



## EVENT REPORT

SRI ARUNODAYAM'S  
SPECIAL MOM AWARD 2025|26



**Date** : May 10, 2026  
**Time** : 10.30 AM  
**Venue** : Bharani Studios,  
Saligramam, Chennai

*Our 9th Annual Special Mom Award 2025–26, held on May 10, 2026, celebrated 20 extraordinary mothers and, for the very first time, a father of special children.*

*Each awardee received a cash prize of INR 15,000 and a Special Lifetime Pass providing free services from Sri Arunodayam.*

### **We are very grateful to:**

- Mr. Nanda Kumar Nagarajan – Trustee; Founder of YogaBandham
- Mr. T. Srinivasan, President, MEL Systems and Services Ltd., Chennai

## Honouring the nobility of our Special Moms

Motherhood is a divine, sacred calling. No service compares to the service that a mother gives to her children. On International Mother's Day, May 10, 2026, Sri Arunodayam hosted its unique Special Mom Awards at Bharani Studios, Saligramam, Chennai. Awardees, families, supporters, well-wishers, and distinguished guests gathered to celebrate courage and love in their purest form.

Among those present was our esteemed Chief Guest, **Mr. S. Govindaraj, Commissioner from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.** Special guests included **Justice P. N. Prakash**, Former Judge of the Madras High Court; **Mr. S. Kumar**, District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (Tiruvallur District); **Mr. S. Thenpandian**, Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee (Tiruvallur District); **Mr. Srikanth**, SP, Crime Against Women and Children (CAW & CW) Wing, Chennai; and **Mr. T. Srinivasan**, President of MEL Systems and Services Ltd.

### **A Moving First**

For the very first time, we honoured a father alongside 19 extraordinary mothers—several of them raising more than one child with intellectual disabilities. Devaraju's story reminded us that **caregiving is a shared and sacred journey, not restricted to mothers alone**, and that a father who patiently embraces his role in the face of extreme difficulty is equally admirable, if not more so.

### **Celebrating Our Finalists**

We were proud to honour the 20 finalists - **Akila Vaidyanathan, Catherine Rathnabai S, Gayathri R, Geetha Varadharajan, Jayanthi T, Jeeva S, Kavitha D, Mahalakshmi V, Manimegalai N U, Meenakshi Kulkarni, Meera Balaji, Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy, Renuga Devi K, Rupavathi R, Sandhya Krishnamoorthy, Sharmila J, Sritharani M, Umamaheswari S, Vanitha Pushpam O, and Velliyamoodu Govindaraj Devaraju.**

Our children filled the stage with vibrant performances, while **the awardees' stories of sacrifice and determination unfolded on screen—moving the audience to tears.** Watching the lives of these families unfold through film felt as close as one could come to truly walking beside them and sharing in their struggles, heartbreaks, and quiet victories.

### **Shining a Light on Unseen Struggles**

Through our Special Mom awards, we shine a light on the often-unseen struggles of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities. Despite social stigma, emotional stress, financial hardship, and limited access to support, these families continue to



*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 in Sri Arunodayam's Special Mom Forum:** All finalists become part of a supportive network that offers regular training programs focused on caregiving, personal growth, and leadership—empowering mothers to become confident agents of change in society.
- **Free short-term emergency care for their children:** Mothers can leave their children in Sri Arunodayam's care for short periods during emergencies or unavoidable travel, ensuring their children remain safe and supported.
- **Future care and guardianship support:** Recognising parents' deep concern about their children's future, Sri Arunodayam offers families the option to appoint the organisation as custodian and official guardian. Through its own programs and trusted peer organisations, Sri Arunodayam works to ensure children continue to receive safe and compassionate care even after their parents' demise.

fight tirelessly for their children's inclusion and future. The Awards provide a **platform to advocate for this deeply marginalised and often judged community** as they strive to rise above immense challenges.

### Inspiring Voices

Commissioner S. Govindaraj reminded us that persons with disabilities are citizens with equal rights and dignity, and that empathy must guide society's actions toward their families. Founder and Managing Trustee Iyyappan Subramaniyan reflected, *"Behind every child who overcomes challenges with courage stands a parent who chose hope over fear and determination over despair."* Our esteemed speakers reinforced that inclusion is both a social responsibility and a human right.

