



MSMF Newsletter

# A Ray of Light

Education \* Eye Care \* Disaster Relief



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## MSMF WORK IS RECOGNIZED IN INDIA

### Real Heroes of India Award



Chandra with Mr. Ambani at the Heroes Award.

The Real Heroes of India event celebrated the undying spirit of ordinary people who have done extraordinary service and have expanded the realm of humanity. This initiative recognized the real-life heroes who never gave up against adversities and served the cause close to their hearts. It is anticipated that the selfless acts of these unsung heroes from across the nation will have a profound impact on the Indian society.

The award recognized the work of Dr. Chandra and Sankurathri Foundation towards avoidable blindness, welfare of women, education, and service to humanity. The award was presented in Mumbai and was broadcast nationwide by the news network CNN-IBN (India Business News) on 10 March 2010. Dr. Chandra represented the foundation and received the award.

Accepting this award, Dr. Chandra said that this award is a recognition of the work undertaken in the last 20 years and he is dedicating it to all the staff members because without their commitment and dedication nothing would have been possible. He also donated all the award money to Sankurathri Foundation in order to strengthen the efforts towards the eradication of illiteracy and blindness.

### Rotary Mission Award



Chandra receiving the Rotary Mission Award

Chandra was also the recipient of the Rotary Mission Award for his service to the community. The award was presented on February 1, 2010 at the Rotary International District 3020 Annual Conference "Sangamam" at Visakhapatnam, India. Dr. S. Eswar Prasad of Collingwood, Ontario represented MSMF at the award presentation. Rt. Hon. Purandareswari, Minister of State for Human Resources, Government of India, presented the award. She said that NGOs such as Sankurathri Foundation work tirelessly to help the poor in society and they form the fifth pillar of society.

### A New Year 2010 Message from Chandra

Greetings and trust you are well. The year 2009 has been a very special and challenging one in many ways. There was never a dull moment and I would like to share the achievements of the year with you.

Sarada Vidyalayam started Grade 10 in 2009. We have a total of 165 students in the school and as usual girls represent higher percentage of total enrollment. Another milestone in 2009 was the completion of the new school building that will house both the high school and the vocational school. The building was inaugurated on the 27th November 2009 and several MSMF board members and

### Sankurathri Foundation Completes a Strategic Planning Session

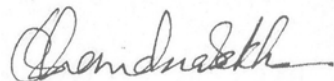
Sankurathri Foundation recently completed a strategic planning session. Such sessions are a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide the foundation - what it does, why it does it, and finally focus on the future. The organization's ability to succeed has more to do with its ability to transform itself continuously to the changes in the operating environment. As a part of the strategic planning, the following aspects of the foundation were evaluated: Core Values, Situation Analysis Vision, SWOT Analysis, Mission, Strategic Priorities, and Stakeholder Analysis. The planning session was conducted by Intervention (India) Pvt. Ltd, a professional company that provides such services in India.

Some of the recommendations made to Sankurathri Foundation are as follows.

- Preparation of an Action Plan to generate 25-30% of the operating costs locally for achieving sustainable operations
- Continuous monitoring of organization performance and the methods for the same
- Succession planning and introduction of professional managers at all levels
- Review the current service loads and prepare new and detailed plan for introduction of new services as well as continuation of existing services.

Dr. Chandrasekhar said that the planning session was a very useful exercise and they are currently following up on some of the recommendations made.

other friends were present for the event. These include Dr. Sarma Vishnubhatla and Andre Trepanier (MSMF) and Michael Schreider, Principal of St. Isidore School, Kanata, Ontario. Other friends and supporters include Gulbanu and Noordin Madatali from Vancouver and Dr. Mark Dube from Sudbury. The inauguration ceremony included science exhibits and a classical Indian dance in Kuchipudi style by the students (supported by Dr. Jhansi-Ainsworth of UK). You can access this event at the YouTube links listed at the end of this newsletter. Thank you for your continued support of our mission to eliminate illiteracy and avoidable blindness. Best Regards,



