



## SEPTEMBER 2019



**42,600+**  
lives impacted



**4,199**  
leadership  
students &  
teachers trained



**196**  
scholarships  
awarded



**3,478**  
students  
attended  
after-school  
programs



**175+**  
leadership  
& teacher  
trainings  
conducted



**250**  
international  
volunteers  
traveled  
abroad



**\$5.4M+**  
invested in  
education  
programs



**5,173**  
students trained  
thru e-learning  
programs

## Launch of New Women's Leadership Initiative in Sri Lanka

This June we were fortunate to have Dr. Darshan Ambalavanar (*Director of Diaconal Ministries & Director of Theological Education at the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) in Sri Lanka*) visit us here in Southern California for a few days. During his visit, Darshan was able to speak to audiences in Orange County and Lancaster about CACM's work and the value of Visions' partnership over the years. After the war in Sri Lanka officially ended, between May 2011 and January 2018, Visions invested over \$150,000 in education programs under CACM, including after-school programs, youth leadership programs and higher education scholarships in the Eastern Province - mostly in hard-to-reach, poverty-stricken villages around Batticaloa.

E-Newsletter #38

September 2019 Edition

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*Visions Co-Founders Dr. Meera Pathmarajah & Greg Buie with Darshan Ambalavanar (CACM) in Orange County, CA - June 2019*

In addition, he shared the details of a new effort that would further strengthen civil society in NE Sri Lanka - a **women's leadership initiative called "Ezhuvazh"** (a Tamil word which translates to "She Will Rise"). This new program will benefit up to 15 young women A/L graduates who will participate in a 6-month English training followed by a 4-month residential leadership training. Final preparations are being made now with an anticipated launch date of later this month.

We wish to thank everyone who made contributions to this important program, which we are proud to say will meet the full financial need of this first batch of young women (estimated at **\$22,650** total). We look forward to sharing more updates on this exciting new undertaking with you all as the project develops!

## **Upcoming Visions Events: DC (9/14) & Rochester (9/19)**

**Washington, DC: Ethiopian Culture Night**

**Saturday, September 14, 2019**

**6:00 - 9:00 PM**

**The River School**



**GUIDESTAR**

[http://www.guidestar.org/  
organizations/26-3386678/  
visions-global-empowerment.  
aspx](http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/26-3386678/visions-global-empowerment.aspx)

### **OUR URGENT SPONSORSHIP NEEDS**

#### **1. University Scholar (India): \$30/month**

We have just **one remaining university student** in India (out of 21 total) who is currently without a sponsor. For just **\$30/month**, you can make a huge difference in his life.

#### **2. After-School Center (India): \$100/month**

We are currently looking for sponsors to support all **14** of our Visions after-school Learning & Empowerment Centers in rural communities across Tamil Nadu. These centers are having a major impact on the overall development and

(4880 MacArthur Blvd NW, Washington, DC 20007)

Join us for a night of traditions, coffee, food and fun that will help raise money to support our new programming in Ethiopia! Come experience a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony and take home your own bag of Ethiopian coffee. Enjoy some snacks while watching some of our short documentary films created in collaboration with our local Ethiopian students, even learning some Ethiopian Sign Language! A suggested donation of \$25 / person will be accepted at the door. Material donations (ie: teaching supplies, books, art supplies, games, etc.) will also be collected in the weeks leading up to the event.

**Rochester, NY: Happy Hour for a Cause**

**Thursday, September 19th**

**7:00 - 10:00pm**

**Monroe's Restaurant**

*(3001 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618)*

Join us for a relaxed evening with old friends and new. Come enjoy happy hour and have a chat with Greg (Visions Executive Director & Co-Founder) and Jayme Kaplan-Krutz (Board member) about new and ongoing efforts in Ethiopia, India, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka. Bring a friend. Come for a drink. Enjoy the company. We will have peace bracelets and coffee from Visions' farm (and location of a future girls boarding school) in Nicaragua for sale. Donations are of course welcome but not required for entry.

