

ViSiONS

G L O B A L

Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship.

APRIL 2011

Projects Update: Summer Interns Selected; Launch of Scholarship Program; After-School Programs Now Running



Visions is very pleased to announce the selection of three summer interns who will be placed in Colombo, Sri Lanka for one month to represent Visions and help develop our programming on the ground, specifically at the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC). These three interns who are each receiving a \$500 grant from Visions for this purpose, will work with students and teachers at the KVLC to develop after-school programs focused on leadership and life skills, strengthening academic opportunities related to English and computer education, and develop a long-term program plan between Kalagam and Visions.

In other news, Visions is turning its attention to building our Scholarship Program for youth and teachers in Sri Lanka and India. Visions has previously given scholarships to students across Sri Lanka for various purposes, but we will be ramping up this effort in the months to come to benefit students and teachers with which Visions has worked. Our most recent scholarship recipient, Kalaivani, has received sponsorship from Visions for English courses at the British Council in Colombo, along with support in the form of a laptop assistance in earning an appointment as a Grade 3 teacher at the Hindu Ladies

April '11 Edition

Issue #10

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Upcoming Visions Events

Details of these upcoming Visions events are available on our website at

www.visionsforthefuture.org.

BOSTON, MA--Thursday, April 28, 2011 @ 9:00pm @ OM Restaurant & Lounge (92 Winthrop St., Cambridge, MA)

Join the Visions Boston Chapter and DJ Pup Dawg for a night out for a cause to support the Visions Scholarship Program in Sri Lanka for youth affected by poverty and conflict. Suggested donation is \$15. You can view the event posting and flier on our website

English courses at the British Council in Colombo, along with support in the form of a laptop, assistance in earning an appointment as a Grade 3 teacher at the Hindu Ladies College, and sarees for work dress. All of this has been made possible by the generosity of one very dedicated donor. In much the same way, Visions intends for our Scholarship Program to reflect the varied needs of each individual and to promote the interests of young leaders who have great potential in becoming positive influences in their communities.

Finally, we are happy to announce that A/L and O/L tuition classes at the after-school center in Karadiyanaru are now up and running, with the same classes in Vaharai expected to begin any day now--ultimately benefiting hundreds of youth who experienced disrupted schooling experiences due to decades of war. Our local partners (CACM) are also currently making good progress in distributing bicycles to a few dozen students who need them to get to/from school each day. Visions made a commitment to provide 17 bicycles to students in need in the Eastern Province. We look forward to providing a thorough update on these efforts and the impact these efforts are having in our next e-newsletter.

Final Call for Summer Volunteers for Visions' Annual Leadership Trainings in India!

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER TRIP TO INDIA:

Visions is returning to South India this summer, and we are pleased to announce the details of our volunteer trip! We will be returning to Tamil Nadu, India to conduct our annual youth leadership trainings with underprivileged secondary school students. In addition, we will be visiting with local nonprofit organizations and exposing volunteers to development work that is being done to address some of the most pressing social issues. Volunteers will also have a few days of travel and sightseeing in this culturally rich corner of the world. We invite you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to explore, have fun, and make a difference in the lives of underprivileged young people. Please note that we will now be holding only one volunteer trip this summer, instead of two as originally planned. The dates are as follows:

2011 Volunteer Trip #1: Chennai, Madurai, & Cochin

Saturday, July 16th-Saturday, July, 30th

Trip Lead(s): Meera Pathmarajah, *Visions CEO* &
Greg Buie, *Visions CFO*

Please find the event flyer, volunteer appeal complete with all the major details of these trips (including tentative itinerary, program fee, maps, etc.), and the 2011 volunteer application & release available on our Visions website [HERE](#). To apply, simply return your completed application along with a nonrefundable application fee of \$50 to us. We have limited space, so early applications are recommended. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to having you join us in India this summer!

Spotlight on our Exceptional Volunteers

posting and flyer on our website [HERE](#).

DAVIS, CA--Thursday, April 14th from 11:00am-2:00am @ Thai Canteen Restaurant (117 E Street, Davis, CA 95616)

Visions Dinner % Fundraiser at Thai Canteen Restaurant: Simply present our flyer or mention 'Visions' when you take-out or dine-in, and we'll receive 10% of your purchase as a donation. It's that simple! All proceeds will help to support the Visions Scholarship Program in Sri Lanka for youth affected by poverty and conflict. For more information, please contact ucdivisions@gmail.com or visit us on Facebook: "[Visions~ UC Davis Chapter](#)". You can also view the event posting on our website and download the event flyer [HERE](#).

