NEWSLETTER

2025 - 2026

Morning Star

Auroville's Birth and Wellness Center



CONSULTATIONS

Consultations available with Nurse Practitioner Midwife, doulas and breastfeeding advisors. Our services include GYN health care needs, preconception guidance, pregnancy, birth, postnatal care and life-long GYN care including Pap tests, breast exams, birth control, etc.

CLASSES

Childbirth preparation classes, including fathers, are offered throughout the year. These classes empower and equip expectant parents with the knowledge and skills necessary for a positive birth and parenting experience. Classes in sexual and reproductive health are offered on request.

RESEARCH

Morning Star is actively engaged and leading the way in global research on birth and women's health. Presently, the team is researching the role of fathers during pregnancy and childbirth in India.

The Morning Star Team offers professional birth and women's wellness care in a serene, respectful environment. Morning Star raises awareness about birth, empowers women, includes fathers and families in birth and shares knowledge with hospitals in Pondicherry and India. Services include:

From a Vision to a Building





Morning Star's journey towards creating a dedicated childbirth and women's wellness centre began in 2018. Although our team was already supporting mothers with great care and commitment, births continued to take place in hospitals outside Morning Star and Auroville. In those settings, we were not always able to provide the continuity, environment and woman-centred care that we envisioned. This led us to begin working towards a dedicated facility where mothers, babies and families could receive respectful, compassionate and professional care.

With generous donations we were able to bring this vision into reality. We established Morning Star as an official Auroville unit so that the construction project could begin. What followed was a long process of planning, approvals and compliance with Auroville's internal procedures.



In February 2025, Morning Star finally received the project's final No Objection Certificate. This important milestone was followed by the Bhoomi Puja—the traditional ceremony to bless the land—and construction began in May 2025.

The building has been developed through close collaboration with various Auroville units, locally available materials, and Mona of Studio Naqshbandi creating the architectural design. Mona is the true star of Morning Star! Mohan from AuroYali undertook the construction, and Ovoid provided project-management consultancy. Wherever possible, artwork, materials, craftsmanship and services have been sourced from within Auroville, making the building a truly collective manifestation of the community's knowledge, creativity and goodwill.

Built with Nature, Care and Purpose

Morning Star has been designed as more than a healthcare facility. It is intended to be a calm, sustainable and human-centred environment where women, babies and families feel safe, respected and supported. During construction, we made several conscious choices to improve the building's ecological quality, comfort and long-term value.



What Makes the Building Special

Solar Energy

Solar panels have been installed with the intention of meeting most of the centre's electricity needs through renewable energy, reducing dependence on the conventional electricity grid.

Natural Termite Treatment

Instead of relying entirely on conventional chemical methods, natural termite treatment was used during construction as part of our commitment to creating a healthier building.

Traditional Lime Plaster and Lime Wash



Breathable lime-based plaster and finishes have been used throughout the building. They improve thermal comfort, regulate moisture and provide a natural, durable surface.

Passive Cooling and Natural Ventilation

The orientation, openings, curved spaces and airflow have been designed to reduce heat and allow the building to remain naturally ventilated and comfortable.

Natural and Locally Sourced Materials

Kota stone flooring, exposed brick, granite elements and other natural materials give the building a warm and non-institutional character while supporting durability and local craftsmanship.





Womb-Inspired Architecture

Curved walls, arches, brick vaults and the central dome create soft spatial transitions. The dome, inspired by the form of a womb, gives special meaning to a building dedicated to birth and women's health.

Handcrafted Granite Birthing Pod

A unique granite birthing pod forms the heart of the maternity space. It has been designed to support hydrotherapy, maternal comfort and physiological birth.

Art, Craftsmanship and Healing Spaces

Artistic finishes, handcrafted elements, water features and thoughtfully designed spaces have been incorporated to create a nurturing and emotionally supportive atmosphere.





Interviews

What are people saying about Morning Star

Morning Star has grown through the contributions of many people from architects and builders to healthcare professionals and members of our wider community.

For this year's newsletter, we invited four people who have been connected to Morning Star in different ways to share their experiences, reflections and learning.

Foram Jani: Architect, Studio Naqshbandi



Foram has been working with Studio Naqshbandi for the past nine months, contributing to the design and development of the Morning Star building.

Designing for Comfort and Care:

1. What inspired your design of the birthing tub from an architectural perspective?

We wanted to create a birthing tub that felt warm, grounded, and connected to nature. Choosing a natural, locally available material over synthetic alternatives not only reduced the budget but also allowed greater freedom in shaping the form and detailing. The material itself became part of the experience, creating a calmer and more human-centered environment.