### Sharing a Meal

Awardees and their families joined us for lunch—a time of laughter, stories, and togetherness, building bonds that last well beyond the stage. We were reminded that **living successfully in community begins with a change of heart**—seeing one another as brothers and sisters, sharing simple joys, and standing together in love and solidarity.

### Looking Ahead

As we approach our 25th year of service in 2027, the Special Mom Awards enter their 10th year, continuing to shine a powerful light on the unseen struggles of families raising children with intellectual disabilities. For our donors, this event is a powerful testament to the impact of their generosity. We thank them and all our well-wishers for believing in our cause, standing with us, and lending their voice to uphold the dignity, rights, and future of every child with disabilities.

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

*The Special Mom Award is an annual event seeking applicants from across the country.*

*A distinguished panel of experts from the disability sector carefully screened the applications, following which a Verification Committee visited each finalist's home and community before the 20 awardees for 2025|26 were finalised. More information on the event and awardees' stories is available at: <https://sriarunodayam.org/special-mom-award-2025-2026/>*

## Welcoming Our Guests



## The Show Begins



## Honouring our Special Moms



## Entertainment Highlights



## Sharing a Meal





*Receiving the 'Special Mom' award from Sri Arunodayam is one of the most moving moments of my life. Raising a child with special needs reshapes your world. You learn patience in hospital corridors, hope in therapy rooms, and joy in the smallest milestones. On this journey, institutions like Sri Arunodayam become family.*

*Your work with orphans, disabled and destitute children is not just service – it's nation-building through compassion. You give these children dignity, education, and most importantly, belonging.*

*I dedicate this award to my son Kedar, who made me a 'special mom', and to every caregiver, teacher and volunteer at Sri Arunodayam who mothers hundreds of children every single day. Thank you for this honour and the sacred work you do. – **Meenakshi Kulkarni, 2025-26 Special Mom Award Winner***



*Thank you, Mr. Iyyappan and Team Sri Arunodayam, for the Special Mom Award honour on Mother's Day. I will cherish this forever. It is a privilege to share the stage with so many phenomenal mothers and that one resilient father.*

*Raising children with unique needs isn't always easy, but the love we have for our children makes us unstoppable, balances endless responsibilities, and provides unconditional belief in our children, looking at what's possible with them. Thank you for helping us advocate and bridge the gap between our children and society, to bring awareness and inclusion. – **Sandhya Krishnamoorthy, 2025-26 Special Mom Award Winner***



*Thoughts of an individual mirror who the person really is! Mr. Iyyappan, your thought to recognise and reward special mothers on Mother's Day is one of the most emphatic gestures I have known so far. I'm really honoured to have been selected for such recognition and absolutely humbled to see every other mother who walked up to receive the award. It was not just a formal ceremony but a celebration that brought into the limelight the hard-fought journey of a mother (and one father too) who never gives up. Team Sri Arunodayam put in months of long, hard work to stage this beautiful event, and things went ahead so spontaneously, keeping up the emotional fervour. Hats off to the coordinators and Mr. Iyyappan himself, attending*

*to every guest with joy that contagiously spread through the crowd. Wonderful event. Meticulously planned and beautifully organised. Grateful for this. – **Gayathri R, 2025-26 Special Mom Award Winner***



*We were honoured to present the award to a remarkable mother of a special child. Her journey, resilience and unconditional love inspire us all. Heartfelt thanks to Mr. Iyyappan for making this beautiful initiative possible and for giving us the opportunity to celebrate these extraordinary mothers.*

*– **Poongody, DM HR, Amphenol Omniconnect India Pvt. Ltd.***



*Memorable and heartwarming hours spent with the Sri Arunodayam family on Mother's Day, May 2026. It was a great honour to give away an award to one of the great special moms honoured by Sri Arunodayam on that day. The whole program was like a well-organised family event, sharing and appreciating the sacrifices and efforts borne by the mothers of special children. My heartfelt thanks and love to the Sri Arunodayam team for providing such dedicated support and serving the special community.*

*– **Dr. Shanthi Chidambarathanu, Paediatric & Fetal Cardiologist***

