

# Times GURUKUL



DMS Feature



## LOVING FOSTER PARENTS' BEAMING YOUNG MINDS



A, too, is pleased with GISB's impact on the lives of his children Vignesh and Ganesh. "I learnt about the school from a friend. Nagarathna madam is a great Montessori tutor and gets into the skin of every child to make beautiful human beings out of them. She has done very well by her students at the Vidyalaya and the Montessori. Since I wanted my children to study in an international curriculum and was considering sending them to Ooty, I checked out GISB and decided on it. By God's grace, we've found a great school that imbibes a fantastic combination of discipline and education in our children," he says.

That every student is immensely precious to her is apparent from the way Nagarathna chooses her students. "We don't send children with low academic records away. There was this child who had scored 10, 15 and



HS Sridhara Murthy

al educational institutions across the world," explains Murthy.

And, there's separate accommodation for boys and girls. "We don't believe in the dorm system — there are four students to a room and we've tried to integrate children from diverse cultures so they can learn from each other. We have weekly boarding for students. They are picked from the Kaggadasapura campus on Sunday evenings and dropped back on Friday evenings," says Murthy. "This school is a great option for students, especially for those who haven't been doing well in their previous schools," adds Sunisa Lamsamot, a Thai national and guardian for foreign students at GISB.

And it is certainly challenging to deal with children from such diverse cultures. "We had to first learn about their cultures, their styles of living and their food habits. Now, we know what a Korean child needs, what a Thai child does and what a rural Indian student is comfortable with. By the time they are 15, no matter where they're from, they all want to become leaders. We facilitate these aspirations by being friends with them," smiles Nagarathna, adding, "The IGCSE syllabus, with its flexibility in allowing children to combine science with arts, commerce with arts or science and various such permutations, sees the child blossoming into exactly who she/he dreams of being. And, right after the O levels and A levels (10th and 12th standards respectively), which are on par with international curriculum, the child can study anywhere in the world."

All reasons why manager of a publishing house Srikanth Kastur Gundappa chose to pull his daughter Sanjana out of a CBSE school and admit her to GISB to pursue the IGCSE curriculum. "My daughter hated the outdoors. After joining GISB, she often comes home late because she's busy with some extra curricular activity or the other. She commutes everyday from Bangalore south to Nandi hills — the school has great transport facility. She missed her bus once, and the management sent a car to pick her up! Most importantly the teachers are excellent," he beams.

Murthy and Nagarathna have hand-picked experienced teachers to vouch for quality education. Stanley Anthony comes with 19 years of experience and teaches English and Geography. "We use the CIE methodology to bridge the gap between students from non English and English speaking countries. It integrates rural students and expats. English is a universal language and so, we've opted for ESL as a subject to reduce language differences," he explains, adding, "And, we are the foster parents of

students at GISB." Sumitra Shivanand, teacher of chemistry too, chose to move from the Vidyalaya to GISB to be able to lend more parental care to children apart from making learning fun for them. "The interaction between the student and teacher is much greater in a residential school. I'm glad to have chosen to be at GISB," she smiles. One hundred smiling faces light up GISB. Murthy and Nagarathna plan to take the wattage up by reaching out to students from seven more nations across the world in the coming year.

NIRMALA GOVINDARAJAN



**C**lass 9 student Dhunavantha Gowda just doesn't want to go back home. "The management of Gitanjali International School Bangalore (GISB) looks after my son better than we do at home," smiles Dhunavantha's father Ramachandra an agriculturist, adding, "He joined the school last year when it launched; his knowledge of English has improved immensely; he's into swimming and dancing as well. He is exposed to a great international curriculum and students from other countries like Korea, Thailand and Japan — all this at a great fee!"

Nestled in the bounty of vineyards and hillocks in the lap of Nandi Hills, GISB comes after the incredible influence Geethanjali Montessori and Geethanjali Vidyalaya, educational institutions nurtured by husband-wife duo HS Sridhara Murthy and Nagarathna S Murthy have had on the lives of tiny tots and teens alike.

"We're spreading our wings from Montessori and CBSE to IGCSE syllabus in our endeavour to provide education to rural and international children alike and help them get ready to take on any career they choose to, in any part of the world," says Murthy.

GISB as a residential school caters to day scholars as well and is fast evolving into a haven of learning for children. Businessman KR Venkatamuniyappa vouches for the all-round education this institution provides his children. "My sons Raghavendra, Gnyaneshwara and Vignesh study in classes 9, 7 and 4 respectively GISB provides all-round learning — all three of them are into sports and academics and are shaping into great human beings," he says.

Businessman, Dhananjaya



20 in his previous school. I told his parents I'll take him on and try my best to turn things around. We've started off with imbibing English language skills in him and inducting him into our audio-visual teaching curriculum. He has a full day, between academics, sports and coaching and is performing much better now. There was this other child too — his parents doted on him and gave him every gadget in sight, taking his attention away from studies. With co-operation from his parents, we've managed to keep him off all gadgets, except for computers in school. The child is a boarder and is performing well, without losing respect for his parents. We are aware that parent-child bonding is of utmost importance and ensure that it doesn't break for any reason," explains Nagarathna.

GISB is run straight from the heart. Murthy chose to construct synthetic courts instead of concrete ones to minimise injury among children. "Years ago, my son, while playing basketball on a concrete court in school, was badly injured. So, although an expensive affair, I decided on synthetic courts to minimise injury," concedes the chairman of GISB.

In fact, this visionary educationist has it all worked out from the cafeteria, sporting facilities and labs to entertainment options for students. "Sports are very important for the overall development of a child. So, we have an international standard swimming pool, playground, tennis, volleyball and football courts. At our entertainment centre, we screen films like *Tare Zameen Par* in an attempt to add value to the education of our children. We are a gated community with a good security system. We have uninterrupted power supply replete with 100 kilowatt computer backup facility. Our cafeteria boasts ethnic architecture and can accommodate 300 students. It is hygienic and vegetarian, just the way cafeterias are in sever-

