

# ViSiONS

G L O B A L

*Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship.*

NOVEMBER 2010

## New Visions Website Launched!

"My experience with Visions in Sri Lanka was life changing. The most lasting memory was the pure joy, gratitude and determination expressed by the children in the orphanages."

– Visions volunteer, 2005



After many months of hard work, we are extremely excited to be able to share our brand new Visions website with you! As our organization has grown and developed over the years, our mission and programming have been adapted. Our new site provides the most current information about Visions and all of our efforts. We will be making frequent posts about upcoming events & volunteer trips, sharing our many efforts with you, and reaching out to people like you who are interested in getting involved with our work. Please take a minute and check out our new Visions website at [www.VisionsForTheFuture.org](http://www.VisionsForTheFuture.org) to see what all we're up to and consider making a donation today!

**3rd Annual Visions Charity Fashion Show Raises \$3,708 to Support the Education of War-Displaced Youth**

Nov '10 Edition

Issue #8

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**Fusing Education & Health Efforts: Visions Forms Partnership with IMHO**



For the third year in a row, Visions held its annual charity fashion show in San Diego, raising funds for war-displaced and orphaned youth in Kilinochchi, Northern Sri Lanka. This year the event was held at the new [Chillers Clothing Showroom](#) in Pacific Beach. The \$3,708 raised will be split evenly amongst the Magasakthy and Yougasakthy Women's Federations based in Kilinochchi, Northern Sri Lanka to assist orphaned children who are living with their grandparents or other extended family members. These youth lack even the most basic educational resources to learn and go to school and have been displaced repeatedly on account of war and/or natural disaster, such as frequent flooding and the tsunami of 2004. All find themselves living in extreme poverty, simply trying to survive on a day-to-day basis. The physical, mental, and emotional trauma they have endured over the years is immeasurable. This is certainly not the way a child should have to spend his or her childhood. The funds raised from this event will help to provide shoes, backpacks, books, clothes, school supplies, and other basic necessities for these very vulnerable youth.

This year's fashion show featured fashions by Chillers Clothing and traditional South Asian and African dress, as well as a classical Bharata Natyam dance performance by Anjana Pathmarajah & Tharini Shanmugarajah and a musical performance by Leslie McClaron. Following the show, eight talented young woman from the [Kalapeetham Dance Company](#) performed a traditional folk dance, much to the excitement of the many guests. In total, an estimated 130 people attended the event.

We are very grateful for the generous sponsorship of Ajantha Nadesan of [Hillside Montessori](#), who served as a corporate sponsor.

And special thanks to all the models: Meghan Salmans, Fairlight Saller, Morgan Buster, Anna Bowen, Aarani Arulmoli, Moyra Dake, Yvonne Dake, Joan Macharia, Patrick Palacios, Steve Sun, Rob Corea, Jessi DeNaut, Caroline Abadie, Karin Wahlstrom, and Jessica Hsu. Also, thank you to Mark Nygard (our event DJ), Anna Nguyen (our event MC), Trent Holland, Jennifer Ling, Carolyn Pines, Kay Nishimura, Dawn Buie, Yaso Ravindran, Vasundra Pathmarajah, Bhavani Harichandran, Anouk Vashe, Eric Blumenthal, and Lauren Yates.

## with IMHO

When it comes to serving the best interests of the communities in which we work it is important to understand that education is inextricably linked to health, livelihoods, and other core necessities. Visions understands this reality and believes that if we are to truly serve the well being of those we help, we must consider these other factors and coordinate our efforts accordingly. As such, Visions has formed a partnership with the International Medical Health Organization (IMHO), a US-based nonprofit organization based in NY that primarily works in Sri Lanka, especially the war-affected areas. Both Visions and IMHO plan to keep each other regularly updated on their efforts and will work to coordinate as many efforts as possible, preferably taking on projects in the same communities or areas in order to maximize impact. We hope to share specific updates with you in the near future about how this partnership takes shape.

## Upcoming Visions Events

Details of these upcoming Visions events will be made available soon on our new website:

**TORONTO, CANADA--  
Sunday, December 12,  
2010 @ 4:30pm (Danforth  
Suite--All Star Bowl)**

Join us for this event-- "Bowl for Bikes"--as we raise funds to purchase bicycles for war-affected students in Sri Lanka who lack transportation to/from school. Tickets are \$25, which includes the cost of bowling. Donations accepted. The

## Visions Chapters off to a Strong Start

With the recent launch of our newly formed Visions Chapters across the US and Canada, there has been much excitement in recent months about Visions and our efforts. We are very happy to welcome the many new volunteers who are signing on to grow these chapters and support our work in South Asia. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteer Chapter Coordinators, most of these chapters are off to a strong start!

**TORONTO:** Following a few initial formative meetings, the Toronto Chapter is the first to officially announce it is holding a Visions event! The event, "BOWL 4 BIKES", will be held on Sunday, December 12th at 4:30pm at Danforth Suite (All Star Bowl), 2791 Eglinton Ave. East, Toronto. BOWL 4 BIKES will raise money to provide bicycles for students living in remote and impoverished areas of Sri Lanka. Due to the extreme distance from school and the cost of a bike, students stop attending school after 5th grade. The literacy rate is incredibly low, and all of the students are craving activities and desire to go to school.