## **Expanding Education Services for Deaf Youth in Ethiopia**

After focusing our efforts on the city of Bahir Dar (*Amhara Region*) for the past 7 years, we marked a new chapter in the evolution of our work by expanding our Deaf education & empowerment work to 2 new cities - **Addis Ababa** (*the nation's capital*) and **Awassa** (*capital of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region*). As a first step, we hired 3 new Visions Ethiopia staff, including a Deaf educator (Mr. Jambo Gemechu) & Interpreter (Ms. Sifen Teka) in Awassa and a Deaf educator (Ms. Atsedemariam Milkias) in

academic trajectory of the more than 400 youth they collectively serve.

### **3. Deaf Student Transportation (Ethiopia): \$1,200/city**

In Ethiopia, we have identified a number of Deaf children who would attend school and our educational support programs, but who simply live too far away. By providing transportation support, we can bring into our fold on average an additional **10-15 students per city** (in each of our 3 locations of Addis Ababa, Awassa and Bahir Dar) at a cost of roughly \$1,200/year per city.

***To become a sponsor for any of these efforts and help support these vital educational opportunities for***

Addis Ababa.



During the past few months, these new staff have been getting ready for the year ahead and conducting summer classes in Ethiopian Sign Language for parents / family members of Deaf students & early language learners, as well as English lessons for students in general. In Bahir Dar, we have also continued to conduct our regular summer activities for Deaf students, including tutoring support in English, Amharic, mathematics & Ethiopian Sign Language, and sign language training for hearing students.

Once schools officially reopen this month, classrooms for Deaf preschool / early language learners will open their doors to students in both locations, providing critical language- and skills-development support to a crucial demographic. We are also planning to introduce a number of other educational support programs in these 2 new locations, including after-school tutoring in various subjects, Ethiopian Sign Language training for hearing students, teachers & family members of Deaf students, and special programs and events.

*the youth we serve,*  
*please*  
**CLICK HERE**



**SUTHAKAR**

*BE Mechanical Engineering (1st Year)*

*Excel Engineering College, Namakkal, Tamil Nadu*

**NEEDS SPONSOR: YES**

*\*Already obtained a 3-year Diploma in Mechanical Engineering as a Visions scholar*



**VILLAGE NAME: AZHAGANANTHAL**

**# OF STUDENTS: 33**

**COMMUNITY WORKER: MS. ATHIYA**



**VILLAGE NAME: KALASAPAKKAM**

**# OF STUDENTS: 21**

**COMMUNITY WORKER: MS. BAKIYARANI**

# Celebrating 3 Years of Visions India (while looking to the future...)



On August 19th of this year, our [Visions Global Empowerment India](#) team proudly **celebrated completion of the first 3 years** of their education & community development work! We also celebrated the graduation of the first 4 university scholars to complete their degrees. Of those 4 young people, 3 are now working toward higher education degrees and 1 is now working as a teacher.

In July, a 2-day leadership training was held for our 14 Community Organizers who collectively serve more than 400 children from rural, low caste communities through our after-school Learning & Empowerment Centers. The topics of this training focused on **Inclusion, Reading / Literacy, and Self-Confidence**. In follow up to this training, our Visions India staff have been putting together bins of **English- and Tamil-language books to be used on an ongoing rotational basis** amongst these after-school centers to promote reading & literacy - a wonderful new addition to our programming!

A 2-day leadership training in **Self-Confidence and Career Planning** was also conducted for our university scholars who came from all over the state of Tamil Nadu for a weekend of fun, learning and reflection. This year 12 of 21 scholarship students are scheduled to graduate, most of whom plan to enter the work force



VILLAGE NAME: KOLAKKARAVADI

# OF STUDENTS: 35

COMMUNITY WORKER: MR. DINAKARAN



VILLAGE NAME: USAMBADI

# OF STUDENTS: 37

COMMUNITY WORKER: MS. VEERAMMAL

while a few plan to continue their studies. We could not be more proud of them all...

**PLEASE MAKE A CONTRIBUTION:**

*Invest in deserving and marginalized youth.*

*Invest in the leaders of tomorrow. Invest in Visions.*

**DONATE HERE**

*Our work is only possible with the support of people like you!*

You can donate online or send a check made out to "Visions" to the address below.  
All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law [tax ID#26-3386678].

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

[visionseducation@gmail.com](mailto:visionseducation@gmail.com)

**[www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org](http://www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org)**