

ALL KERALA ASSOCIATION FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED (AKAMR)

ANNUAL REPORT 2023- 24



Ever living in our fond memories

I. Background of the Organization

The All Kerala Association for the Mentally Retarded (AKAMR) is a non-profit, social service Organisation founded in the year 1980 by Reverend Father Thomas Felix CMI, who devoted his entire life in mainstreaming the intellectually challenged children. Inspired from his mother who instilled very early into his mind a sense of commitment to work for the uplift of the intellectually challenged, Father Felix set out with a mission to bring about positive changes in the lives of the intellectually challenged persons.

AKAMR is a National level NGO in India with an objective to work for the total development of the intellectually challenged children and to promote awareness among the parents and the public for an inclusive development by acquiring, evolving and disseminating information. It works closely with the families of the intellectually challenged, professionals working in this field and various Governmental Agencies. AKAMR is an organization with excellence in the area of human development with special reference to the intellectually challenged. It is a premier Institute working towards the welfare and holistic development of the intellectually challenged for over 40 years.

Central Institute on Mental Retardation (CIMR) is the executive organ of AKAMR with its Administrative Office at Murinjapalam, near Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram.

Vision

“To Reach out the intellectually challenged to enable them to develop into a total person to live with all human rights through integration with family and community. We strongly believe that Less ability does not make a Lesser Human being”.

Mission

To equip the intellectually challenged persons to live with self-reliance by enhancing their skills and levels of confidence through holistic and enriching education by evolving special education tools and through community participation.

Strategy

The strategy of the organization is to work closely with the families of the intellectually challenged, professionals working in this field and various Governmental agency. CIMR has attained the pre-eminent position as a National Resource Centre, through its committed service for the “poorest of the poor”. CIMR has always encouraged and promoted more of “Home Based” and “Community based” rehabilitation programmes for the intellectually challenged persons which is centred around the mother and the child.

A Tribute- We feel deeply indebted to the great contributions to the special education and rehabilitation sector by our Founder Director, Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI. It was his hard work and sacrifice that AKAMR reached this stage. This year (2023-24), we have travelled without his presence and guidance, but in the footsteps that he has shown over the years and in his invisible presence. We pay rich homage to his remembrance.

II. AKAMR – its Activities

Since its inception, the Institute is working for the holistic development of the intellectually challenged persons through a series of activities such as special education, vocational training, rehabilitation programs etc. Besides regular education, the children in the Institute are undergoing training in various

aspects like dance, musical instruments, horse riding, car driving, cycle repairing, automobile mechanism, agriculture, fish & poultry farming, computer education etc. The Institute runs two Special Schools, Child Development Centre, Freedom Centre for Performing Arts, Agriculture Training Centre etc. The activities carried out by various Centres during 2023 – 24 are detailed below:

Activities of AKAMR

The various activities undertaken by different Centres of AKAMR namely) Ashakendram, Ernakulam, ii) DCMR Special School, Thiruvananthapuram, iii) Jeevan Prakash Child Centre, Thiruvananthapuram, iv) Teachers Training Centre, Thiruvananthapuram, v) Agri-Horti Farm, Kuttichal and vi) Freedom Centre, Kovalam are as follows –

i. Ashakendram Special School, Ernakulam

Asha Kendram is the first special school of AKAMR. It was started in 1980 as a week end programme and developed into a full time special school in the following year and has trained several hundreds of children in the past above four decades.

After the summer holidays, Ashakendram reopened on June 1st 2023. During the academic year there are 63 students and 12 staff on the roll.

a. Activities of Ashakendram

Activities at Ashakendram is planned in such a way to develop the 4 main living skills like, Basic living Skill, Independent Living skill, Community living skill and Employment living skill of each mentally challenged individual by improving the 4 cardinal functions – Motor, language, psycho-social and cognitive function- which are seen in every human being and which is under developed in intellectually challenged persons. Through this we are trying to make our students achieve personal adequacy, social competency and economic independence and lead a life as normal as possible in the society in which they live. For all this development, we implement the 3'Cs philosophy i.e., comprehension, competency and creativity which is developed by Rev.Fr.Thomas Felix CMI, our Founder Director, after his several years of research and committed effort. We use group teaching method and IEP depending upon the need of the students.

Students of Ashakendram are divided into 6 groups according to their age and functional level for main classes, and for band, music (Both Vocal and

Instrumental), sports and academics, we have different groups according to their ability in each of this item.

