

SEPTEMBER 2013

Support Deserving Youth in Our New Visions Leadership Academy for just \$1/day!



Visions has launched a new initiative that has been in the works for several years...the **Visions Leadership Academy!** Our goal is to develop the inherent leadership potential of high-achieving and motivated youth from disadvantaged backgrounds in both Sri Lanka and India through a year-round leadership enrichment program designed to help youth succeed in both their formal education and daily lives. An initial batch of 30 youth from Sri Lanka and 30 youth from India were selected to participate in the Academy. Among them, those who later choose to pursue higher education or other professional development will be encouraged to apply for a Visions Scholarship, demonstrating our long-term commitment to them and belief that an investment in every individual is an investment in our collective future.

It costs just \$1/day to sponsor a youth in Sri Lanka or India to participate in the Visions Leadership Academy. Sign up today to become a monthly donor! Simply register online at <http://www.razoo.com/story/Visions-Leadership-Academy> or mail us a check with "Visions Leadership Academy" in the memo line (and the country preference of "Sri Lanka" or "India"). As a monthly sponsor, we will pair you with a specific youth in the country of your choice so that you can know exactly who you are helping. You can expect to receive the following for your generous contribution:

- A Photo and Short Bio of your sponsored youth
- Annual Thank You Note from your sponsored youth
- Tax-Deductible Donation Receipt at the end of each fiscal year
- Annual Progress Report on the Visions Leadership Academy program
- Year-round Facebook Updates on our **Fan Page**

You can access the full Visions Leadership Academy overview and appeal on our website [HERE](#). Thank you for your generous support!

September '13 Edition

Issue #22

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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.

NorCal/DAVIS:
Ritika Johal
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LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY:
Greg Buie & Vince Gonzales
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WEST VIRGINIA:
Cristina Fiorentino
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Continuing the Tradition: Review of Visions 2014 Service Learning Trips



For both the youth who attend our trainings and the volunteers who conduct them, the exchange that occurs during our annual Visions summer leadership camp is one that is seldom forgotten. Friendships are forged. Knowledge and experiences are shared. As one volunteered summarized, "[O]ne of the most amazing experiences of my life...I got the opportunity to volunteer in Sri Lanka and work with 27 incredible youth, who have changed my life. This was such an incredible adventure; words can not express what I am feeling. I am forever changed and will always cherish the wonderful memories that were made. I hope I can go back next year to do this again. Thank you...for the opportunity of a lifetime!"

For an 11th consecutive year, volunteers from around the globe came together to conduct the Visions leadership training programs in both India and Sri Lanka. In India, our team of 3 volunteers (Margi, Erik, and Greg) spent 3-days leading a training for 16 social workers and staff under one of our partner organizations, the ALC School Project, in Thirukovilur. This training focused on preparing staff to implement the necessary efforts under our new Visions Leadership Academy and to solicit vital feedback for the development of our programs in general. Following this, a 2-day follow-up leadership training for 30 repeat youth was held at the ALC School Project training center. This special 2-day workshop introduced new leadership concepts and centered around the idea of service. Youth were encouraged to brainstorm both issues their communities face regularly and how they can work to improve the situation. At the end of the training, the participants performed social awareness-raising dramas for each other in small groups, touching on such important topics as domestic violence, alcoholism, and HIV/AIDS. It was a fantastic sight to see the maturity, talent, and ambition of these young leaders in action.

In Sri Lanka, our team was comprised of 5 stellar volunteers (Promiti, Margi, Sabine, Ernest, and Anthan) who gave their heart and soul to their work. A 6-day leadership & life skills training was held for 27 exceptional youth from across the Eastern Province at St. John's Church in Batticaloa. One particular highlight of the experience occurred when one of our generous volunteers provided shoes and clothes to all of the students as a special treat and gift. This training marked the 32nd youth leadership training in our organization's history! Additionally, two of our volunteers stayed on longer to conduct project site visits, meet with partners, and organize other trainings & discussion sessions. Thanks to everyone who dedicated their time to our volunteer program, and more importantly shared their lives with the youth, this summer!

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Stay Connected with Us!

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

FACEBOOK



TWITTER





YOUTUBE



RAZOO

[http://www.razoo.com/story/
Visions-Global-
Empowerment](http://www.razoo.com/story/Visions-Global-Empowerment)

Upcoming Visions Events

Our Visions Chapters have been busy planning several upcoming events as we strive to raise funds a number of our new and ongoing educational development programs across South Asia. Please help us spread the word and come out and support us!

