

Shantha's Story



Shantha is an 11 year old little girl with mild intellectual disability. She also lives with hydrocephalus – a condition in which there is an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid in her brain causing increased pressure inside her skull. **Unable to care for her on account of poverty, her parents had surrendered her to the Government Cradle Baby Center in Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu State, when she was a little child.** She came to our home when she was 4.

Sustained special education and physiotherapy brought Shantha up to speed over the years, but more especially in the past year where her progress has been simply phenomenal! The role of the speech therapist was very critical in helping her express herself coherently. She is a quick learner. **Around 6 months ago, Shantha passed a psychological evaluation that found her fit for mainstream education** and she was enrolled in the 3rd grade at a Government school under the 'inclusive learning' program. Apparently, Shantha has a lot of hidden potential which needed some tapping into! In the past year she took up drawing, making small pieces of jewelry and painting colorful diyas.

As if this weren't achievement enough, **Shantha began to excel at classical Indian Bharatanatyam dance** (which can be quite challenging for 'normal' children too!). We had introduced dance classes at the home less than a year ago and at first it didn't

appear that she would stick with it because of hyperactivity and body imbalance issues. But Shantha took us all by surprise! Not only has she overcome her challenges but she is able to remember long and complex dance sequences and lyrics, and is well on her way to becoming a wonderful classical dancer who has made 6 public appearances already!

This is very exciting for us! A child written off by society but with a fighting chance to make it big one day! Thanks to her special educators, speech and physiotherapists, she is reaching her fullest potential today!

- **Watch her dance at:**
<https://www.facebook.com/deepakraj.sethuraman/videos/vb.100001987497694/1244219412320963/?type=3&theater>
- Shantha also performed at our Special Mom Award ceremony on May 14, 2017. You'll find pictures of her and the rest of the troupe under the "**Picture Gallery**" (**Welcome Dance by our Children**) section at: <https://sriarunodayam.org/special-mom-post-page/>

Children are a priceless gift. They aren't given to us because we are special or entitled, but because they can make our lives special as we choose to receive and love them. If you are interested in making a difference in the life of a child like Shantha, please call our office. There are 114 children like her whose lives can be transformed with a little help!

Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust

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Sri Arunodayam is a secular organization with zero tolerance for discrimination against children, whether on the basis of caste, creed, religion, color or gender orientation.

This child is the ward of the Government of India and her identity is recognized and protected. Using her picture without permission from Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust is a punishable offence.

Report prepared by Althea D'Sylva for Sri Arunodayam Charitable Trust