

ViSiONS

G L O B A L

Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship.

AUGUST 2011

Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: 2011 Visions Leadership Trainings in India and Sri Lanka



"I never thought I could experience something like this. It's my first time and I am so happy! I've been to many gatherings and meetings in the past, but never before, have I met anyone like the Visions volunteers!" Daniel Raja, one of the 56 youth

August '11 Edition

Issue #12

In This Issue

2011 Leadership Trainings in India & Sri Lanka

Launch of JR Scholarship Fund for Higher Education in India

Growing Partnerships & Ties in India

Welcome to Edmonton Chapter

Upcoming Events

Stay Connected with Us!

Keep up to date with Visions and all our efforts, events, upcoming trips, and more...

FACEBOOK



TWITTER

YOUTUBE

RAZOO

happy! I've been to many gatherings and meetings in the past, but never before, have I met anyone like the Visions volunteers!" Daniel Raja, one of the 56 youth selected from 8 schools in Dalit-majority communities of Thirukkivilur, Tamil Nadu, India, was bursting with excitement on the concluding day of the Visions Leadership training. For the 7 international Visions volunteers and handful of local volunteers and teachers who conducted 48 hours of residential leadership training over 6 days, the separation from the dynamic group of youth who had visibly transformed in confidence and motivation, was equally difficult.

Now in our 9th year of conducting youth leadership trainings in India and Sri Lanka, Visions has reached a significant milestone, having conducted two-dozen trainings, directly benefitting more than 1,400 youth. Our first training this year was held in Thirukoilur, Tamil Nadu, India from July 21-26, hosted by our new partner, the Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC). We are now in the process of working with ALC to ensure that our leadership development efforts are sustained year-round as we continue to engage the youth whom we have previously trained.



Our second leadership training this summer was conducted by 2 international volunteers for 40 secondary school youth attending Saiva Mangaiyar Vidyalayam (Hindu Ladies College) in Colombo, Sri Lanka from August 2nd-9th. With the completion of the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre earlier this year, which has been designed to serve as both a school extension and a Visions training facility,

RAZOO

<http://www.razoo.com/story/Visions-Global-Empowerment>

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 COUNTY

Pamela Cheuk
pamela.cheuk@gmail.com

BERKELEY:

Mythili Sivaswarupan
mythili.sivaswarupan@gmail.com

TEXAS:

Nitya Kumar
nityakumar90@gmail.com

NEW YORK:

Kari Dietrich
dietrich.kari@gmail.com

TORONTO:

Shivanu Thiagarajah
shiv_thiya@hotmail.com

EDMONTON:

Branawan Gowrishankar
branawan@ualberta.ca

OREGON:

Shannon Quihuiz
shannon.d.quihuiz@gmail.com

BOSTON:

Vince Gonzales
vgonzales@gmail.com

PHILADELPHIA:

Romero Santiago
romero3344@gmail.com

We need YOUR support!

Please consider making a donation to Visions today or getting involved in our work. There are many ways

this leadership camp (our fifth at the school to-date including teacher trainings) was intended to foster and strengthen existing leadership capacities amongst students at the school. The international volunteers who conducted the camp even organized a farewell lunch for the participants thanks to the generosity of a local benefactor. One participant said the following about her total experience, "*I never forget these seven days. Because everyday the functions were attractive to my heart and mind...I am really very happy to this programme.*" We look forward to continue building activities and programs at the center that will enrich the lives and the opportunities of students and teachers in the years ahead. We are already busy planning future trainings in both India and Sri Lanka for next year, so stay tuned!

Launch of \$100K Jayalakshmi Ramachandran Scholarship Fund to Benefit Disadvantaged Youth in India

Visions is proud to announce the launch of our newest initiative--the establishment of the Jayalakshmi Ramachandran Scholarship Fund to benefit disadvantaged students pursuing higher education in Tamil Nadu, India in partnership with the Nandalala Seva Samithi Trust (NSST) based in Chennai, India. The fund is being established in memory of Jayalakshmi Ramachandran, mother of Pujyashri Mathi Oli R. Saraswathy (founder of NSST), whose vision was to help underprivileged students realize their dreams and ambitions through the gift of education. "Paati", as she was fondly referred to, was a generous, compassionate and inspirational mother to many. Through the generosity of a donor, Visions is donating \$100,000 as corpus for running the "Jayalakshmi Ramachandran Scholarship Program". The interest generated annually from this endowment fund will be used to administer and award financial support to underprivileged students in India, who wish to pursue higher education and lack the means to do so otherwise.