The main classes of Ashakendram are knowing shapes(concept building), making Shapes (Carpentry), selecting shapes (Cycle assembling), combining Shapes (Home management class which includes cooking, washing, ironing clothes, bed making, cleaning class rooms, bath rooms, toilet, surroundings etc.) academics, drawing and painting, craft, stitching, health and hygiene, horticulture, time and money concept, general knowledge, sports and games (both indoor and outdoor), dance, vocal music & instrumental music (Jass, Drums, Organ, Bongos, Thabala and Band).

As part of the training, we take our students for outing to the nearby places like Public Park, railway station, bus stand, shopping centers, hospital, church, post office etc.and attend various festivals, cultural programmes, exhibitions and public functions taking place in the city. We also take our students to attend the social functions like funeral, marriage, and other functions in connection with our well-wishers, staff and students. For various reasons and occasions, we take our students to Central Institute on Mental Retardation which is our main Centre at Thiruvananthapuram. By this, our students get chances to travel by train, bus and auto, to take food in moving trains, use public toilet and interact with public etc. By all these activities we make our children understand and familiarize the cross section of the society. At the same time the society also get a chance to know our children. This will indirectly develop the community living skill of our students and thereby integration and inclusion in the society in which they live is also possible.

Vocational training at Ashakendram includes, carpentry, Cycle assembling, cooking, Cleaning, Washing, and Ironing clothes, making envelopes, greeting cards, candles, Files, wall hanging, glass painting, Christmas Cards, tablemats, paper bags, hand wash, dish wash soaps, phenol,



soap powder, Book making, spiral binding, tailoring and paper plate making. The senior students of our centre are given training in paying electricity bill, telephone bill, water bill, doing shopping, purchase train tickets and top-up cards to recharge mobile phones, go to post office, banks and LIC office etc. for various purposes. Training is also given to our senior students to work as Peon, sweeper, Ayah, Gardener etc.

b. Main events of the academic year:

This year our students participated in so many programs organized by various institutions and organizations. Details about the various programs conducted and special events attended are given below.

1. Academic year started on 1st June, 2023
2. Celebrated Yoga day and music day on 21st June at school.
3. All teachers attended online training conducted by SCERT on 30th June, 2023.
4. Two of our staff attended a training programme on Digital Education for Special Children at YMCA, Ernakulam on July 18th conducted by AID.
5. Our students participated in Malayali Manka competition, Mahabali fancy dress and Pookkalam on 21st August at POC, Palarivattam. This programme was conducted by CEFPE. Cible Mary dressed as Malayali Manka and Sreejith M. as Mahabali. 10 of our students participated in Pookkalam competition also.
6. On 23rd August, we celebrated Onam at our school. Since it is only 7 months our Director left us, we celebrated Onam in a small way. This year our Onam lunch was sponsored by Elite Groups Private Ltd., Thrissur, and flowers to make Athakkalam by the parent of our student, Amshik Bashi. Mr. Manoj, HR Elite Group, Fr. Thomas Changanariparampil, President, AKAMR, Sr. Elise Mary, Executive Director, Ashakendram were also present in this celebration.
7. Six of our students got an opportunity to recite poetry on the occasion of releasing the book 'Blooming of Red flower' at Ernakulam Sahodara Soudham on August 27. This programme was organized by Indian Society of Authors, Kerala chapter.
8. Parents of our 28 students and 3 staff participated in the felicitation given to the students who won medals in Special Olympics international level. This programme was at Ernakulam Town Hall on 29th September and this programme was conducted by PAID.
9. 3 students from Rajagiri college, Kalamassery did their internship at Ashakendram for one month from 7th November as part of their training programme.

10. 5 of our students and one staff participated in a programme named 'A Day to Remember' conducted by Stallions Group and FISAT, Engineering college at Keezhmadu, Aluva. The programme was mainly for interaction between regular school students and intellectually challenged students and to entertain with cultural programmes and games. Engineering college students and staff of FISAT welcomed our students with cultural programmes and fun games. They entertained our students, prizes and gifts were given to all and it was really a wonderful day to remember.

11. Amal Thambi, one of our students participated in Jass competition in district level special school kalotsavam, on Oct 30 held at Nirmala Sadan Special School, Muvattupuzha. He won 1st prize in this competition.