2. How has working on this project influenced your vision for future architectural designs?

This project reinforced the importance of an interactive design process. Regular discussions, continuous feedback, and repeated refinements helped us improve every detail. It also taught me that introducing moments of playfulness and warmth can enrich a space without compromising its functionality or purpose.

3. Did this project change the way you think about designing spaces for care and well-being?

Yes. It made me realize that designing for care goes beyond aesthetics. Every detail—from user comfort and ergonomics to maintenance and long-term usability—has a direct impact on the experience. Staying closely connected with the future users throughout the process helped us create solutions that were thoughtful, practical, and empathetic.

Mohan: Executive of AuroYali Construction



With 24 years of experience in the construction industry, Mohan has worked with architects from Auroville and beyond, specialising in sustainable architecture, natural materials and innovative construction techniques.

Building with Purpose:

1. What inspired you to take up the Morning Star project?

Over the past 24 years in the construction industry, I have had the privilege of working with several architects from Auroville and beyond, specializing in sustainable architecture using natural materials and innovative construction techniques. Throughout my career, I have built many unique and beautiful buildings that were appreciated and even received recognition. While those achievements were rewarding, I always dreamed of contributing to a project that carried a deeper purpose and lasting value for the community.

That dream came true when I had the opportunity

to be part of the Morning Star Natural Birthing Centre project at the age of 50. This is not just another building—it is a place that will serve generations of families and support one of the most important moments in people's lives: the birth of a child. Knowing that this building will benefit our community for many years gives my work a special meaning.

Being entrusted with the responsibility of executing this project is both an honour and an inspiration. I feel truly happy, proud, and grateful to lead my team in bringing this meaningful vision to life.

2. Can you share your overall experience working on this project?

Working with the Morning Star team, Architect Mona, Ovoid, and Auroville IMC is also a great opportunity to learn new things, fine-tuning our method of working as a professional construction unit which helps all my team members develop.

3. Has this project influenced the way you see or understand the role of women, especially within your own family?

Yes. Working on the Morning Star Natural Birthing Centre has deepened my appreciation for the strength, resilience, and importance of women, particularly mothers. As a father of two daughters and a son, this project has made me reflect more on the care, dignity, and support that women deserve during pregnancy and childbirth.

It has also reinforced my belief that my daughters should have the same opportunities, respect, and encouragement as my son. This experience has strengthened my commitment to treating all women in my family with greater understanding, respect, and appreciation for the vital role they play in our lives and society.

Suganthi: Former Morning Star Team Member, Nurse, and Midwife



Suganthi has been part of the Morning Star team in the past and brings experience from both Morning Star and her current healthcare setting at PIMS Hospital.

Learning Through Experience:

1. How would you describe the difference in atmosphere and working environment between Morning Star and PIMS Hospital?

Morning Star had a more community-oriented and close-knit working environment, where patient interactions were often more personal and staff members worked closely together.

I have learned more about Natural birthing techniques, and how to take care of a mother in pregnancy, during birth, and in postnatal care along with baby care. It is a team work.

I have completed the courses like Spinning babies, Lactation consultant, English communication class, Thank you so much for all your support and encouragement. A special thanks to PAULA....

PIMS Hospital has a larger and more structured healthcare setting with a wider range of specialties, advanced facilities, and a higher patient volume. Working at PIMS has provided exposure to diverse clinical cases, multidisciplinary teamwork, and opportunities for continuous professional growth.

2. Can you share insights from your research on the effects of climate change/global warming on pregnancy?

My research focused on understanding how climate change and rising temperatures can affect maternal and fetal health. Studies indicate that exposure to extreme heat during pregnancy may increase the risk of dehydration, preterm birth, low birth weight, hypertensive disorders, and other pregnancy

complications.

Climate change can also worsen air pollution and increase the spread of infectious diseases, which may indirectly impact pregnant women and newborns. These findings highlight the importance of public health measures, awareness, and targeted care for vulnerable populations during periods of extreme weather.

3. What is your current role, and how has your past experience influenced your work today?

I am currently working in a healthcare setting where I am involved in patient care, clinical support, and health education. My previous experience at Morning Star helped me develop strong communication skills, empathy, and a patient-centered approach.

Working at PIMS Hospital has further strengthened my clinical knowledge, decision-making abilities, and capacity to work effectively within multidisciplinary teams. Together, these experiences have shaped my professional growth and enhanced my ability to provide high-quality care.