TORONTO, CANADA--May 2011 (Details TBA)

Top Chef Cook-off Challenge: We are raising funds to conduct week-long art camps for young people in the war-affected areas of Sri Lanka in partnership with "Third Eye", a local group that uses theater, painting, music, poetry, and other art forms to help students to learn, grow in self confidence, respect the resources and traditions of their communities, and more. For more information or to reserve your spot, please email Shivanu at shiv_thiya@hotmail.com. You can also join the Visions Toronto Chapter Facebook group [HERE](#).

ONGOING T-SHIRT SALES ONLINE - Now!

You can now order a trendy, custom-printed Visions t-shirt and benefit our Visions Leadership Education Program at the same time. Both men's and women's t-shirts designed exclusively for Visions and printed on high quality Alternative Apparel shirts are now available. You can order your t-shirts online via ShopModerne.com for just \$20. All orders will be shipped to you



Visions is driven by a dedicated team of volunteers across the globe who commit their time, skills, talents, and effort to help ensure a brighter tomorrow for youth in South Asia. We are so grateful to all who have volunteered or gotten involved with our organization over the years, and we **thank you for your service!** As a small grassroots nonprofit, we rely on the support of people like you to keep our programs running. To-date, Visions has taken nearly 100 international volunteers abroad with us and been joined by dozens of volunteers locally. We have had a number of interns over the years, and currently have 8 amazing Chapter Coordinators in various cities across the US and Canada who lead their own teams of volunteers. And beyond that, there are many more who have helped out locally in a whole host of ways. We love hearing from all of you and having you involved in our small but mighty organization! A snapshot of some of our amazing volunteers are featured in the photo above, and you can meet more of them [HERE](#).

Visions Chapters Keep the Momentum Going!

Visions Chapter Coordinators across the US and Canada have been doing an incredible job in organizing volunteer teams, holding events, and raising funds for vital educational services in Sri Lanka in the past few months. We are so pleased to know that these committed individuals find their involvement with Visions to be so rewarding, knowing that they can contribute to such a worthy cause while having fun in the process. We are happy to provide you with an update of recent efforts undertaken by several of Visions' chapters...

ORANGE COUNTY:

OC Food Festival: Over 200 people joined the Visions Los Angeles/Orange County Chapter for an international food festival event at the Rush Park Auditorium in Rossmore, CA on March 5th, raising **\$4,000** to help support after-school programs and provide bicycles for impoverished, war-displaced, and flood-affected youth in the communities of Karadiyanaru and Vaharai in Eastern Sri Lanka. Volunteers provided the food, which included Thai, Korean, Sri Lankan, Filipino, Chinese, and Mexican, while guests had the option of selecting the cuisines of their choice. We must also thank the Happy Family Vegetarian Restaurant in Costa Mesa for generously donating food as well. An opportunity drawing was held, and Visions team members gave a presentation on the benefitting programs in Sri Lanka. With schools in the war-hit regions of Sri Lanka facing

right away. Now you can look good and support a very worthy cause!

We need YOUR support!

Please consider making a donation to Visions today or getting involved in our work. There are many ways you can help, including:

- *Organize a fundraiser or event on Visions' behalf (or turning an event or party into a fundraiser for Visions)

- *Organize a school supplies drive (using our Amazon Wishlist) with campus groups, friends, your church/temple, local businesses, etc.

- *Offer your professional services, such as legal, business/accounting, architectural, web, and more

- *Ask your company to make a corporate contribution or matching grant

- *Volunteer with us locally or abroad

This year the new Visions Leadership Education Program will benefit an estimated 1,000 youth & teachers in Sri Lanka and India. Help give them crucial Leadership & Life Skills and Human Rights training by donating **just \$25** today!

Visions Chapters

We invite you to get involved with one of our many Visions Chapters today or start your own. Please feel free to contact any of the following individuals if you are interested in joining.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Venita Sivamani
venita.sivamani@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES/ORANGE

severe shortages of teachers, learning materials, and even basic essentials, such as school buildings and toilets, teachers and local community members are doing their best to help children learn. For many students, this after-school programming is vital and without it, they would be at high risk of dropping out of school.