12. On Oct 31st, we conducted a class for our students about good touch and bad touch and this class was taken by Adv. Hazim. All the vocational group students attended this class.

13. On 4th November 14 of our students participated in the cultural programme at Rajagiri College, Kalamassery in connection with cancer day celebration. Amal Thambi played Jass, Shilpa Antony played Keyboard and 12 of our students got a chance to perform dance on that day.

14. On 9th November, Amal Thambi participated in Jass competition at state level special school kalotsavam held at Kalamassery. He won A grade in senior level competition.

15. As usual, CEFFE conducted children's day celebration at Fine Arts Hall, Ernakulam for the intellectually challenged students of special schools in Ernakulam district. 48 of our students, 25 parents and all staff participated in this programme. Cine artists and many other VIPs interacted with our students and entertained them. This year programme was inaugurated by Hon Governor of Kerala, Mr. Arif Muhammed Khan. Two of our students got an opportunity to participate in the Tablo named 'Amrit Ka Mahotsav' as Dada Bai Navaroji and K. Kelappan (freedom fighters).

16. Two of our students renewed their disability certificate in the camp conducted by PAID at Women's Association Hall, Ernakulam on November 18, 2023.

17. On 3rd December, 2 of our students and one staff participated in the programme named 'Santa Run' at Grand Hyatt Hotel, Bolgatty. This programme was conducted by Rotary Club of Cochin.
18. Remembrance of our Founder Director Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI was held on 11th January 2024 at CIMR, Thiruvananthapuram on his 1st Death Anniversary. All staff and 5 of our students attended the function and paid homage to him.
19. Three students and 2 staff attended the 10th Annual day programme of Indian Society of Author's Kerala chapter at Changampuzha Park, Edappally on 25th January, 2024. Students got an opportunity to meet famous poets like Sippy Pallippuram etc.

One of our student, Amshik Bashi got a chance to participate in the Republic Day celebration conducted by the Kerala Governor, Hon. Shri. Ariff Muhammed Khan at Raj Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram on 26th January, 2024.

On 14th February 2024, Cochin corporation conducted a cultural fest at Town Hall, Ernakulam for Special schools in the corporation Area. 11 of our students participated in painting, solo song, and group song competitions. All the participants received consolation prizes.

Dr. Imthiyas and team conducted a training programme namely 'Imthiyas Mind Moves' at Ashakendram on 1st March. All the students attended the training programme. The therapy can improve finger coordination and concentration of the students.

On 2nd March, we conducted a one-day Picnic to Chittilappilly Park, Kakkanad. 35 students, 16 parents and all staff went for the picnic. Everyone really enjoyed this day as special.



On 6th March, one of our students got an opportunity to attend inaugural function of Metro station at Thripunithura.

On 22nd March we celebrated 44th Annual day in a grand manner. Mrs. Padmaja Menon, ward councillor, Fr. Thomas Changanariparampil, President AKAMR, Sr. Elise Mary, Executive Director Ashakendram were our distinguished guests. All our students got an opportunity to show their talents on this occasion.



Trans Asian Shipping Services Private Limited, Kakkanad informed us that they are willing to install a lift at our school as part of their CSR Fund.

Visitors:

- 21st June 2023, Trainees and staff from DIET, Lakshadweep visited Ashakendram as part of their training Programme.
- NSS students from Maharaja's college, Ernakulam visited on 6th November, 2023.
- Health Inspector from Cochin Corporation, in connection with Noon Meal Programme visited Asha kendram
- Inspection Team from DDE office, Kakkanad visited Asha Kendram in connection with Grant-in-Aid 2022-23, on 27th September 2023.
- AEO, Ernakulam visited school on 12th October 2023.
- Noon Meal Officer from AEO office, as part of Noon Meal Programme.
- Rev. Fr. Roy Vadakkal, Chair Person, All Kerala Special Schools Association.
- Smt. Padmaja S. Menon, Councilor, Cochin Corporation is a usual visitor of our school. She is also a member of Noon Meal Committee.

Parents Meeting

We conducted parents meeting once in every 3 months to discuss about their children's development.

The Financial assistance by the state of Kerala, since 2008-09 was a great relief to us for the smooth functioning of our institution. But this year (2023-24), we did not get any assistance from the state, since the govt. fixed the tariff i.e., special schools should have 20 students below 18 years of age. We had only 4 students during this financial year.