Dr. Kiruba: Obstetrician, PIMS Hospital & Resource Person for Morning Star

Dr. Kiruba has been associated with the Morning Star team for the past two and a half years, collaborating with the midwives in providing maternity care.



Growing Through Collaboration

1. Can you describe your association with the Morning Star team?

I am Dr. Kiruba, an obstetrician working at PIMS. I have been associated with the Morning Star team for the past two and a half years. During this time, I have worked with them in a collaborative model of care that integrates obstetricians and midwives to provide comprehensive, respectful, and evidence-based maternity care.

2. How has your perspective evolved through your involvement with Morning Star?

My perspective has evolved significantly through my involvement with the Morning Star team, especially through working closely with the midwives. Their dedication, compassion, and commitment to providing quality maternal care have deepened my understanding of the importance of teamwork in delivering woman-centred care.

3. In what ways does the philosophy of Morning Star resonate with or inspire your work?

As an obstetrician, I have worked with women for many years, and throughout my career I have always been passionate about providing a positive birth experience. I am a strong advocate for natural birth whenever it is safe and appropriate.

The philosophy of Morning Star Midwives strongly resonates with my own values. I admire the team's commitment to supporting natural birth and empowering parents through education.

4. Can you share your overall experience collaborating with the Morning Star team?

My overall experience working with Morning Star Midwives and collaborating with them professionally in providing women-centered care has been very positive.

I truly appreciate their collaborative approach to decision-making for mothers, which supports respectful and compassionate care. I feel there is a strong sense of healthy professionalism and mutual respect between me and the Morning Star Midwives.

We learn from each other, share knowledge, and continue to grow together as healthcare professionals.

Reaching Out, Learning & Growing Together

Our work at Morning Star extends beyond our centre. Throughout the year, our team has had opportunities to learn from others, share our experience and connect with healthcare professionals and organisations working in the field of maternity and midwifery care.

These experiences have increased our knowledge, built new connections, and guided us on our quest for continuous improvement of the care we offer to women and families.

Better Birthing Experience Conference 2025, Hyderabad

Learning, Reflections & Connections

Our Morning Star team participated in the **Better Birthing Experience 2025 Conference in Hyderabad**, hosted by the Fernandez Foundation. The conference brought together birth professionals from across India and the world, offering a valuable space for learning, reflections and connections.

One of the strongest messages we took away was that birth is not only clinical, but deeply human. Respect, dignity and emotional safety are an important part of creating meaningful and empowering birth experiences.

What We Took Away

Woman-Centred & Respectful Care

The conference deepened our understanding of care that places the woman at the centre,with communication, trust and compassionate presence guiding every interaction.

Supporting Natural Birth

Sessions on birthing positions and fetal alignment highlighted how movement and patience can support the natural progression of labour.

Hydrotherapy & Waterbirth

We explored the use of water as a comfort measure during labour, inspiring us to further develop waterbirth facilities at Morning Star.



Trauma-Informed Care

The importance of recognising emotional experiences and providing care that is sensitive, safe and supportive was another important takeaway.

Family-Centred Birth

The conference also highlighted the growing

role of fathers and families in the birth journey and the importance of making care inclusive and supportive.

Taking the Learning Forward

The experience strengthened our team, built confidence and deepened our commitment to this work. We look forward to bringing these learnings into our practice by strengthening respectful and trauma-informed care, expanding hydrotherapy and waterbirth services, enhancing antenatal education and birth planning, and promoting family-inclusive care.

Learning from Tribal Health Initiative in Sittilingi Visit to Sittilingi: Learning from the Tribal Health Initiative



Lakshmi, our lactation consultant, reflects on how the visit strengthened her understanding of community-based birth care.

Our team visited the Tribal Health Initiative in Sittilingi to understand how a successful birthing centre can function in a remote tribal setting with limited resources.

The visit was deeply meaningful and inspiring. It opened my mind to a different model of community-based maternity care. I was impressed by the experienced healthcare workers, their teamwork without hierarchy, and their commitment to supporting normal vaginal births while maintaining a low caesarean rate.

It was inspiring to see how the centre has served the tribal community for many years with dedication and quality care. I particularly appreciated the way women are educated and empowered. This connected deeply with my own work in lactation support and gave me valuable learning that we can carry forward at Morning Star.



I am grateful to Dr. Kenneth, Dr. Jenny, Dr. Sana, Magesh, Dr. Ken and the entire Sittilingi team for generously sharing their knowledge and experiences. A special thanks to Magesh for her companionship and support throughout the visit, and to Paula for giving me this wonderful learning opportunity.

