

# HALL OF FAME



The AURED team

affordable to stay if they don't have relatives and friends they can camp with for a while. For such parents AURED is also preparing a room and bathroom adjacent to its main premises.

The mood at the centre on the three occasions we visit, is of camaraderie and bonhomie. There are shared lunches. About 17 therapists, a few office hands, a coordinator and two women helping with the housekeeping make up the staff. A large chart on the corridor wall tells us that everything is planned and lots of work is getting done.

The atmosphere is tension-free as indeed it would have to be if very young children are going to be encouraged to lose their fears and discover the ability to speak. As you walk up a path and enter the centre, Aziza sits to the left. Being AURED's founder she is admired for her vision and the many sacrifices made over the years. It is apparent that in all matters she is the boss. But you won't find her ordering anyone around.

Auditory-verbal therapy depends for its success on team work and conciliation. Children are involved and so there can't be deadlines. Each child is different and comes with his or her own set of problems. Ways forward will vary and be customised to suit each case — though the broad principles may well be the same. A therapist therefore should be secure and confident to innovate and seek advice. There must be a constant reassessment and yet accountability has its place. Communication is essential and open to discussion and flexible. It is essential to be open and expect therapists to perform well in an environment of trust.

year round so that they get exposure and keep growing.

Being part of AURED also means getting to participate in its innovations like using art and music for teaching language. These are much more evolved strategies than what gets taught in the degree-dispensing institutions. For instance, AURED has collaborated with Artlist to use art for gaining confidence and building relationships. Similarly, music is being used to enhance the speaking abilities of deaf children and reinforce the auditory verbal approach.

AURED also does audiograms and impedance tests and maps the hearing of cochlear implant wearers. It has developed a device which tests the hearing of infants as small as three to five months of age.

It is the spirit of voluntarism that has fuelled the outfit. "It is magic by Aziza," says Kamod Misra, who is also a member of the AURED Trust. "She is the one person who has empowered everyone."

"Everybody's ideas are considered," says Latha Dilip, who left the Hinduja Hospital in 2006 to join here and lead AURED's outreach. "It is a combined effort which ultimately benefits the child."

"There is a lot of bonding. You don't like not to come to AURED. You come to work even if you are not feeling well," says Armaity Khambatta, who has been working at AURED for 15 years. She is currently the coordinator, always busy updating the timetable board and getting things done.

"Aziza is the backbone of AURED," says Armaity. "She is not like a boss or anything. You are so free to talk to her and she listens to your problems."

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