All the achievements of Ashakendram are due to the effective guidance of Rev. Fr. Thomas, the President AKAMR, Rev. Sr. Elise, the Executive Director, the

whole hearted support of the managing committee and the committed effort of the staff of Ashakendram and co-operation of our parents. We also remember the noble hearted people who are supporting us by giving their valuable suggestion, guidance, time, money, material, and good will. We acknowledge our gratitude to all our well-wishers who have helped us directly or indirectly.

ii. Developmental Centre for the Mentally Retarded (DCMR), Thiruvananthapuram

The year 2023-2024 was a year of deep sentiments in the absence of Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI who remained the life and soul of DCMR School. We bow our heads before the memory of this great soul who founded and nurtured DCMR and who was our father and mentor.

Although we have lost the physical presence of Fr Felix, we all experienced the proximity of his soul, the feeling that Achan is with us gives the strength and it has guided us in the whole year.

This academic year, the school started functioning on 1st June after the summer holidays. There were total 194 working days in this year.

So far 138 children were trained during this year. There are 60 children below the age of 18 years and 78 above 18 years age group. It consists of 82 Boys and 56 Girls.

The 3Cs concept developed by Fr Felix and the curriculum of SCERT are the basic syllabus followed in the school for the children. A time table has been prepared for 45 different activities in a week. Along with special education, training in Arts, Agriculture, Sports and Vocational activities are also provided. In addition, the students are taken to the Kuttichal Agricultural Farm for training in horse riding and agricultural activities.

The class time is from 10 am to 3.30 pm every day. It is difficult to bring the children belonging to the care group category to the school regularly. To such children, the respective class teachers go to their homes from time to time and give necessary guidelines.

The students are given noon meal every day under MDMS program.

Major events of this year

Following the demise of Fr. Thomas Felix, Fr. Thomas Chenganariparambil took over charge as the President of All Kerala Association for the Mentally Retarded and he is responsible for the administration of the institution.



- ❖ All the day-to-day operations of DCMR are now being led and guided by Thomas Achan and Sr Elise Mary.
- ❖ Sr. Betsy took over as Assistant Director of DCMR.
- ❖ The first death anniversary of Fr. Thomas Felix was duly observed on 11th January 2024. Governor of Kerala Shri Arif Muhammad Khan attended the function as the chief guest.
- ❖ On 11th June 2023 Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal Shri Ananda Bose visited DCMR Special School.
- ❖ On January 17, 2024, Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha Constituency MP Shri. Shashi Tharoor visited DCMR School and inaugurated the bus provided by him through his MP fund for our School.



- ❖ On February 21, 2024, on the occasion of Hon'ble Governor Shri Arif Muhammad Khan's Grandson's birthday, they came to meet the children with grandson and celebrated the birthday with our students.
- ❖ On February 27, 2024, the General Manager of State Bank of India and his team came to the school to meet the students of DCMR and presented gifts to them.
- ❖ On November 27, 2023, a group of students, teachers and parents from Shalom Special School, Bhopal, visited our School
- ❖ PAID, an organization of parents of intellectually challenged children, held two meetings at DCMR.

- ❖ As part of the study, more than 500 nursing students visited the school in several batches from various nursing colleges in and around Trivandrum to visit the school and observed the classes.
- ❖ On 5th October, 2023, six people from Charity Village visited the school and understood the activities.
- ❖ On 24th August 2023 Community Police team from Medical College Police Station conducted a social awareness program.

Our children were taken to participate in various programs.

- ❖ On November 03, 2023, the students were taken to see the Keraleeyam program organized by the Kerala government on the occasion of the birth of Kerala.
- ❖ On December 3, 2023, the children were taken to see the exhibition held by the Social Justice Department.
- ❖ On March 14, 2024, our students visited Akkulam Tourist Village as part of their study tour programme.
- ❖ On 21st November 2023, the students were taken to participate in the program organized by CEFEE. On that occasion, Sister Elise was honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ❖ The students of DCMR participated in the special school arts festival where our students participated in various competitions and won prizes.
- ❖ On December 3, 2023, students participated in a program organized as part of World Disability Day, where they participated in various competitions and received prizes. At this function Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI, our founder director was posthumously honored and Sister Elise and the students received the award.
- ❖ As part of the Vikasit Bharat Sankalp yatra program, students and teachers participated in the program where Union Finance Minister Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman was the chief guest at a Convention centre at Mangalapuram, Trivandrum and our students Arun and Pradeep presented artistic performances.
- ❖ This year the teachers participated in various training programs conducted by SCERT
- ❖ On October 20, 2023, a medical camp was arranged for the students and an eye check up camp was organized by Government PHC Nanthancode General Medicine and Regional Institute of Medicine.

