



Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation

(A Registered Canadian Charity – BN 89002 4995 RR0001)

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MSMF Newsletter

May 2008

Greetings from MSMF

When Dr. Chandra Sankurathri returned to India to reorganize his life after losing his family in the Air India tragedy in 1985, in his own words, “ ... to find something meaningful for my life ...”*, he found strength and support in his sister Hema. He writes, “without her help I am not sure how much I could have achieved, and I owe the success of the programs to her presence and help”. His article is included in the adjacent column.

After seeing the award winning CBC documentary, “A Ray Of Light”, Mr. Noordin Madatali from Vancouver, BC, decided to visit Dr. Sankurathri in India, which he did with his wife Gulbanu. Impressed by what he saw - “children that now see a future for themselves rather than otherwise wasting their lives away in a remote village with nothing to look forward to” - he pledged support for the construction of a High School and a Vocational School. Mr. Madatali’s report is in page 4.

Over the past five years, five members from the University of Ottawa Eye Institute visited Srikirana Institute of Ophthalmology seven times. Those visits are sources of new skills and knowledge, inspiration and guidance not only to ophthalmologists and technical personnel of Srikirana, but also to other local eye care providers in the region. In another initiative, two senior residents from the Eye Institute, completed their three week Clinical and Surgical Elective at Srikirana. Their experiences are presented in Page 2.

Dr. Sankurathri is visiting us in May and June to attend awareness and fundraising meetings in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. He will also be visiting a few cities in the USA. For more information on his visit and other news, please visit our website: www.msmf.ca

* ³⁰³ Testimony of Dr. Chandra Sankurathri, vol 44, June 18, 2007, P.5343.

Ms. Hema Sankurathri

Whoever visits Sankurathri Foundation in Kakinada will come in contact with my sister, Hema Sankurathri, popularly known as Hema. It is impossible not to meet her or feel the impact of her contribution on any activity, starting from the house cleaning to delicious vegetarian meals prepared and served.

Born into a large family, she was always loaded with responsibilities from a young age, and she carried out those responsibilities with utmost care. Because of family responsibilities she sacrificed her formal education and studied from home.

When I decided to return to India to start the programs of MSMF, she offered spontaneously to resign her job in Hyderabad to assist me with my efforts to improve the quality of life of rural poor and needy. Knowing her commitment, determination, and zeal I did not persuade her to rethink her decision, and I was very happy about her decision.

She followed me to Kakinada in 1990 and since then has been a guiding force for me and others in various activities. Her impact is obvious in the planning and implementation of all activities related to the school, Sarada Vidyalayam. In addition, she also takes care of me, manages the home, canteen, food arrangements for the patients, maintenance of the compound and buildings. She also looks after all the visitors who stay at the Foundation.

Despite her contribution to the welfare and happiness of so many children, patients, and visitors, she avoids limelight and never craves for recognition. I am fortunate to have such a sister who supports me quietly. Without her help I am not sure how much I could have achieved. I owe the success of the programs to her presence and help. I acknowledge her contribution and thank her for her unselfish support over these years.

Chandra Sankurathri

Clinical and Surgical Elective at Srikiran

Our experience at Srikiran was invaluable. In all clinical, surgical and outreach settings the time we spent at Srikiran was a vast, in depth and continuous learning experience. Not only did we learn and become competent with a new surgical technique, we also saw many different manifestations of tropical and developing world ophthalmology. Mike Fielden and Jamie Bhamra were both PGY 5 residents, during this fantastic clinical elective in Kakinada, India at the Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology.

Our goals before leaving for Kakinada were to learn manual small incision cataract surgery (MSICS), experience ophthalmology in a tropical setting and to realize the practice of



ophthalmology in the third world, as well as, indulge into the culture, food and way of life. We are happy to say that during our elective, we comfortably met all of these goals and we are very grateful to all of the eye care team at Srikiran.

Upon arrival, we were given a thorough introduction of the Institute by Dr. Chandra. We toured the paid and non-paid outpatient departments, the optical shops, the pediatric, glaucoma and retinal wings, the ophthalmic technician's rooms, the director's office, and operating theatres. The next day we began shadowing our surgical preceptors (Dr. Teja and Dr. Thulasi). After watching many MSICS,

discussing the complications and perils of each step, we were quickly given a chance to participate and learn the technique. From Mondays through Thursdays, we spent 3-4 hours in the operating theatres learning, practicing and watching the technique. First, we were guided and advised under close supervision of very skilled and knowledgeable preceptors. As we became comfortable, we were given much autonomy to complete the cases on our own and deal with complications. Each following day, we would see our postoperative patients and help with other postoperative and care.

Half of the day was spent in the operating theatres. The other half (morning or afternoon) was filled with clinic time in the paid or non-paid outpatient departments. Through these clinics, we saw many new ophthalmology presentations not present or common in North America. Moreover, we were able to discuss these cases with our clinical preceptors (Dr. Rajendra, Dr. Ravi, Dr. Jyoti, Dr. Thulasi and Dr. Teja) in depth revealing a very interesting and practical clinical experience. Many new and different eye manifestations were seen and the management and prognosis were usually always discussed.

Most of our time was spent in the emergency outpatient clinics. A retina team from Edmonton, Alberta was also present during our first week. Dr. Greve, a retinal surgeon, allowed us to spend a lot of time in the retina clinic seeing new consults and complicated cases. We participated in the inauguration ceremony of Teleophthalmology at Srikiran. A grand rounds presentation and a clinical seminar were also attended during our elective.