### Volunteer Reports

#### An Ophthalmologist in Training

I spent 3.5 weeks at the Srikan Institute of Ophthalmology from December 13, 2009 to January 6, 2010. Dr. Chandra and all the staff were very welcoming and hospitable. As an ophthalmologist in training, the opportunities for learning were present everywhere. It was quite a shift of practice setting coming from an affluent, urban and modern hospital to the rural poor region of Eastern India city of Kakinada. Not to mention the climate difference! I found the hospital itself very well equipped and the staff extremely welcoming and helpful. The hospital was set up to make the best use of the ophthalmologist's time - a complete work up was done on every patient, and past charts and information were readily available.



Dr. Andrew Toren, Ophthalmologist

One of the best parts of the visit was the exposure to a tropical pathology - most of which I had never seen outside of a textbook or lecture. Clinically, there was a broad range of pathology, with many tropical diseases not seen in the developed world. Regular management of chronic diseases such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataract were all presented at advanced stages and required immediate treatment. Surgically, the experience was a highlight of my training. Not only was I able to share some of my surgical knowledge and put it to immediate practical use, but I also was able to learn the manual small incision cataract surgery under the excellent guidance and instruction of a highly skilled and proficient cataract surgeon. The high volume of cataracts conducted in one day - upwards of 100 patients a day, required a highly efficient system for pre-operative evaluations. The facilities and trained personnel allowed the examinations to be conducted in record time - I doubt I'll ever see as many post-ops in such a record amount of time.

Furthermore, the visits to communities with outreach camps, and satellite clinics helped me appreciate the unique needs of

the country in tackling blindness and see the methods effective in this environment. Overall, this elective was a very valuable experience that enlarged my perspective on global health care. In the face of enormous health needs, one learns how to be an efficient and prudent physician and appreciate how local health care systems adapt. Practicing ethical care in a different culture and medical environment pushes your limits as a trainee and at the same time provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect on your current practice patterns. I hope other residents have the opportunity to participate in this invaluable experience. I would be happy help or assist them in any way needed.

(Dr. Andrew Toren, M.D. is an Ophthalmologist with the University of Ottawa Eye Institute, Ottawa, Ontario)

#### Unsung Heroes of Kakinada

Just recently Dr. Chandrasekhar was honoured by the Reliance Company (a major Communications and Petrochemical conglomerate) as a hero of India. All who know Chandra's work in education as well as eye care for the needy in and around Kakinada need not be convinced of the role he has had in this venture. You, as a participant of MSMF, here in Canada play a most important role in rendering this possible. Dr. Chandra, in his acceptance speech, emphasized how none of this could have been possible without the involvement of his team in Kakinada as well as here in Canada.

Last November, I had the privilege to attend the opening ceremony of the high school and vocational school. During my visit I was able to see first-hand a hub of activities around the school buildings as well as around the hospital.



André Trepanier

I was particularly attracted to the school and the work done by its teachers. I soon could detect that the School was very special as the children could not only learn enough but were looking to be challenged by their teachers. All this work was being performed with a deep sense of respect for the teachers as well as for the students around them. The children were so proud of their accomplishment. I soon found out where the spirit came from.

When Chandra first had the idea to return to India and to dedicate his life to the needy, his first disciple was an experienced school teacher - his sister Hema. She has been at Chandra's side since the beginning and she is the spirit behind the school.

Her role in the school is very much behind the scene but she knows every student personally and every student knows her. To them she is like their mother at times very demanding, but always in a very loving way. She is an excellent role model for all teachers and other employees.

Thank you Chandra and Hema. Your leadership inspires us and your work with the needy convinces us to continue to support your actions.

(André Trepanier is the Treasurer of MSME. He lives in Gatineau, Québec.)