- ❖ As part of the Home-based rehabilitation of the children, the teachers visited children's homes and provided training, also the speech therapist visited the children's homes and gave speech therapy. All the children are making good progress.

Several organizations and individuals came forward this year to help us in various ways

- ❖ Apsara Pencil Company team visited DCMR and Crayons and Books were given to the children on the occasion of Children's Day.
- ❖ The students of Good Shepherd Higher Secondary School brought study materials and books to the students of DCMR School.
- ❖ Bank associations members distributed school bags and other study materials to our students on International Women's Day

During the last academic year, three of our students left us. Nitin, Sibi and Bhadra passed away due to various ailments. Wife of our staff, Mr William, also departed this year and tributes are paid to her pious memory.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported us in this academic year and look forward to your cooperation in the future.

Under the leadership of Thomas Achan and Sister Elise, we hope that the school activities will be very efficient in the coming years and we pray to God to give all the blessings for it.

Posthumous honour to Fr Thomas Felix CMI.

The Social Justice Department of Kerala honoured the noble service of Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI Posthumously on 3rd December, World Disability Day. A citation and shawl was given in honour of Fr Felix and was received by Sr. Elise along with a few children. We are happy that the Social Justice Department remembers him even after he is not alive.



Cultural programmes of our children were organised on World Day of Disability.

Participation in Keraleeyam

'Keraleeyam' was a week long celebration organised by the Government of Kerala in connection with the day of formation of Kerala State. CIMR participated in a few programmes organised during this celebration. 11 teacher trainees participated in the seminar organised at Jimmy George stadium in connection with Keraleeyam.



The students of DCMR were taken to see the exhibition organised in connection with Keraleeyam in different batches. They visited different stalls - food stalls arranged by Kudumbasree, art exhibitions, stalls of products and models of tribal people, Book exhibition etc. Arun and Pradeep of DCMR School performed Odissi dance and played Sitar at the University College auditorium in connection with Keraleeyam.

Life time Achievement award to Sr Elise Mary

It is a matter of great pride that Sr. Elise Mary, Executive Director of CIMR was given the Life time Achievement award considering her 50 long years of selfless service to the persons with Intellectual Disabilities. She was awarded by Centre of Empowerment and Enrichment (CEFEE) and was honoured by Shri M G Rajamanikam IAS, Commissioner, Rural Development Department. The award was given in a grand function organised at Tagore Theatre on 21st November. A few of our children, parents and teachers also participated in the programme.



Shalom Special School, Bhopal- Visits CIMR

A group of 15 students and 9 teachers from Shalom Special School Bhopal made a two day visit to CIMR. They went around to see the activities of DCMR and Agriculture - horticulture rehabilitation farm at Kuttichal. They were given a warm welcome by our children on 27-11-2023.



Adieu to Sony.

Sony Kuriakose, one of the first students of DCMR passed away on 03-10-2023 at the age of 51. He was suffering from cancer. Sony was staying in DCMR for several years, as he was from Ponkunnam. He was very active in DCMR as he was involved in activities like dance, sports etc and has gone to different places in India and abroad along with DCMR team. A group of children and teachers from DCMR participated in the funeral programme along with Fr Thomas and Sr Elise at Elangulam, near Ponkunnam.

Helping hand from Sarvodaya School.

The manager of Sarvodaya School, Nalanchira, Fr Koshy, extended a helping hand to DCMR School. He motivated the principal and students of the School who collected several materials for the use of our children. A cheque of Rs. 25,000/- and the learning materials were handed over to DCMR, represented by Fr Thomas and a few children in a programme organised in the Sarvodaya School auditorium.

CSR Support from SBI

CIMR is a voluntary organisation functioning totally with the financial support from well wishers. Several people and companies come forward to support the activities of CIMR in their own way. State Bank of India Trivandrum Zone came forward and contributed office equipments and



furniture for students as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. The sanction order was handed over to the organisation by the Hon'ble Union Minister for Finance Smt. Nirmala Sitaraman during a function of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yathra of the Central Government organised at Rashaj Royal Auditorium, Mangalapuram near Attingal. We express our heartfelt gratitude towards SBI. Our children Pradeep and Arun performed two Classical Dances - Odissi and Kuchippudi during the programme.