NEW YORK CITY, NY:

WHAT: Visions NYC Fall FUNdraiser

WHEN: Thursday, October 3rd; 6:00-10:00pm

WHERE: 310 Lounge, 310 Bowery (at Bleecker St.), New York, NY

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$20

For more information, please visit our Facebook event page [HERE](#)

WASHINGTON, DC:

WHAT: DC Social Meet-Up & Fundraiser

WHEN: Sunday, October 6th; 4:30-6:30pm

WHERE: Irish Whiskey Public House 1207 19th Street NW Washington, DC

<http://www.irishwhiskeydc.com/>

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$20

For more information, please visit our Facebook event page [HERE](#)

EDMONTON, AB:

WHAT: Edmonton Tamil Cultural Association (ECTA) Annual Diwali Festival; the Visions Edmonton Chapter will have a table at the event and members are performing

WHEN: Saturday, October 12th; 3:30pm

WHERE: Festival Place, Sherwood Park, 100 Festival Way, Strathcona County, AB

For more information, please visit the event page on our website [HERE](#)

EDMONTON, AB:

WHAT: 2nd Annual Comedy Night

WHEN: Wednesday, October 23rd; 7:30pm

WHERE: The Comic Strip, West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, AB

TICKETS: \$20; please contact Leka at [780.937.7363](tel:780.937.7363)

For more information, please visit our Facebook event page [HERE](#)

DAVIS, CA:

WHAT: "Visions of Hope" Dinner & Auction

WHEN: Saturday, November 16th; 6:00-8:00pm

WHERE: International House of Davis, 10 College Park, Davis, CA

TICKETS: \$30; please [BUY YOUR TIX](#) online

For more information, please visit the event page on our website [HERE](#)

Teacher Empowerment Efforts Gain Momentum

Launched earlier this year, the Visions Teacher Empowerment Program is designed to assist teachers and schools through material and training support. The primary objective is to help teachers to be better prepared to improve the knowledge and skills of their students and to provide and improve the resources available in schools for students, particularly those in rural communities. There is wide variety among teachers in war-affected areas with regards to their training and teaching experiences. There are also significant discrepancies in the conditions of school and classroom environments and the availability of materials. We will continue to build on our efforts and reach out to more teachers in both Sri Lanka and India in the year to come.

This August, Visions organized two teacher trainings in Sri Lanka. One was held at our Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC) in Colombo for roughly 25 teachers. The theme of this training was personality development and counseling skills, and we brought in three skilled trainers from the Bright Minds association in India to lead it. The second training and workshop was held for 15 teachers in Batticaloa later in the month and was focused on leadership and overcoming barriers to educational achievement amongst students in disadvantaged communities. The impacts of the devastating war in Sri Lanka and its toll on the local educational infrastructure still present major challenges, but we hope that our Teacher Empowerment Program will help to address some of those issues and provide a vital support network for dozens of hard-working and committed teachers.



Meet our Newest Visions Team Members!

We are thrilled to see our team continue to grow and to have such wonderfully ambitious, thoughtful, and compassionate leaders join our volunteer ranks. Two new Visions Chapters were recently added in Pittsburgh and Washington, DC, bringing our total number of Chapters up to 14. And two new Chapter Directors have stepped up in existing chapters in New York City and Davis. On behalf of our entire team, we wish to extend a very warm welcome to all of the following:

**Ernest Rajakone, Pittsburgh/University of Pittsburgh Chapter Director*
**Ritika Johal, NorCal/UC Davis Chapter Director*
**Meg Whittenberger, Washington DC Chapter Director*
**Gurdeep Sareen, New York City Chapter Director*

We invite you to meet our whole team by visiting our website here: [Meet Our Team](#). Starting a local Visions Chapter in your city or at your university can be a highly rewarding volunteer experience, and we are always looking for new leaders to step forward and start a Chapter. Contact us at visionseducation@gmail.com to receive more information about starting a Visions Chapter and visit our website for more information: [Visions Chapters](#)

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PLEASE MAKE A CONTRIBUTION!

We need your help! There are several projects that need funding for 2013, including the Visions Leadership Academy, After-School Programs, Student Scholarships, and various other educational initiatives. We can only do this important work with your support...education is key to development and personal growth! Donations are accepted online through our website OR can be mailed to us. Please make checks out to "Visions". All donations are tax-deductible [tax ID#26-3386678].