

Dear Friends,

We hope this letter finds you well. It has been another exciting year for Visions, and we are happy to share this update with you. We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have volunteered their time & services and donated money & supplies. Visions would not be able to help those in need without your support.

Visions Leadership Camps: Expansion to Africa

After five years of successfully running camps in Sri Lanka, in August 2007 Visions launched its first ever operation in Africa with great success!! The 2 camps were held in Kenya at Dunga Non-Formal Center in Dunga and at Agape Children's Home in Milimani. Located in the Kisumu region of Western Kenya, we worked with orphaned youth who have been particularly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and who have been hit hard by poverty. Issues of emotional and physical abuse, drug use, and violence also surfaced with these youth. A number of students at our second camp were former 'street youth', many of whom have dealt with family loss, drug problems, abuse, and street crime. The ability of these young people to overcome such a seemingly impossible and defeating past with hope and courage is inspiring, to say the least. We are hoping this is only the beginning of a new Visions chapter to improve the lives of young people *worldwide*.



The 'Unbeatable' Leadership Group poses for a picture with Visions volunteers Joy and Ami at Agape Children's Home in Milimani, Kenya.

In December Visions Co-Director Greg Buie traveled to Sri Lanka to hold a special 5-day student training and 2-day teacher training at Saiva Mangaiyar Vidyalayam in Colombo. In tandem with the upcoming development of the Visions Learning Center at Colombo, Greg assisted the school's staff and students in setting up a student government as well as staff & student committees to aid in the project design and implementation of the VLC. Additionally, Greg had many meetings and laid some of the foundation for each of the 5 major efforts Visions will be pursuing this year.

This next summer, for the sixth year in a row, Visions will be holding its annual Visions Leadership Camps. Four camps have been planned for July & August 2008, two of which will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka and two of which will be held in Kisumu, Kenya. We will be working with more teachers and returning students than ever before and will be holding special sessions for each. We anticipate working with 220 students and 30 teachers across both countries. New lessons in Human Rights & Citizenship have been added, as well as many new exciting lessons and activities. The camp has been refined and drastically improved over the years, and each year it gets better and better. If you



Visions Update 2007: The Year in Review

would like to volunteer with us in Sri Lanka and/or Kenya, or donate any supplies or money for this cause, please contact us or check out our website to learn more.

Visions Website Launch



We are very pleased to announce that the new and improved Visions website is finally up! Learn more about Visions and follow our progress on the site, which we will be updating regularly. The web address is www.visionsforthefuture.org.

In addition to the new website, a web blog has been set up to keep you extra informed of our latest news and events. Please visit the blog and feel free to leave comments. The blog address is www.visionseducation.blogspot.com.

Posted on the web blog is a link to our Amazon Wishlist, which lists all supplies that we are in need of for upcoming teacher and student training camps.

New Visions Initiatives

In 2007 Visions forged a new partnership with the Sri Lanka based non-profit organization Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam. The non-profit school managed by this group is in dire need of additional classrooms, teachers and facilities. It caters to a vastly growing population of Internally Displaced People who have fled from the island's conflicted North East. In 2007, Visions donated \$8,000 to establish a Multi-Media Room at the Colombo-based school. This fully furnished facility has a computer, projector, DVD player, and high tech sound system, enabling students an opportunity to be exposed to films, presentation, and other stimulating multimedia as part of their course curriculum.

In addition, Visions is currently working with the Kalagam to develop and implement the proposed Visions Learning Center (VLC) in Colombo. The VLC was originally planned to be built in Trincomalee, but due to Sri Lanka's civil strife that plan had to be altered.

More exciting initiatives are underway, including a plan to develop an Institute of Technology to help fill the large void of higher education opportunities available for youth in Sri Lanka, a program to train rural English teachers in effective English teaching techniques, and a Professional Assistance initiative for youth to explore career options. Please visit our website to learn more about all our current and planned projects.

As always, it is your support and donations that enables Visions to help those in need in Sri Lanka and Kenya, so we thank you in advance.

All the best,

Greg Buie & Meera Pathmarajah
Visions Co-Directors