Cost: \$25/person or \$30/person at the door includes: 2 hours of COSMIC bowling + Shoes + Hors d'oeuvres + FUN! In order to guarantee a separate lane, register as a team of 6 and SAVE \$10 off your team's total cost. Prizes to be won at the event. For tickets, please email [toronto@visionsforthefuture.org](mailto:toronto@visionsforthefuture.org). You can also view the event posting [HERE](#).

**AUSTIN:** After registering as a student organization at UT Austin, the Austin Chapter has held its first few meetings and is working towards a number of small fundraising efforts. Please email Nitya Kumar at [nityakumar90@gmail.com](mailto:nityakumar90@gmail.com) to express interest.

**NEW YORK:** A Community Lab "Bring Your Own Cause" cocktail social was held in NYC on Thursday, November 18th for young professionals & students, at which Visions was one of 4 nonprofit organizations present. Following a vote by the event attendees, Visions won for the best cause at the event and walked away with a small donation. Apart from that, regular meetings are being held, with a core group of committed members pushing the chapter forward. The chapter is aiming for late January 2011 for an event; details are forthcoming. Please email Katherine Redington (Visions Consultant) at [katrosere@gmail.com](mailto:katrosere@gmail.com) or Kari Dietrich (Visions NY Chapter Coordinator) at [dietrich.kari@gmail.com](mailto:dietrich.kari@gmail.com) to express interest or get involved.

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:** Initial organizational meetings have been held. If you are interested in joining, please contact Venita Sivamani at [norcal@visionsforthefuture.org](mailto:norcal@visionsforthefuture.org).

**UPENN (PHILADELPHIA):** We are very happy to welcome our 9th and newest chapter, started recently at UPenn by new Chapter Coordinator Romero Santiago. Welcome!

event will be held on Sunday, December 12th at 4:30pm at Danforth Suite (*All Star Bowl*). For details or to RSVP, please email Shivanu (Visions Toronto Chapter Coordinator) at [toronto@visionsforthefuture.org](mailto:toronto@visionsforthefuture.org). You can also view our event posting [HERE](#). Hope to see you there!

### **NEW YORK CITY, NY-- Late January 2011**

The Visions New York Chapter is planning to hold a networking social for young professionals and students to help raise awareness about educational deficiencies in South Asia, as well as funds for after-school programs for war-affected youth in Sri Lanka. Details are TBD and will be announced on our website shortly.

### **LOS ANGELES, CA - February 2011**

For all those in the SoCal area, we hope you will be able to join us for an international food festival fundraiser for Visions. Details are TBD and will be announced on our website shortly. Please email the Visions L.A. Chapter Coordinator, Pamela Cheuk, at [pamelacheuk@yahoo.com](mailto:pamelacheuk@yahoo.com) for more details

### **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 [ShopModerne.com](http://ShopModerne.com) for just \$20. All orders will be shipped to you right away.

## Orange County Chapter Holds Book & School Supplies Drive for India

The Orange Coast Junior Optimists (OCO Jr. Optimists) in Orange County, CA have been holding an ongoing books & supplies drive for Visions for the past month. [OCO](#) is affiliated with Optimist International, a world renown organization dedicated to the scholastic, physical, moral and civic development of the youths in every community. Members of this Japanese youth basketball league have been dropping off gently used books and new school supplies to benefit highly impoverished youth in the Lower Palani Hills of the Tribal Areas in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, South India. The collection will continue for 3 more weeks, at which time the shipment will be sent to SAWED Trust, Visions' main partner organization in India. We owe a special thank you to all who have donated so far and to Karole Holland-Hagino and Trent Holland, two past Visions Kenya volunteers, for organizing this outstanding effort!

## Kalagam Visions Learning Centre Update: Opening Near!

The final stages of construction are quickly coming to an end, as we edge closer and closer to the planned opening for January 2011 of the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC)! In these last few weeks the construction team is finishing up the painting, glasswork, and electrical issues, and putting the other final touches on the facility. Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam is tentatively planning an official opening ceremony in January 2011, for which Visions is hoping to send a representative. Please check back with our website for updates. In the meantime, you can view a photo gallery of the progression of the KVLC construction by clicking the following link:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=2635096&id=3309175&l=70513ca299>



## English Scholarship Given to Colombo Youth

Visions recently provided a scholarship to Ms. Kalaivani Kamalanathan, one of our very own Visions Volunteer Trainees working on the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC) project, to pursue further English education. Through this scholarship Kalaivani will be attending a General English Course at the British Council in Colombo, the premier English learning center in the country. The 10-week course, which started in October 2010, will serve Kalaivani in her personal and professional development. As a KVLC trainee, she has been participating in KVLC weekly site supervision meetings and assisting in the supervision of KVLC construction. Kalaivani completed her G.C.E. A/L exam at Manipay Ladies College in Jaffna in 2001.

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 Sponsors Team of 4 to Attend Trainings in India



As we reported in our last e-newsletter, four members representing the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) in Sri Lanka were brought over from Jaffna, Mannar, and Batticaloa, where they are all working in various educational and humanitarian efforts. Visions saw this as an opportunity to build the capacity of both these individuals and their organization. As their first time out of the country, it was an eye-opening experience for the team and an incredible opportunity for culture & knowledge exchange. The four CACM team members--Antony, Juthurajah, Kanchana, and Rohaan--participated in the first of two Visions leadership & empowerment trainings held this summer in Perambalur. During the second week, the team was taken on various site visits to see how some of India's thriving civil society is responding to the challenges of education, development, and poverty.

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[www.VisionsForTheFuture.org](http://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 the key to development & success.*

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