This program strives to create and empower a network of students from underprivileged backgrounds who are motivated to pursue and complete their higher education. We also plan to provide mentorship support for and among scholarship recipients, while working to create a network of empowered, socially-minded students and professionals. The scholarship award will cover the cost of tuition fees based on merit for students who have been accepted into a Government recognized college/ institution but have not been awarded any other scholarship for their tuition fees. Scholarship selection will prioritize those who are girls, underprivileged, orphaned, or from a single parent family. The scholarship will cover tuition fees for each year of the full degree/diploma, provided that the student meets the eligibility criteria as specified by the selection committee. Donations from students' parents, whenever possible, will be encouraged, so that parents retain the responsibility and motivation to invest in their ward's education. We look forward to sharing updates on this program with you next year when we announce our first batch of recipients.

Strengthening Ties & Forming New Partnerships in India

In 2008 Visions branched into South India, forging our first partnership with local NGO partner SAWED Trust (Social Action Womens Education and Development). The exceptionally efficient and hard-working team at SAWED Trust has handled the logistics of all our Visions leadership trainings in India since then, and we are extremely grateful for their commitment and support. Aside from the work they do

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!

organizing our annual leadership trainings, the organization runs a number of programs targeted at supporting and empowering youth, women, and society's most vulnerable groups. One major undertaking SAWED Trust is currently working on is the development of a boarding school to benefit tribal children from impoverished villages in the Lower Palani Hills in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu. In support of this effort, Visions contributed **\$1,000 to SAWED Trust** for the school construction, which is scheduled to open in June 2012. Looking to the future, we plan to be involved in supporting this school through trainings and other assistance.



Photos from top left clockwise: Residents of a tribal village in the Palani Hills that will benefit from the school currently being built in Nayanampatti Village, Dindigul; Visions CEO Meera Pathmarajah hands over \$1,000 check to SAWED Director M.S. Abdaheer; the school construction site.

Beyond our solid relationship with SAWED Trust, a flurry of new activity and partners in India has given great energy and optimism to our team in recent months. We have forged a number of new partnerships with some truly exceptional local nonprofits working with vulnerable communities, including Dalits, tribals, and refugees. Two of these partners, the Nandalala Seva Samithi Trust (NSST) and Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC), are featured above in this e-newsletter. Volunteers who came to India this summer were able to meet with another new partner organization, SCOPE India Trust, and visit 3 of their Children's Learning Centres that Visions is supporting in and around Madurai, Tamil Nadu. We are currently in discussions with a few other organizations and are expecting to have more details about these partnerships and planned efforts to share with you in our next e-newsletter. With so much in the works, we need your continued support!



Children attending two of the Visions-supported after-school Childrens Learning Centres in/around Madurai.

Welcome to our Edmonton Chapter Coordinator

Visions would like to officially welcome our newest Chapter Coordinator, Branawan Gowrishankar, to our team. Branawan is our 10th Chapter Coordinator to step up and is representing the Edmonton area. We look forward to reaching out to those in and around Edmonton and encourage your involvement. Welcome!

Upcoming Events

New York City, NY: October 18, 2011

Join us for a "Toast to Visions" as we reflect on recent accomplishments and look to the future with incredible optimism and hope that we will create a positive and lasting impact on the lives of many more young people in South Asia. The date is tentatively set for October 18th in the NoHo neighborhood of NYC. Details will be posted on our website and Facebook page soon.

Davis, CA: November 19, 2011

The UC Davis chapter of Visions is proud to present cultureSHOCK, the must see culture show of the quarter! Featuring food, raffles, and performances from dance and musical groups from Davis, it's going to be a huge night of entertainment that you're not going to want to miss! Tickets are available at Freeborn Hall for: *\$7 for students, children, and seniors (\$10 at the door) OR \$10 for adults (\$15 at the door)*. All proceeds will benefit the Visions Scholarship Program. For more information, please contact ucdvisions@gmail.com

Toronto, ON: November 2011

The Visions Toronto Chapter is planning a charity basketball tournament in partnership with TamilCulture.ca. Details of the event and how to register will be available on our website and Facebook page soon!

Lancaster/Los Angeles, CA: December 2011

Details of this event are TBA. Stay tuned!

Beaumont, TX: December 2011

Details of this event are TBA. Stay tuned!

1621 Barry Ave. #PH1, Los Angeles, CA, 90025
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.

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe**[®]



This email was sent by visionseducation@gmail.com |
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#)[™] | [Privacy Policy](#).
Visions Global Empowerment | 1621 Barry Ave. #PH1 | Los Angeles | CA | 90025