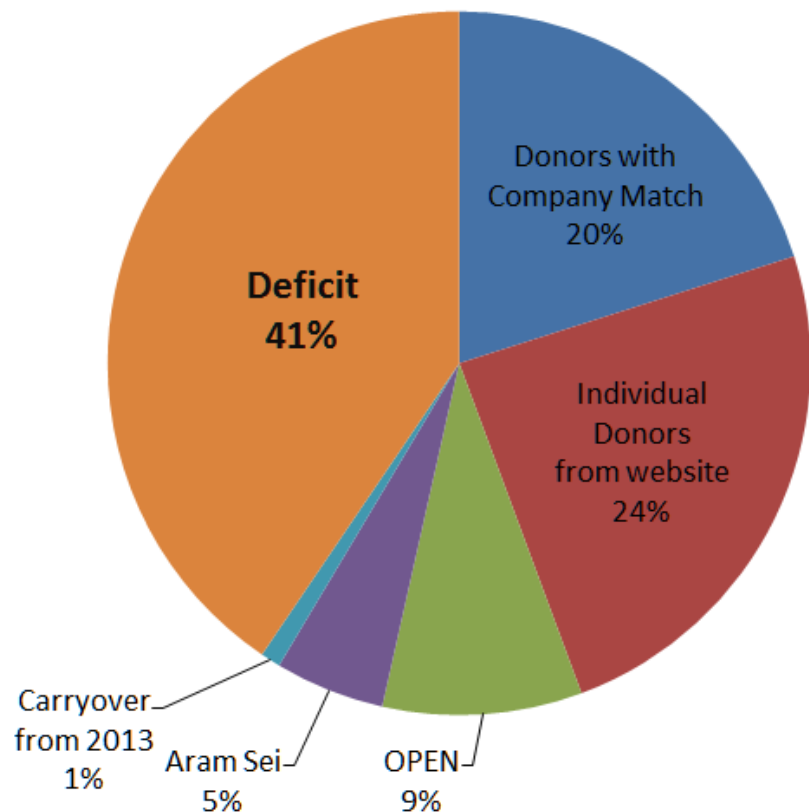
- Recent introduction of "Teenager Outreach" and the "Alumni Club" programs in Pudiador that will offer academic, extracurricular & personal development activities.
- Increased emphasis on "community interface" in our goal to increase community well-being, required hiring more social workers for house visits and counseling to reach our objectives.
- Improved benefits including annual salary increases for Pudiador team members to retain skilled staff.



Funding Outlook

Pudiador's financial outlook for 2014 includes a challenging 41% deficit in funding sources. We are awaiting pledges from chapters of 'ASHA for Education' to help bridge the fiscal gap.

Please write to us if you know of other ways to support us to continue providing a safe and fun educational experience to the kids from Pudiador's communities.



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



We welcome donations

(PayPal, 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 once a month for health check-ups in our communities. Any kind doctors you know of who would be willing to help?
- Need a child psychologist who speaks Tamil. Know any?

2. Projector

- 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
- Art Material: Color pencils, crayons, water-colors, paint-brushes
- Science experiment kits

4. Music and sports equipment

- Musical instruments
- Bats/balls/frisbee for group sports
- Carrom boards / Chess boards

5. Cameras and Camcorders

- Digital cameras to record activities and share between centers

6. Others

- Computer tables, Plastic chairs, Storage cupboards/bureaus, Ceiling fans

Contact our Planning Team

info@pudiyador.org:: +91.99629.34227

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 :)

newsletter@pudiyador.org