Eye Check - up camp at DCMR

An eye check up camp was organised at DCMR on 20-10-2023 with assistance of Regional Ophthalmology Institute (ROI). A group of eight members including two Doctors and technicians from ROI examined the eyesight of 63 children and provided consultation and those who need further check up and treatment were referred to ROI.

Children's day and World Disability Day

Children's day was celebrated on 14th November, 2023 with cultural programmes and rally. Children were given sweets. Children enjoyed the programmes and they participated in the activities enthusiastically.

At Ernakulam, Children's day celebration was organised by CEFEE at Fine Arts Hall. From Asha Kendram, 40 children and staff participated in the Programme. Hon'ble Governor of Kerala Shri. Arif Mohammed Khan inaugurated the programme. The children were very happy to meet the Governor and other distinguished guests.



World Disability Day was celebrated with the Social Justice Department on 3rd December. Children participated in a variety of cultural programmes conducted at Women's College, Trivandrum.

At Ernakulam, Rotary Club organised ' Santa Run' programme on World Disability Day at Grant Hayatt Hotel ground. Cine actor Jayasoorya and Hibi Eden MP were chief guests of the programme. Two children Anshik Bashi and Gopika Krishnan participated in the programme.

Participation in different activities.

From Ashakendram, a few students participated in a special programme called 'A day to remember' organised by Stallions -FISAT at Eli Hills Kezhmad. This was a programme aimed to integrate the regular school and Special School students. Children participated in painting, dance and few games.

Similiarly in the District level special school Kalolsavam, Children from Ashakendram participated and won first prize in Instrumental Music. The programme was organised at Nirmala Sadan, Muvattupuzha. Amal Thambi secured 'A' grade in Instrumental music at the state level competition organised at Kalamassery.

14 students and teachers from Ashakendram participated in the Cancer Day special programme organised at Rajagiri College at Kalamassery on 4th -November. The children participated in different activities.

Christmas Celebration with State Disability Commissioner

At DCMR, Christmas was celebrated on Tuesday 19th December, 2023. Kerala State Commissioner for Disabilities Shri. S.H Panchapakesan was the chief guest of the programme. Children performed different cultural programmes in connection with Christmas including Tableau depicting the



birth of child Jesus. The Hon'ble commissioner very much appreciated the beautiful performance of the children and the activities of CIMR. He promised all possible help to the Institute. He along with children, cut the Christmas Cake and distributed sweets to all children. Fr Thomas welcomed the commissioner and Sr. Elise proposed the vote of thanks.

Shri C.V. Ananda Bose, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal visits CIMR



Dr.C.V.Ananda Bose, the Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal visited the tomb of Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI at CIMR on 11-06-2023 and paid rich homage to the departed soul. He became very emotional and expressed his sentiments on his long term intervention with Fr. Felix. He spoke on the occasion and told that the good works of Fr. Felix has to continue and his memories shall be made live. He promised his support in all activities and wished an award to be instituted in his honour. He also presented a scroll of honour to Fr. Felix and handed it over to Sr. Elise.

Training in Horse back riding

The New Space India Limited (NSIL), Bangalore – the Commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development (CSR&SD) Activity had approved a project titled “Empowering the mentally challenged through Hippo Therapy” for the students of DCMR.



With a view to cater faster development of intellectually challenged children, CIMR initiated Horseback riding. The rocking and rhythmic movement of horse riding helps the students to stimulate various and different senses of body and brain simultaneously, which is highly regarded as therapeutic. Horse riding has not only provided them physical agility, but also the much-needed mental attributes, confidence and comfort too. This activity remains the pride of our students providing them valuable experiences and fond memories for ever. The

purpose is to give the students 'courage & confidence' that they can lead a fierce horse by holding the rein with a definite length and strength.

This project was worked out properly. The children were trained in skills related to horseback riding. It has improved the confidence level of the children. Now we have a group of individuals who are able in riding horse and taming them. The skills they have achieved through this activity is amazing.

Independence Day Celebrations

Independence Day of our nation was celebrated in all our centres. At CIMR flag hoisting was done on 15th morning. The importance of the day was explained to the students of DCMR and Asha Kendram on the previous day.

