My name is Jagdishan and I’m 22. I live in La Ferme Community in Auroville’s Greenbelt. My parents are both Aurovilians, and since 1980: Loganathan who is in charge of Mahasaraswati Freestore and Manimegalai who works at Solar Kitchen. In fact, our family has a long history with Auroville – my maternal grandmother, from Kottakarai, worked at Bharat Nivas, and my mom worked at Auroville too. My father was born at Arasur, 90 kms away, but his sister lived at Kuilapalayam next to New Era Secondary School (NESS). He loved the school’s atmosphere and then he started to work there. Next he organized nature camps with Jaya and others, and that’s how my parents met. So I was « born and bred » in Auroville, and so was my elder brother, Ajith.
Growing up in Auroville, my childhood was filled with happiness, and learning. I attended Auroville schools where my education was multi-lingual and international. And at Auroville’s pre-creche at Baraka, I was already taught Tamil. Here I am with my teacher Kamala.

Then I went to kindergarten at Aurodam - a very happy place for us kids, full of learning and fun.
Next, I went to Transition School from 1st to 6th grade. The main motive of Transition School was to teach children more than just knowledge, and what we need for life, but also about Auroville - what Auroville is and what all of us are here for. They taught us about freedom, equality, wisdom and the Divine. They taught us that everyone is the same, and we were taught that physical and mental health are also important. So in addition to math, science, and English classes, music and arts and crafts, we had ATB - awareness through the body, a training that was created and developed in Auroville by Aloka and others - and we learned about our capabilities and strengths.

Transition school was an environment where we were also taught about the surrounding countries and world cultures. We went on field trips with our teachers who concentrated on educating us kids in a fun way - which worked - and how to put this learning into practice. I learnt a lot from Transition School for which I am grateful.

Very young, I came to know about Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and the Matrimandir. I think I first went there when we were in kindergarten and we used to play in the garden. Then we would also go inside the chamber, sit there and meditate. My parents used to tell me about The Mother’s role for Auroville, about Mother and Sri Aurobindo and how they were cherished so much. I've always loved and respected them throughout my life. Everytime I go to Matrimandir I sit there and think about them and instantly get a peaceful, divine feeling, which helps me to calm myself. Since my earliest years, Auroville, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have been inside my heart and I look to them when I need them.

The Mother had put a great emphasis on physical education and in Auroville, sports were a big part of my life starting in 1st grade. I learned to play badminton, football and basketball. When I was older, in the evenings I went to Dehashakti where I learned from professional trainers. Later, I focused my sports life on badminton and have played in many tournaments in Auroville, Tindivanam, Coimbatore where I’ve won 2nd and 3rd prizes.
After Transition school I did my 7th to 10th grade in Pondicherry and then did my 11th and 12th at Kuilapalayam Higher Secondary School. I pursued a B.Com. at Coimbatore from 2018 to 2021 in Corporate Secretarship with a focus on accountancy, business and company management. In those three years I got greater exposure to the world outside Auroville.

One of my important activities in Auroville is « Let’s Talk Trash » (LTT) and I have been part of the team since the very beginning. It got started several years back when me, my friends and some elders like Ilayabharathy from Ami community, Bala from Kuilapalayam and Naveen from Fraternity, played badminton together in the mornings. After every match, we used to share our thoughts on things like how Auroville is now and was before. We started talking about the daily visitors and the garbage that gets thrown all around the Auroville roads. So one day our badminton team didn't play and instead went for a walk from Certitude to Pitchandikulam bridge and collected a lot of garbage that we handed over to the Auroville Eco Service. And from that day on, we started doing it every two weeks. People came and joined us. Some others came to congratulate us and even prepared breakfast for us. We started as 8 people and now we are more than 50! We still do it every two Sundays to clean up Auroville and also to educate the youth in and around Auroville about a trash-free planet.

Involvement with Auroville’s New Era Secondary School and its students is one of my other activities. NESS concerns itself with integral education: learning to enquire, to observe oneself, and to relate with other people is the core intention of the school. I am also part of the organizing team for Badminton Tournaments in Certitude and New Creation.

Recently, I have taken up work at the Unity Pavilion. I feel very happy with the work there and the team is very encouraging and supportive. The Unity Pavilion is a beautiful place and it has the honor of housing the beautiful Peace Table - one of only three in the world that were created by former Ashramite George Nakashima. Auroville houses the Peace Table created for Asia.
My work at the Unity Pavilion is for « Art For Land » which is a support action for the Acres for Auroville land campaign, and a showcase for the creativity of Auroville artists. Over the past months I have been working with organizing and registering the Art for Land artworks by reference number and measurements, and updating them on the AFL website. We are now preparing the 7th year of AFL exhibitions, artwork sales, and supporting events for this August. I feel very good about this unity action and working to bring in funds for Auroville’s still-missing Master Plan land.
Though I am only 22, I've travelled, alone or with friends, to many places in India – like the majestic Yercaud Hills in Tamil Nadu ... and the nature preserve of Bandipur Forest in Karnataka.
My practice of physical fitness has given me the possibility to see things from a variety of angles and perspectives when travelling :) … in Ooty in the Nilgiris, or in Wayanad in Kerala!
This past Spring, through my association with Unity Pavilion and the support of Jaya, I joined the « Sourcing our Oneness » Camp held at Nainital in the Himalayas. SOO was started by Taradidi Jauhar of the Sri Aurobindo Delhi Ashram in coordination with Jaya of Auroville's Unity Pavilion. It is now an annual event uniting friends and devotees at Nainital for study and practical progress. There were Auroville and Integral Yoga-related friends of all ages from all over India. It was a great opportunity to widen my contacts with people having similar aspirations.

For the Nainital trip, I was in charge of a group of school students from NESS School who attended the camp. I took good care of them and it empowered me when I received super feedback from them. That made me feel so proud.
We also went trekking up to Tiffin Top, Naina Peak, and Snow View Peak in Nainital. The longest trek was to Kainchi Dham Temple. We packed our lunch and starting from the campsite, walked alongside a river stream and reached the destination after trekking in magnificent nature for 8 hours.

The Sourcing Our Oneness theme was the Twelve Qualities of The Mother based on The Mother’s symbol. I had always heard about the names of the twelve qualities when I was young - Receptivity, Aspiration, Perserverance, Gratitude, Humility, Sincerity, Peace, Equality, Generosity, Goodness, Courage, Progress - but I never knew the deep meanings of them.
This time, working with the qualities every single day, I got to know and understand more and more about each of them. This training and all these rich experiences of Nainital have brought me a new sense of both capability and patience in my life and really made me feel how precious it is to have been born and brought up at Auroville. I thanked my parents after returning from the camp!!

Unity Pavilion has established interactions with the Tourism Department in Pondicherry which wants to collaborate with and support the Art for Land outreach activities. For my work at Unity Pavilion and Art for Land, we often have to interact with visitors from abroad. I love meeting new people, learning new languages and travelling. So my plan is to study Tourism next year via a distance degree with Pondicherry University, to parallel my work for Auroville. I feel these studies will help my contributions in Auroville’s international setting as well as make me advance in my life. These new horizons fit well with my own personal dreams and aspirations as well as with Auroville’s aspect of unending education and learning.

I am very glad to have these possibilities while I go on giving my service to Art For Land and Unity Pavilion, both of which reflect Auroville’s creative dynamism and international spirit.

Jagan, La Ferme, Auroville,
July 2022