Sharing Knowledge at JIPMER

Morning Star has developed a strong professional relationship with JIPMER, one of India's leading medical institutions. During Dr. Ken's visit, he joined our midwives for a professional exchange on childbirth and midwifery-led care. More than 50 postgraduate medical students participated in this valuable discussion, creating an important opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and perspectives on respectful maternity care.





A Visit to Thailapuram PHC

Connecting with the Local Community

Primary Health Centres represent the grassroots level of India's public healthcare system. During our visit to Thailapuram PHC, the Morning Star team held a professional discussion on quality of care and was impressed by the commitment and standard of services provided to the local community.

We also conducted a lactation-support workshop for traditional birth attendants (dais) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), strengthening practical knowledge around breastfeeding and maternal care.

Through our relationship with Thailapuram PHC and our professional exchanges with tertiary institutions such as JIPMER, Morning Star is building connections across the healthcare system—from grassroots community care to advanced medical institutions.







Special Event on Breast cancer awareness

Breast Cancer Awareness Workshop with Dr. Ashwini
As part of our community outreach and women's health initiatives, Morning Star hosted a Breast Cancer Awareness Workshop with Dr. Ashwini.



The session provided an opportunity for members of the community to learn more about breast health, the importance of awareness and the role of early attention and screening.

Dr. Ashwini shared information and practical guidance to help participants become more aware of their breast health and encouraged open conversations around a topic that is important for women of all ages.

The workshop was also a valuable opportunity for the community to come to know and ask questions and learn in an accessible and supportive environment.

We are grateful to Dr. Ashwini for sharing her knowledge and to everyone who joined us and contributed to this meaningful conversation on women's health.

Parents' Get-Together

Connection & Celebration with Morning Star Parents and Babies
Care is not only about the services we provide. It is also about the relationships and community we build along the way.

This year, the Morning Star team brought together the mothers and families whose birth journeys we had the privilege of supporting over the past year. We invited the mothers, their partners and their little ones to share a meal, reconnect and celebrate together.

Twenty couples and their babies joined us for this special lunch gathering — a beautiful reminder of the many families and new beginnings that have been part of Morning Star's journey over the past year. Dr. Kiruba also attended and was joyfully greeted by the families.

It was heart-warming to see the babies together, meet the growing families and hear everyone share their experiences. The gathering gave us a wonderful opportunity to pause, look back and celebrate not only the births, but also the relationships that have continued beyond them.

For the Morning Star team, seeing these families together was a particularly special moment. Each family carries its own unique birth story, and being able to come together as a community made the day one to remember.

Twenty families. Twenty new beginnings. One beautiful community.
We are deeply grateful to all the parents and families who have trusted Morning Star to be part of their journey, and we look forward to continuing to grow this community together.



Looking Ahead

Looking Forward with Hope
As we look towards the coming year, there is a sense of excitement at Morning Star.

Our new space is bringing us closer to a long-held vision: a dedicated environment where women and families can access care, education, support and connection.

A New Chapter Begins
With the completion and opening of our new building, we look forward to providing a beautiful and safe environment for the community we serve.

What's Ahead
- A new home for Morning Star
- Childbirth education dedicated space
- Birthing services
- Women's health initiatives and screening
- Community workshops and educational programs
- Opportunities for collaboration and outreach

There is much to look forward to, and we are excited to continue this journey together.

One step at a time. One woman at a time.

Donation & Support

Be a Part of Our Journey
Morning Star is grateful to everyone who has supported our work and helped us come this far.

As we begin this new chapter, your support can help us continue providing compassionate, respectful and informed care for women and families.

Your Support Makes a Difference
There are many ways to support Morning Star through a donation, volunteering, collaboration, sharing our work, or simply helping spread the word.

Every contribution, in every form, is meaningful to us.

Keep in touch ------ support Morning star

Donate

Donations are gratefully accepted
International donations use this link-https://aviusa.org/?form=Morningstar
Indian donations use this link-https://auroville.org/page/donate-from-india
If you like more information about how to support and donations
please contact Bala : **balaganesh.siva@gmail.com**

Reach out to us:

To join an education program or enquire about future retreats, please contact:
morningstar@auroville.org.in
Our Address:
Morning Star, Crown Road, Near Sante, Auroville-605101,
Villupuram District, TamilNadu

Thank You

To all our families, volunteers, team members, collaborators, donors and friends, **thank you for being part of the Morning Star journey.**

Together, we can create a future where every woman and family feels informed, respected and supported.

morningstar@auroville.org.in