At the invitation from the office of the state Governor Fr. Thomas and



Sr. Elise participated in the Independence Day celebration at Raj Bhavan on 15th evening. They met the Governor and exchanged greetings.

The New President of AKAMR takes charge

After the sudden demise of Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI, our founder president Fr. Thomas C.T. Chenganariparampil MST was elected the new president of All Kerala Association for the Mentally Retarded. He took charge of the office of the president in March 2023. As he is transferred full time at CIMR he was given warm welcome on 12 August 2023.

PAID District level meeting at CIMR

The general body meeting of PAID- Parents Association of the Intellectually Challenged, was organized at CIMR. Principals and selected parents from all special schools in Trivandrum district participated in the meeting. Executive committee for PAID Trivandrum district was elected in this meeting.



Nursing College students visit CIMR

Nursing students from different nursing colleges visited CIMR to get to know the training given at CIMR to the intellectually challenged persons. During this period students of KIMS college of nursing, Saraswati college of nursing, Cooperative College of nursing, Nightingale college of nursing, SP Fort hospital and Rukmani college of nursing visited CIMR and went through the facilities available here and interacted with the students. Similarly also a group of Higher secondary school children from Good Shepherd school visited DCMR and interacted with the children.



Association with Estuary Sarovar Portico

Fr. Thomas Felix had initiated talks with the management of Estuary Sarovar portico, a beach resort at Poovar for a lasting association with them. It was after his time that it was materialized. All the children and staff of DCMR were invited to this beach



resort for a firsthand experience and it was a wonderful experience for all. After further discussion, the management of the resort agreed to give opportunity for our children to perform cultural programmes in that resort. A contract was agreed upon with the Resort for conducting performing arts before the guests by our children Pradeep and Arun on the evening of every Friday or Saturday. This is continuously being done and the performance of the young boys are very well appreciated by the visitors at the resort.

General Body meeting

The annual General Body meeting of All Kerala Association for the mentally Retarded was held on 3rd September to discuss the progress and future activities of the organization.

Janamaithri police visits DCMR

The child protection officer of Janamaithri police of Medical College police station visited DCMR and interacted with the students and staff of the school in connection with Independence Day celebration.



First Commemoration Day of Fr. Thomas Felix CMI

CIMR rejuvenated the memory of Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI on 11 January 2024 on his first death anniversary. It was on this day, one year ago Fr. Felix departed us, leaving all of us in deep sorrow. The staff and students were enthusiastic to observe the day with prayers and multiple



programmes to enliven the memory of our beloved founder. The day started with Holy Mass at 9.30 a.m. The main celebrant of the Holy Mass was Rev. Fr. Antony Elamthottam CMI, the provincial superior of CMI Trivandrum province. Several priests, sisters, staff and students of DCMR and Asha Kendram and their parents and family members of Fr. Felix participated in the Holy mass. In his message the main celebrant highlighted the importance of the service of Fr. Felix. He said that Fr. Felix is like St. John the Baptist in the Bible

who exclaimed that “he (Jesus) should increase and I should decrease.” Fr. Felix spent his entire life so that Jesus Christ be exalted through him. After the Holy Mass Rev. Fathers along with the CIMR family and the family members of Fr. Felix conducted special prayers at the tomb of Fr. Felix.

A public commemoration meeting was organized at 11 a.m on the same day. Honourable Governor of Kerala, Shri Arif Mohammed Khan was the chief

guest. Rev. Fr. Antony Elamthottam CMI presided over the meeting. In the beginning, Honb’le Governor and the distinguished guests prayed at the tomb of Fr. Felix and paid floral tributes to him. In his address as the chief guest, the hon’ble Governor highlighted the



services of Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix CMI. He said that Fr. Felix was a true follower of Jesus Christ and he spent his entire life with one single thought of serving the intellectually challenged persons. He also recollected several occasions of his interaction with Fr. Felix. Shri S.H. Panchapakeshan, the disability commissioner of Kerala and Shri Mohd. Arif Khan, the General Manager of State Bank of India also spoke about the importance of the great contributions of Fr. Felix and expressed their gladness to be part of this institution. Fr. John Kochupura CST was also present on the stage. Fr. Thomas Chenganariparampil MST welcomed the guests and Sr. Elise Mary proposed the vote of thanks.

