

MENCAFEP
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Mentally Handicapped Children & Families Educational Project

A Programme for Children / Young People with Learning Disabilities

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Sharing Smiles

A SEMI ANNUAL PUBLICATION FOR FRIENDS OF MENCAFEP

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HELP WANTED !

IMPERFECTIONS ARE A BONUS.

Being disabled can mean missed opportunities. But MENCAFEP staff members Sarojani, Manike and Ayesha found that their disabilities were not disabilities at all at MENCAFEP.

"There's a great belief that disabled people should be working with disabled people," Ranji Stubbs project co-founder says. "They have more empathy."

With that in mind, MENCAFEP practices "positive discrimination" when looking for employees. Ranji says: "All other things being equal, a disabled person will get the job."

For different reasons, coming to MENCAFEP has helped all three women look toward the future with anticipation rather than fear. In Sarojani's case, the job as MENCAFEP Housekeeper has meant a small income to feed and clothe three children. Sarojani was afflicted with polio as a child and has an atrophied leg to show for it. But it's her ever-present smile – not the limp – that leaves a lasting impression. "It's a smile, that Sarojani brought with her to MENCAFEP: a sign that she had already come to terms with her disability before she arrived. With Ayesha and Manike however, self-acceptance has taken time.

Ayesha began work at MENCAFEP after completing her schooling at MENCAFEP. Before this Ayesha was found abandoned in a Sri Lankan Government Home for the Mentally Retarded. From where she was brought to Nuwara Eliya. Ayesha has a condition called MicroCaphilli, which means she has an undersized skull, causing epileptic fits and intellectual disablement. Ayesha is presently working in the Integrated Pre –school (a mixed school for disabled and able children) as a helper. She has also had stints as a kitchen helper and garden worker; this has been to provide her with as broad a skill base as possible. Since starting work Ayesha has, "totally blossomed," Ranji says. "Always giggling, joking and being positive."



Ayesha with her Pre-school students – new hope – new life.

This Newsletter is sponsored by Inter Fashion, Nuwara Eliya Sri Lanka.

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A programme for children/young people with learning disabilities.
The special child/young person has the right to live & be part of their community.

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