

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO) launches Sri Arunodayam's 2018 'Special Mom' Awards and 'Special Mom Forum'**

**Kolathur, Chennai, India – December 18, 2017:** Sri Arunodayam is a home for abandoned mentally challenged children in Kolathur, Chennai. Over the past 15 years, the home has provided a safe and caring environment for these children most of whom were abandoned in hospitals, crowded public places such as railway and bus stations, and at time even in dustbins! The organization works with the Department of Social Welfare, Child Welfare Committees, the Police and ChildLine in the rehabilitation of such children.

### **The story behind Sri Arunodayam's 'Special Mom' Award**

Sri Arunodayam understands the extremely critical role of parents – especially mothers, in the healthy upbringing and development of children, more especially if they are 'special' children. However, in today's society, mothers of 'special' children are often misunderstood, discriminated against and judged. Some are even ostracized from their communities. Instead of fixing the problem the tendency is often to fix the blame, and almost always this falls on the mothers and their children, even though the children are the innocent victims in the whole scheme of things.

Sri Arunodayam believes that women who brave the odds for the sake of their special children are true unsung heroes and that is why the organization created this unique program with the aim of giving these mothers the recognition and honor that they truly deserve.

### **Second Annual Awards Event to happen in May 2018**

The upcoming 2018 event was officially launched at a special function by **Mr. Joseph Ravi - District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO), Chennai** in a ceremony held at Hotel Shan Royal, Poonamallee High Road, Chennai on December 16, 2017.

Nominations for the Awards were declared open via the organization's website:

<https://sriarunodayam.org/special-mom-award-2018/>. Mothers of 'special' children from all over India are invited to send their applications to Sri Arunodayam through till February 1, 2018 after which the applications will be screened by an eminent panel of judges to arrive at the 15 finalists for 2018.

Mr. Joseph Ravi, District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO), Chennai says: *"Projects like these are truly inspirational and that's why I agreed to inaugurate them. I assure Sri Arunodayam and the Special Moms of all the assistance that my Department and I can provide them. I am happy to be part of transformative programs like these."*

Iyyappan Subramaniam, Sri Arunodayam's Founder & Managing Trustee says: *"The Special MOM Forum is a unique space for special mothers. It brings them together to collectively fight for their children's rights and welfare. The Forum mitigates the feeling that they are all alone and ensures their*

#### **Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust**

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**SRI ARUNODAYAM**  
Home for Mentally Challenged Destitute

*due recognition from society. This program has the potential to transform the lives of mothers of special children and ensure that no children is abandoned due to a lack of support and care.”*

## **The Award**

The 15 finalists will be given a cash award of INR 15,000/- each, a Certificate of Excellence along with a special Trophy, gift hampers sponsored by event partners and a Special Lifetime Pass that entitles them to a host of free support services from Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust.

## **Important links & downloads**

- Nomination Forms in English and Tamil, and details on program timelines, eligibility criteria and more, are available at: <https://sriarunodayam.org/special-mom-award-2018/>
- A round-up of 2017's Special Mom event is available at: <https://sriarunodayam.org/special-mom-post-page/>

## **Sri Arunodayam also launched its SPECIAL MOM FORUM on December 16, 2017**

As a follow up to the 2017 Awards held on Mother's Day - May 14, 2017, Sri Arunodayam **officially launched its 'Special Mom Forum'** also on December 16, 2017. All Special Mom finalists automatically become members of this Forum – a project aimed at empowering mothers through joint collaboration, to advocate their issues at all levels of society with the help of the Forum. Such empowerment can help these mothers become powerful agents of change in society.

The Special Mom Forum was launched through an all-day program of **specialized workshops, tailored to cover issues faced by families of 'special' children**. Eminent faculty took sessions on **Government Policy & Schemes for the Disabled** (*Mr. Joseph Ravi - District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO), Chennai*); **Government Resources & Entitlements for the Disability Sector** (*Mrs. Sheeba, Speech Therapist & Audiologist from the State Resource Training Center (SRTC)*); **Women's Health and Stress Management** (*Dr. Sumitra, President of the Tamil Nadu Woman Doctors Association*); **Psychiatric Disorders in Mental Retardation** (*Dr. Mythiri Manoharan, Psychiatrist from Kilpauk Medical Hospital*); and **Legal Counsel concerning Wills & Probates** (*Iyyappan Subramaniyan, Sri Arunodayam's Founder & Managing Trustee who is also an Advocate*).

## **For more details, please contact:**

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