### Truly Wonderful Experience

In November, 2009, I had the privilege to visit our sister school, Sarada Vidyalayam, in Kakinada India and to be part of the inauguration of the new Secondary and Vocational School that opened in June 2009. This was a life-changing experience for me to see first hand the work of Dr. Chandra, his sister Hema and all his staff in both the school and the eye institute. I was amazed at how this small community has contributed so much for the betterment of the individuals in and around Kakinada. In visiting the school I was amazed at the dedication of the staff to ensure that every child who attended

received the best possible education. The goal of all staff and the school is to ensure that all students are given the tools to ensure success. The school has provided a safe and nurturing environment for all students so that they can concentrate on their studies. It is truly wonderful to see the light in the eyes of these students as they arrive each day for school. They are hardworking, polite and grateful for the opportunity that each and every one of them has been given. I also witnessed how Dr. Chandra and his sister, Hema, took an interest in all students in order to build their self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. Every morning and evening I saw Hema take the time out of her busy day to speak with them. She was always there to help and guide them when needed, and you can see and feel the love that she imparts to them.

The opening of the new high school was extremely successful. Staff and students worked extremely hard to prepare the grounds and building for the inauguration. Students will be able to access a new computer lab, science lab, sewing room, and library just to name a few. This new building will now provide the students an opportunity to continue their education in an environment where they are all respected and expected to do their best. These students will now be given the skills and knowledge to be able to continue their life-long learning.

I am now able to use these experiences to speak to the students of St. Isidore, and others, about how important it is to continue to raise funds for such a worthwhile cause. The students of Sarada Vidyalayam Schools need to look no further than Dr. Chandra for inspiration and proof that through hard work and dedication your dreams can be achieved!

(Michael Schreider is the Principal of St. Isidore School, Kanata / Ottawa, Ontario.)

### 32 Hours with Chandra - A typical day at Sankurathri Foundation.

We started with the Rotary District 3020 Conference in Visakhapatnam, India. Chandra was receiving the Rotary Mission Award. Over a 1,000 people were in attendance. Following the award presentation, we started the 125 km trip to Kakinada, with a lunch stop with Mr Gandham Nandgopal, an industrialist and a community leader. We discuss lack of facilities for eye care in his village, 80 kms from Kakinada, and potential solutions that include political support to service that area. We arrived in Kakinada at 4PM



Michael Schreider with students of Sarada Vidyalayam.

and Chandra promptly disappeared to his office. Dr. Dennis Bhui, an ophthalmologist from Vancouver on an internship at Srikan joined us for dinner and to discuss his experience.

After dinner I got my opportunity to discuss the Strategic Planning Session report. We discussed the need for the following: 1) need for a HR Manual, 2) shift towards a ISO based metrics system to evaluate performance and instill continuous improvement goals, 3) need for a documented action plan, 4) succession planning, 5) challenges associated with adding additional services and 6) staff turnovers. We agree that several challenges exist and these need to be addressed quickly.

Next morning, I joined in an early morning staff meeting with Chandra and four senior staffers. The topics ranged from analysis of operating costs and marketing, through "Arogyasri" (a new Government of India universal health plan that funds surgeries), to maintenance of airconditioning equipment and painting of the hospital. Following the meeting, Chandra asked me to spend some time at the Instrumentation Laboratory while he took care of some visitors. The instrumentation laboratory does preventive maintenance and calibration of equipment as well as provide other support to the hospital operations. I reviewed the records, and maintenance logs, and gave some pointers. It is necessary that there is no down time on equipment and if there is any, it has to be minimum. We also discussed the field equipment that goes to eye camps and some of the repetitive maintenance issues and remedies. I reported to Chandra on my observations. Then it was off to the new Vocational School. The admissions to the dress making class were in progress.

At 11 AM and we proceeded to Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU)

**THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES - STATISTICS****Facts**

Out patients examined	1,532,777
Surgeries performed	163,801
Outreach camps	2,177
Other Patients (Corneal transplants, Amniotic membrane grafting etc)	126

**Volunteers**

André Trepanier, Ottawa; Michael Schreider, Kanata; Gulbanu and Noordin

Madatali, Vancouver; Dr. Mark Dube, Sudbury; and Lakshmi & Dr. Ram Murthy, Peterborough.

