

## April 2008

### 3<sup>rd</sup> April:

Avurudu Celebrations  
At the School Premises  
5.00 – 6.30 p.m

### 8<sup>th</sup> April:

Last day of the Term

## May 2008

### 6<sup>th</sup> May:

Re opening for the 2nd  
Term 2008



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News!

[www.ideschool.org](http://www.ideschool.org)

We are proud to announce that we have launched our website. The website has information and photos about both the work of the school and disability issues in general. We would like to thank Mr Vili Sintonen for generously donating his time to this project.

### Special Thanks to:

Ms Eveline Cassim, Mr. Kesarralal Gunasekera,  
The Swiss Lady's Charity Group, Mr Vili Sintonen, Mr. Bernard Sinniah, Ms Joanna Campion.



### Dear Friends,

With the dawn of the Year 2008, it is time again to share the outcome of some of the activities at IDE School last year.

The Annual Prize Giving and Concert was held at the Dutch Burgher Union Hall on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007. There were beautiful



presentations by almost all the children and they enjoyed their performances.

We were fortunate to have Ms Eveline Cassim, our Yoga Therapist who honoured the event as our Chief Guest.

Mr. Kesarralal Gunasekera, former Member of Parliament honoured the event as our Guest Speaker. We thank him for spending his valuable time with us and we hope that he will assist us in future too.

We are now looking forward to the Avurudu Celebrations which will take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April at the school premises.

Hope to see you all there.

Wish you a prosperous and peaceful New Year

**Kanthi Perera**  
Principal/ Special Educator

### Globally united for education for our children!

In January I joined the I.D.E School for three months as a volunteer. Having previously worked in a very large disability organisation, it makes a pleasant change to be working with the very small and friendly I.D.E School. I was placed by a UK organisation called Challenges Worldwide and I have been asked to look at I.D.E Schools ideas for the future. One idea is to look at why rights for children with disabilities are so often overlooked...

2008 should be a year of opportunity for adults and children with disabilities, both in Sri Lanka, and around the world. Last year, over 100 countries signed a new UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This is the first ever convention for people with disabilities and it represents a monumental achievement for the international disability movement! Let us look at why it is so badly needed.

As many of us already know, adults and children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized groups in society. In countries like Sri Lanka, poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability. People with disabilities tend to be concentrated in the poorest sections of society. Sadly, the statistics speak for themselves; people with disabilities make up 20% of the worlds poorest people and 82% of people with disabilities live below the poverty line. However, poverty is not simply about a lack of income but a denial of rights, fundamental freedoms and the opportunity to develop as a human being and be included in society.

These freedoms and opportunities should be available to children with disabilities too. In Sri Lanka, approximately 40% of children with disabilities are not in school and children with



intellectual disabilities are even less likely to be in school. This means they cannot learn, develop or socialise like other children do. The facilities available for children with intellectual disabilities are even more restrictive. Their abilities are overlooked, their capacities are underestimated and their needs are given low priority. This means that many children don't have access to therapies and teaching methods that can help them to learn and develop.

This situation is simply not acceptable which is why schools like I.D.E School are so desperately needed. ALL children deserve an education regardless of their disability. Without the dedicated work of the I.D.E School teachers, many of the children would not be able to exercise their basic right to an education or develop their independence skills.

The new UN Convention has rules on many aspects of life including improving access to therapies and education. I'm hoping this new convention will mark a major shift in the way 650 million people

with disabilities around the world will be treated and that children in Sri Lanka will benefit too. But the Convention won't change things over night. So in the meantime I would like to thank you for continuing to support such an important school. With your help the children are getting the education they have a right to receive... something which sadly is not yet available to ALL children.

### Want to know more?

Find out more about the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by visiting [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities) and following the links. Download a campaign pack and make sure that adults and children with disabilities have rights in your country.

*Joanna Campion – Volunteer*