



EVENT REPORT

SRI ARUNODAYAM'S
SPECIAL MOM AWARD 2022|23



SRI ARUNODAYAM
Home for Mentally Challenged Destitute



Date : August 6, 2023
Time : 10.00 AM
Venue : Radha Regent,
Arumbakkam,
Chennai

Our 6th Annual Special Mom Award 2022|23 was held on August 6, 2023 where we celebrated the lives of 20 incredible mothers of special children.

They each received a Cash Award of INR 15,000/- and a Special Lifetime Pass entitling them to free services from Sri Arunodayam.

We are grateful to:

- Azim Premji Foundation (APF)
- Dr. Seshagiri Rao
- Mrs. Krishnapriya Das, Director, Pixint Graphics Pvt. Ltd.

Never giving up, never giving in!

This pretty much sums up the attitude of our Special Moms this year! They're not giving up or giving in but using challenges as stepping stones to build themselves and their families up. What might have crushed others has, in fact, formed and fashioned our Special Moms into women of substance. That's why they're incredible!

It's not easy being a parent; even more so, parent to a child with intellectual disabilities. These mothers face enormous emotional stresses and insecurities. They often question their parenting competence and grieve over the future that they had envisioned for their children. Often grappling with guilt, condemnation, judgment, and criticism, it's no surprise that they report higher levels of stress than other parents. Sadness is a familiar companion. How often they miss out on family and social activities because their children's disabilities prevent them from participating. Most feel like outsiders in their own family circles! How difficult that must be to bear every single day!

But our Special Moms are overcomers. They feel what they feel but push through to the other side where love, acceptance, and confidence abide. They've broken moulds and refuse to be stereotyped, emerging stronger in an increasingly materialistic and self-seeking world.

Our 2022|23 Award ceremony was held on August 6, 2023, at Radha Regent, Arumbakkam, Chennai. We are very grateful to the event sponsor, **Azim Premji Foundation (APF)**, our Chief Guest, **Dr. Sethu Kumaran, Chairman of Soka Ikeda College of Arts and Science for Women**, and our Guest of Honor, **Mr. P. Jerard Selvaraj, Joint Secretary to Government, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Textiles & Khadi Department**, for giving away the prizes together with Sri Arunodayam's long-standing donors. We are grateful to every donor, sponsor, staff member, well-wisher and friend for making this ceremony a grand success.

At the ceremony we welcomed these amazing women and families into our lives: **Alapati Naga Sowjanya**, mother of Alapati Tejasvi (10 yrs.), Chennai; **Ambiga S**, mother of Surendiran (20 yrs.), Tiruvannamalai; **Bargavi K. B**, mother of Lhamaya (14 yrs.), Chennai; **Dhanalakshmi P**, mother of Logeshwari (20 yrs.) and Jai Balaji (15 yrs.), Coimbatore; **Jayakodi S**, mother of Sathish Kumar (26 yrs.), Tirunelveli; **Kalarani**, mother of Abhinash (14 yrs.) and Santhosh Abi (13 yrs.), Kanyakumari; **Kamala S**, mother of Gowthaman (23 yrs.), Chennai; **Maheshwari L**, mother of Suryaprakash (14 yrs.), Coimbatore;



Sri Arunodayam's Special Lifetime Pass is carefully thought out to provide a lifetime of free services to each year's finalists and their children.

- **Automatic membership to Sri Arunodayam's SPECIAL MOM FORUM** – a program aimed at empowering all Special Mom finalists through regular training programs to help them advance in caregiving and personal areas of development. Such empowerment helps shape them into powerful agents of change in society.
- **Free short duration stay for their children in an emergency:** The mothers are entitled to leave their children in our care for limited periods of time when they may be required to travel and have no one to care for their children during those periods.
- **Sri Arunodayam as custodian and official guardian of their children:** Understanding their anxiety concerning the future of their children on their demise, Sri Arunodayam offers the parents an option to appoint us as custodian and official guardian of their children. Sri Arunodayam will either induct or network with peer organizations to enable a safe home for the children on their parent's demise.

Mary C, mother of Sasikumar (29 yrs.), Chennai; **Nirmala M**, mother of Anand (39 yrs.), Chennai; **Ponnammal K**, mother of Epsiyammal (26 yrs.) and Prahbu Kumar (13 yrs.), Tiruvannamalai; **Pooma**, mother of Rejin Raj (14 yrs.) and Reju (12 yrs.), Kanyakumari; **Pothiyammal G**, mother of Pothiraja (15 yrs.), Chennai; **Prathiba Sudhakar**, mother of Roshini (14 yrs.), Chennai; **Ruckmani S**, mother of Lokesh Babu (26 yrs.), Chennai; **Sajeetha Parveen Syed Ibrahim**, mother of Sheik Alaudeen (42 yrs.), Chennai; **Santhakumari J**, mother of Sabarinathan (20 yrs.), Madurai; **Sasikala Baskaran**, mother of Ragabharathi (15 yrs.), Chennai; **Srikala V**, mother of Naveen Kumar (21 yrs.) and Veena (16 yrs.), Chennai; and **Subbulakshmi M**, mother of Keshavapechi Raju (22 yrs.), Tirunelveli.

The audience was moved by their stories presented during the ceremony. Our Guest of Honor, Mr. Jerard Selvaraj, praised Sri Arunodayam's work in recognizing and supporting these families, and two awardees shared about their experiences with Sri Arunodayam. (Their testimonials are below.) Thoughtful stories were interspersed with wonderful dance sequences by our children, and the ceremony ended with a grand lunch for all.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Special Mom Award is an annual event seeking applicants from across the country for the most deserving finalists.

Sri Arunodayam received applications from mothers across Tamil Nadu, and a group of eminent panelists carefully screened each application to arrive at the 20 finalists for 2022|23.

More information on the Special Moms and their stories are available at:
<https://sriarunodayam.org/special-mom-award-2022-23/>

Welcoming our Guests



The Show Begins



Honouring our Special Moms



Entertainment Highlights



Sharing a Meal Together



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Alapati Naga Sowjanya, Special Mom Award 2022/23 Finalist



"I'm speechless at receiving this award, and I thank Sri Arunodayam for breaking the mould and honoring mothers of children with ID. Many in society still have a medieval outlook, believing that these children are cursed. Nothing could be further from the truth! Our daughter is God's gift to us. A true blessing. I would never exchange Tejasvi for anything in the world!"



Prathiba Sudhakar, Special Mom Award 2022/23 Finalist

"The vetting process was stringent but Sri Arunodayam interviewers were very humble and observant. I'm honored to win this award on account of my daughter, Roshini. I loved the many personal touches all throughout the event, especially receiving my gift in a beautiful jute bag made by the children of Sri Arunodayam. I know what an effort this would have been for them. I want to stay connected with this organization and its children."

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