**Ophthalmologists in Training**

At Kakinada, India: Dr. Dennis Bhui, Vancouver; Dr. Andrew Toren, Ottawa.

At Edmonton and Ottawa, Canada: Dr. Tejeswar Prasad, Retina Specialist, Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology, Kakinada, India.



Dr. Chandra and Eswar Prasad

where Mr. A. Appa Rao, Vice-Chancellor of the University had assembled a group of 50 people, consisting of the heads of the department, directors of outreach programmes, and the press (TV and News papers). Chandra spoke about Sankurathri Foundation and the initiatives and how everyone can benefit from the cooperation. I talked about sustainable programmes and collaborative work.

At 2PM, the children of Sarada Vidyalayam assembled in the Hospital Auditorium for a screening of an IMAX film, *Deep Sea*. The children love documentaries and animated films, and I normally take them with me on each trip. They quietly filed out after the show back to their classes. At 4PM, I had a final meeting with Chandra and Rajesh Kamireddi to discuss a LED-based avoidable blindness lighting project and to provide affordable lighting to the children. It was time to say goodbye. The 32 hours moved quickly and it was certainly very a productive time.

(Dr. S. Eswar Prasad is the Chairman of Sensor Technology Limited and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto. He lives in Collingwood, Ont. He together with Dr. Sarma Vishnubhatla, is the editor of this newsletter)

**Our Recent Visit to Kakinada**

Our last visit to Kakinada was about six years ago, and there are a lot of changes. The biggest change is the new high school building which is very spacious and can meet the ever increasing requirements of the school. The sea breeze floats through all



Prof. Ram Murthy teaching a class at Sarada Vidyalayam.

the rooms. The ground floor of the building houses the classes from grade 6 to 10. The upper floors accommodate the vocational school activities .

Vocational training classes have already begun on a modest scale in areas such as computer training, dress making and sewing. Mature students and house wives attend these courses and the progress is very impressive. The students bring their own materials and make impressive dresses for their children. The students of the computer class have been using the graphics program to create art and pictures. Discussions are in progress to initiate courses in carpentry, plumbing, and electrical wiring.

During this visit, I also spent some time teaching English classes for grade 6 and 7 students at the school. The high point of our visit was that two past students of Sarada Vidyalayam came to visit us. One of those students was in my class, which I taught during one of my earlier visits. It was most gratifying to learn that both these students are currently pursuing undergraduate programs in engineering and one of them has already secured a position in his campus interview in the third year of his four-year programme.

(Prof. K.S.Ram Murthy and Lakshmi Murthy are retired from Trent University. They live in Peterborough, Ontario.)

**THANK YOU FOR CARING**

We would like to thank you for your continued support of MSMF, for Eye Care, Education and Disaster Relief, in order to maintain current activities and support new initiatives. You can donate to MSMF in three ways: with a cheque or credit card information sent directly in mail to MSMF, online through CanadaHelps, ([www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)), and through the United Way campaign. Some organizations and employers match donations of their employees. If you need more information, please call us at 613 523 5413, or visit our website, [www.msmf.ca](http://www.msmf.ca). Our mailing address is: MSMF, 23 Mary Dr., Gloucester, ON, K1V 1G9, Canada. Email address: [info@msmf.ca](mailto:info@msmf.ca).

**PLEASE GET INVOLVED**

Eye Camps, Art Projects, Science Projects are just a few ways you can help.

Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation (MSMF), a registered charity (BN 89002 4995 RR 0001) in Canada ([www.cra.gc.ca/charities](http://www.cra.gc.ca/charities)), is dedicated to promote rural community development in India through Education and Vocational Training, Health Care and Disaster Relief.

**PLEASE VISIT YOUTUBE LINKS**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZRA6N23F14>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUBuz-PF9xE>



Vocational School