

ViSiONS

G L O B A L

Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship.

FEBRUARY 2011

From Dream to Reality: Official Opening of the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre Marks a Significant Milestone



It is with great pleasure and excitement that Visions Global Empowerment and our partner organization, Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam, announce the completion of the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVL C). After numerous years of heartwrenching news

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Upcoming Visions Events

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

www.visionsforthefuture.org.

DAVIS, CA--Thursday, February 24, 2011 @ 9:00pm (Wellman 26, UC Davis Campus)

Bollywood Bonanza, sponsored by Jhankaar and Visions, is a night of MUSIC, DANCE AND FUN!! Jhankaar, UC Davis's first South Asian A Capella group, will be performing along with many other performers! And you can join in too...we will be having an open mic karaoke with tracks from various genres--including Bollywood!

For more information or to RSVP, please check out the Facebook

partner organization, Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam, announce the completion of the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC). After numerous years of heartwrenching news coming from Sri Lanka, we are overjoyed to acknowledge positive developments for the future of Sri Lankan children. The KVLC has reached completion and is beginning the next step toward strengthening the lives of those children that endured so much hardship and suffering. This momentous occasion could not have been accomplished without the abundant generosity of our alumnae, donors, visionaries and sponsor organization, Operation USA, who have all worked diligently to ensure the success of this project.

The soft opening of the KVLC was held on February 7, 2011, signifying the culmination of years of planning and construction on the long-awaited center. The occasion was marked by temple priests and school dignitaries, as well as representatives of Kalagam and the larger community. This project will expand the current campus of the Hindu Ladies College in Colombo 6 and will serve as a community center for various academic undertakings designed to benefit local school children and young people in need throughout the island. Visions and Kalagam have joined hands to promote the long-term development and education of young people so that they may reach their potential and serve as future leaders.

The final costs of the KVLC totaled approx. \$420,000 (beyond the donation of the land by Kalagam valued at approx. \$400,000), of which Visions contributed \$160,000 through Operation USA. This five-story learning center contains a multimedia room, computer lab, science labs, activity rooms, lecture halls, student offices, and a rooftop playground. KVLC is dedicated to the education of both students and teachers impacted by conflict and poverty in Sri Lanka. The building will also act to relieve the overcrowding at the Kalagam School, which has provided a safe space for students continuing their education while fleeing the Northeast region. You can view a photo gallery of the building and the opening ceremony [HERE](#).

Our success is rooted in the collective effort of local and global communities coming together to serve individuals in need. It is through you that Sri Lanka is in a better position to rebuild and heal. We thank all of you who are supporting positive change in the lives of all Sri Lankans, especially in the lives of children and youth.

New Volunteer Opportunities with Visions this Summer

INTERNSHIPS IN SRI LANKA:

Due to high demand and interest, Visions has put together a few exciting summer volunteer internship opportunities in Colombo and Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. For complete information on these opportunities, please download the [2011 INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW](#).

To apply, please send a resume and short cover letter to visionseducation@gmail.com. This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it with '2011 Summer Internship' as the subject. Applications will be considered until June 1st or until both the positions are filled. Short-listed applicants will be contacted for an interview. Due to funding constraints, interns will be expected to cover international travel and lodging costs for this opportunity. A small stipend for local travel and food will be provided. Additionally, we will do everything we can to work with each intern to secure travel/funding grants as well as arranging for reasonable low-cost accommodation.

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER TRIPS TO INDIA:

Visions is returning to South India this summer, and we are pleased to announce the

please check out the Facebook event posting [HERE](#). You can also download the event flyer [HERE](#).

**ORANGE COUNTY, CA--
Saturday, March 5, 2011 @
5:30pm (Rush Park Auditorium,
Rossmoor)**

The Los Angeles/Orange County Chapter of Visions Global Empowerment is hosting a food festival fundraising event to support after-school programs for youth deeply affected by the war in Eastern Sri Lanka. The event will feature various cuisines (South Asian, East Asian, American, etc.), as well as live dance performance and an opportunity drawing. Each guest will receive 4 food coupons upon admission, which can be used at any of the 8 food stalls of your choice. Drinks will be provided as well. Extra food coupons will be available for purchase for \$5/each. All admission tickets must be purchased in advance. Guests can buy e-tickets online by making a donation at <http://www.razoo.com/story/La-Oc-Food-Festival>. Or you can purchase your admission tickets from one of the event coordinators.

For more information or to purchase admission tickets, please email Pam (pamelacheuk@yahoo.com), Gowri (arulmoli04@yahoo.com), or Greg (gtbuie@gmail.com).