The outreach experience was the most memorable of our time at Srikiran.. We were fortunate enough to experience 2 outreach camps during our elective. Our first camp was advertised and funded by members of a local Sri Sai Baba group. Our second camp was located in a rural village located 3 hours away

from Kakinada. We traveled by bus with the eye care team to the village for eye exam screening of a very large number of 250 people. We participated in vision assessment, irrigation of nasolacrimal systems, slit-lamp examinations of the eye for cataracts and eye pathology and the dispensing medications.

Overall, we feel our time at Sriikiran has made a huge impact on our immediate training and understanding of global ophthalmology. We felt a direct connection to the mission to help restore vision. The enlightening experience has broadened our perspectives on humanitarianism and global needs and differences in world eye care. Through engaging discussions with Dr. Chandra, we also learned about the operations of an NGO eye hospital. Providing superior quality surgery in a cost-effective and efficient manner is a principle we can understand, as well as, dealing with the enormous and endless demand.

Our exposure to tropical ophthalmology was in depth and we experienced it all while indulging in new foods, a unique way of life and beautiful culture.

We thank MSMF, Sriikiran Institute of Ophthalmology and the IPC at the University of Ottawa Eye Institute for this extraordinary opportunity.



Mike Fielden and Jamie Bhamra, PGY 5, Ophthalmology. University of Ottawa Eye Institute. January 16 – February 2008

Support from
CATO Recherche – Research, Canada..

Christina Jez and Dominique Viens
Fund-raising Leaders

We are excited to hear that you have received our donations and they will be applied to your programs. This is the 3rd year that the Cato Research Canada employees have been involved in fund-raising and it has quickly become a tradition. Each year, a small group of us choose a new foundation or organization to support and agree on a fund-raising goal. This year's choice was obviously MSMF, and our goal was \$2,200.

Just before we started fund-raising efforts, we held an information session to tell people a little bit about MSMF and shared with them the CBC video coverage so that employees would know where their money is going. We also used our monthly staff meeting as an opportunity to share with everyone who didn't attend the information session the organization and goal for the years new fund-raising efforts. Once this was all out of the way, the fund-raising began.

Some of the methods we used this year were:

- 50/50 Raffle: Every Friday, we sold tickets for \$2 each or 3 tickets for \$5. Out of the money that is in the pot, the winner takes half and the other half goes towards fund-raising. During Easter, we raffled off some Easter chocolates.
- Spaghetti Lunch: We cooked spaghetti and made a large batch of spaghetti sauce and had a lunch where employees were asked to contribute \$5 for their Spaghetti meal.
- Silent Auction: Donations from scarves, new shoes, knitted items, MacDonald's coupons, and more were auctioned off over a two day period. Art work that was no longer being used for the office was also later auctioned off at another event.
- 10 km Run: We organized a run on a local mountain and asked participants to donate \$5 to the fund.

These were the main methods used this year to raise money. A large portion of the money collected was raised from the weekly 50 / 50 raffles and the two silent auctions. (Contd.. page 4)

Our Visit with Dr. Chandra in India

My wife, Gulbanu, and I were very privileged to be invited by Dr. Chandra to visit him in Kakinada, and we did in November 2007. During our 3 days in Kakinada, my wife and I were both humbled by Dr. Chandra's generosity, kindness, and more so by how he has successfully turned a personal tragedy into this absolutely successful concept of "giving" - giving his time, energy, and his personal funds towards education and medical care for the less fortunate and needy people in his hometown in Andhra Pradesh.

There were moments of tears when we saw the realities of how a person, living out in a very remote area and one that might never have ever had an opportunity otherwise of receiving medical care, comes across Dr. Chandra and his medical team - a team of dedicated people that literally bring back "life" to a person blinded by cataract but with surgery can now see !! Oh, those expressions of "...now I can see my grandchild..." or "...I was blind and unable to earn a living and now I can get a job and earn Rupee 400/= a month as a security guard....." (Rupees 400/= is the equivalent of US \$ 10.00).

The children being educated at Dr. Chandra's School showed a level of confidence that would be hard to comprehend within our education system in North America. Children that now see a future for themselves rather than otherwise wasting their lives away in a remote village with nothing to look forward to.

As part of our commitment to Dr. Chandra and his Foundation, my wife and I have already donated \$ 50,000 last December 2007. This donation is towards the capital funding of the new Secondary School and the Vocational Training Facilities currently under construction. Furthermore, my wife and I are undertaking two separate dinner reception functions in Vancouver, B.C., Canada on May 13th and 14th. 2008 to bring awareness to our friends, family, and members of the public of

what Dr. Chandra has achieved to-date and his vision for the future.

In addition to further cash donations that



we will make to the Foundation, both my wife and I have offered Dr. Chandra and his Foundation our personal services towards any Management services he desires. This is a "cause" that has become very dear and close to our hearts not only because of the example that Dr. Chandra has personally set out for others to follow but he has also surrounded himself with friends that are equally dedicated towards his cause.

Noordin Madatali

Continuation from page 3...

In the past years, we had chili / brownie contest lunches, cooked and baked by volunteers, and BBQs with hot dog eating contests.

Once again, we were very happy to support MSMF this year in your various programs. It was also an eye opener to us to find out more about how preventable most blindness is and how hard a decent education to come by for the children in India.

We urge you to support generously our education, eye care and disaster relief programs. MSMF is a registered charity in Canada and donations to MSMF qualify for tax credits in Canada. Your donation makes the difference. Thank You.

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