Several priests, sisters, well-wishers, family members of Fr. Felix, students and staff of Asha Kendram and DCMR, parents and neighbours participated in the programme. All were discussing about the great contributions of Fr. Felix. After the programme all participated in the noon meal also.

Releasing of Memorial book and Documentary

A memorial book narrating the life and contributions of Fr. Felix and experiences of a few of his associates, parents and teachers was released on the occasion of the first death anniversary of Fr. Felix by the hon'ble Governor, the name of the book is *Ormathirakal* (Waves of Memories). Similarly, a documentary explaining the development of CIMR and the evolvement of Three C's Concept was also released by the hon'ble Governor. The importance of this documentary is that the whole narration in this is given by Fr. Felix himself. He

explains about his life and the progress of his work and how he developed the Three C's concept and its impact on the development of the intellectually challenged persons in this documentary. Hence it is named "My Life".



Awards declared in honour of Fr. Thomas Felix CMI

During the commemoration meeting held at the CIMR campus two awards were declared in order to immortalize the memory of Fr. Felix. Sr. Elise Mary announced the awards in front of the hon'ble Governor.

The first award is instituted by the family members of Fr. Felix. Kurichiaparambil family instituted an award in the name of Fr. Felix to be given to the best institution working for the intellectually challenged children in India. Selected institution will be given a cash award of Rs. 50000- and a citation.

The second award is instituted by CIMR and will be given to the best individual working for the intellectually challenged persons. The selected individual will be given a cash award of Rs. 50000- and a citation. The award money for this will be collected with the collective effort of the well wishers of CIMR.

These awards will be given every year on the annual commemoration day of Fr. Felix at CIMR. The awardees will be selected by a committee constituted by CIMR as per the guidelines prepared for the same.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor M.P. pays tribute at the tomb of Fr. Felix and dedicates a school bus for DCMR special school



Dr Shashi Tharoor M.P. of Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency paid floral tribute at the tomb of Fr. Felix on 17 January 2024. He also dedicated the school bus purchased from his M.P. fund for DCMR special school. We are thankful to him for this generous act

towards these children. The new school bus will help in transporting the children from home to school and back. The process for this was initiated by Fr. Felix and Dr. Shashi Tharoor had committed to him to sanction the school bus for DCMR.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor spoke on the occasion and fondly remembered the moments that he spent with Fr. Felix on several occasions. Sr. Elise Mary thanked the hon'ble M.P. for giving us this bus and for coming to inaugurate it. Fr. Thomas welcomed him to CIMR. He was generous enough to spend time with the children of DCMR and distributed sweets to them.

Cardinal George Alencherry visits CIMR

It was a happy occasion for all of us at CIMR that His Eminence Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, Major Archbishop Emeritus of the Syro Malabar Church visited CIMR on 28th January 2024. It was a casual visit to CIMR during his visit to Trivandrum. As it was a Sunday only a few students and staff were present in



the school and a warm welcome was given to the cardinal. His Eminence visited the tomb of Fr. Felix and prayed. He also visited the class rooms and understood the unique training given to the children at the school

Outing of DCMR students to Kuttichal



As part of the training, a group of students from DCMR along with staff and teacher trainees were taken in the new school bus to Kuttichal Agriculture and Horticulture farm. There, they could experience different types of trees and plants, animals etc. They went around to see

the different cultivation in the field. They enjoyed the horse riding also. Children are taken there regularly for training in horseback riding. The children enjoyed the trip very well. The teachers and the teacher trainees helped the children and involved in all the activities.

Participation in the Republic Day Celebration at the Raj Bhavan

At the invitation of the Hon'ble Governor, Fr. Thomas, Sr. Elise and Mr. Rafi participated in the Republic day celebration at the Kerala Raj Bhavan on the evening of 26 January 2024, met the hon'ble Governor and exchanged greetings.

Conclusion

This year 2023-2024 was an year with full of activities. One full year has passed in the absence of Fr. Felix and it was hard to believe. We tried our best to keep his memories alive and also to keep the things in order and to continue the activities he had started.

We are thankful to the General Body and Governing Body members for their timely advice and cooperation. We thank also all the individuals, groups and companies who have supported our efforts. Thanks are also due to our staff members who are our collaborators, our parents and neighbours who are with us in all our activities. We are hopeful that we can further go ahead with the energy of support from all of you.