LOS ANGELES:

"Nriya Sameepyam" Dance Performance in Los Angeles: The exceptional Kalapeetham Dance Company, under the direction of Kalayani Shanmugarajah, held a memorable performance on Sunday, March 20th at the El Portal Theater in Canoga Park. Spearheaded by Tharini Shanmugarajah, over two dozen students performed a number of South Asian styles of dance, including folk dances from across various states in India and classical Bharata Natyam. Despite the extreme weather that day, the sold-out audience came out in full force. Visions CEO Meera Pathmarajah was in-town from New York to give a short presentation before the intermission, highlighting the many challenges that those across North and East Sri Lanka face in bringing themselves out of poverty and rebuilding their lives in a post-conflict setting. Visions wishes to thank the event organizers, along with all of the dancers for their many hours of practice and preparation, including Anjana Pathmarajah (our *Visions Global Health Program Manager*) who flew from New York as well to perform), and all who attended/supported this special event! Thanks to you, vital funds was raised to support Visions' work in Sri Lanka.



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UPENN:

Visions' UPenn Chapter has initiated an ongoing fundraiser whereby they are selling samosas and promoting Visions at campus events. Their first effort took place at a student group's cultural show held on Saturday, March 26th, where they successfully raised \$110 for Visions programs. Their next effort will be on Sunday, April 24th starting at 5:00pm at another South Asian campus event, the *UPenn Thillana Show*.

NORCAL (UC DAVIS):

The NorCal/Davis Chapter of Visions held their first event on Thursday, Feb 24th in Davis to help get the word out about Visions and the work our organization does in India and Sri Lanka. The event was an evening of Bollywood karaoke, with around 50 attendees who braved a horrible storm that day to participate. It was a very enthusiastic group, which meant a lot of audience participation. The organizers also succeeded in increasing awareness and reaching out to students about Visions' mission. They are now looking forward to the Spring Chapter and some upcoming fundraising events they are planning, including a dinner night at Thai Canteen Restaurant (117 E Street, Davis, CA 95616). Simply bring in the event flyer or mention "Visions" with your dine-in or take-out purchase, and Visions will receive 10% of your purchase as a donation.

TORONTO:

The Visions Toronto team is planning their second event for May 2011. Details will be announced shortly on our website, so please check back soon!

BOSTON:

The Visions Boston Chapter will be holding its first event on Thursday, April 28th from 9:00pm onwards at OM Lounge & Restaurant (92 Winthrop Street, Cambridge, MA). Join Visions and DJ Pup Dawg for a night out for a cause. Suggested donation is \$15. All proceeds will benefit Visions' Scholarship Program in Sri Lanka.

Visions Present “Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service” to Two Exceptional Young Leaders

In March 2011 Visions presented two certificates of appreciation for outstanding volunteer service to two incredible young woman who have utilized their talents and dedicated their time in organizing efforts domestically to support development efforts abroad. As Visions is a group comprised of mostly young professionals and students, we feel it is important for us to acknowledge their efforts as young leaders in the South Asian community and commend them for their compassion and commitment to service. The first recipient, Ms. Tharini Shanmugarajah, is not only an exceptional dancer and dance teacher with the Kalapeetham Dance Company, she has held a benefit every year since 2005 to support the efforts of a number of organizations, including charity:water, IMHO, Susan G. Komen Foundation, and now Visions. Her sold-out March 26th dance performance in Los Angeles raised several thousand dollars for Visions to help support one after-school tuition center in Eastern Sri Lanka and provide bicycles for several young people who lack transportation to/from school.

On March 26th Visions LA/OC Chapter Coordinator Pamela Cheuk presented a second certificate to Ms. Jothy Yogarajah who held a Carnatic keyboard performance in Los Angeles and raised over \$10,000 for Manitha Neyam Trust, another service organization active throughout Sri Lanka. Aware of the incredible humanitarian needs that exist across South Asia and having the motivation to help create positive change, Jothy will be an asset to any group or cause to which she lends herself. Visions congratulates her on her performance and hopes that the funds she has raised will help to enrich the lives of many young people across Sri Lanka.

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visionseducation@gmail.com

www.VisionsForTheFuture.org

PLEASE DONATE:

Donations are accepted online through our website OR can be mailed to the above address. Make checks out to 'VISIONS'. All donations are tax-deductible [Tax ID#26-3386678].

We need your help--there are several projects which need funding, including the Visions Leadership Program, Scholarship Program, and various other educational initiatives. We can only do this important work with your support. Education is key to development & success.

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