**LOS ANGELES, CA--Sunday,
March 20, 2011 (Details TBD)**

Save the date for this special dance performance featuring the Kalapeetham Dance Company. Event details TBA.

**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

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. The trip dates are as follows:

2011 Volunteer Trip #1: Chennai, Karaikal, Dindigul, Madurai, & Pondicherry

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

Trip Lead: Meera Pathmarajah, Visions CEO

2011 Volunteer Trip #2: Chennai, Madurai, & Cochin

Saturday, July 30th-Friday, August 12th

Trip Lead: 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!

Visions Supports After-School Programs, Provides Bicycles for Youth Affected by War and Natural Disaster in Eastern Sri Lanka

Recently Visions gave \$3,000 to support after-school programs being coordinated by the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM), as well \$1,360 to provide bicycles for war-affected youth in Eastern Sri Lanka. These funds help support programming for impoverished and war-displaced youth in the communities of Karadiyanaru and Vaharai. Schools in the war-hit regions of Sri Lanka face severe shortages of teachers, learning materials, and even basic essentials, such as school buildings and toilets. In this context of crisis, teachers and local community members are doing their best to help children learn. The after-school programs run by CACM provide extra classes in basic subjects for students, ranging from primary grades to Advanced Level. For many students, this after-school programming is vital and without it, they would be at high risk of dropping out of school. These programs are run on a low budget, basically providing teacher stipends and basic supplies. They are often conducted in temporary structures or outdoors if necessary.

Due to the extreme distance from school and the cost of a bicycle, many students in these areas stop attending school or do so very irregularly. As a result, the literacy rate and educational standards are very low. Most of these young people crave activities and desire to go to school regularly, which is why Visions has helped to provide bicycles to several students who have been deeply affected by the war and live deep in poverty.

In addition to their educational efforts, CACM has been doing a lot of good work in extending emergency flood relief to victims of the recent flooding that has plagued Eastern Sri Lanka for the past 2 months. Visions is proud to be working with such an exceptional and proactive partner as CACM. While this may have temporarily affected the after-school programming that Visions supports, we know that CACM will resume activities as soon as possible, and we encourage all of our donors and supporters to support Visions and CACM in these efforts to serve the people of Eastern Sri Lanka.

ShopModerne.com for just \$20. All orders will be shipped to you 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

Visions Chapters off to an Exciting Start: *You Can be a Part of the Change Too!*

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...

TORONTO:

The Visions Toronto team held a bowling event entitled "Bowl 4 Bikes" on December 12th that raised \$1,260 to help purchase bicycles for war-affected youth in Eastern Sri Lanka so that they can attend school regularly. Congratulations to "Team FOCUS" for winning the tournament with an average score per bowler of 115. Thanks to all who attended and helped organize this event. The Visions Toronto Chapter is currently planning their next effort; if you are interested in joining or getting involved, please email Shivanu at shiv_thiya@hotmail.com.



TEXAS:

The Visions Texas Chapter also held their first event in Beaumont on January 6th. It was also a bowling event, in which guests were able to enjoy several hours of bowling, as well as an opportunity drawing. Several dozen people participated, and a total of \$1,270 was raised. to benefit the after-school programs in Eastern Sri Lanka being coordinated by the Church of the American Ceylon Mission. Again, thanks to all who participated in, planned, and supported this event!

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ORANGE COUNTY:

As we mentioned in our last e-newsletter, the Los Angeles/Orange County Chapter of Visions successfully held a books and supplies drive to benefit impoverished young people in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, South India throughout November and December 2010. The shipment was sent in January to SAWED Trust, Visions' main partner organization in India, and is due to arrive shortly.



SAN DIEGO:

Following the successful 3rd Annual Visions Charity Fashion Show held in October, the San Diego Chapter of Visions raised another \$270 at a wine bar event at Vin De Syrah in downtown SD on December 15th. Visions had an information table, and volunteers made a short presentation about the organization at this holiday shopping boutique event organized by Shop Moderne. We are very grateful to those who attended and to the volunteers who helped sell opportunity drawing tickets.

NEW YORK:

The Visions New York Chapter held a very successful event at Lair in New York City on

February 3rd, raising \$2,825 to support CACM's after-school programs in Sri Lanka. Dozens of supporters braved blizzard-like conditions to attend the social hour event, while many others showed their support by making online contributions. These funds will go a long way in helping to provide vital educational services to young people who would otherwise have very limited opportunities.

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.

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