



# Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation

(A Registered Canadian Charity – BN 89002 4995 RR0001)

Autumn Issue

MSMF Newsletter

November 2002

## Appreciation Award to Srikiran



On October 10, 2002, during the World Sight Day Celebrations, in Hyderabad, India, the Awards Committee, comprised of National Programme for Control of Blindness of Government of India and Health, Medical and Family Welfare Department of Government of Andhra Pradesh, bestowed Best NGO status to Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology.

This indeed is a remarkable recognition. We congratulate all those responsible at Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology and Sankurathri Foundation.

## News from Kakinada ...

The school, Sarada Vidyalayam, reopened in June for 92 students, 50 girls and 42 boys. While most of those in grades two to seven are returning students from last year, 17 new children, eight girls and nine boys, are enrolled in grade one.

Construction of the new building, an extension to Srikiran, is on schedule and will be available for occupancy by the end of the year.

Recent visitors to Srikiran are Dr. V. K. Raju, Morgantown, WV, Dr. Dahlen, Plattsburgh, NY, and Ms. Smitha Chavali, Ottawa, ON.

## Co-Founder of Srikiran Honoured

Dr. V K Raju, Co-Founder of Srikiran and President of Eye Foundation of America, received the Humanitarian Award of the Academy of American Ophthalmologists. We extend our hearty congratulations to him.

## MSMF Humanitarian Awards

Volunteers are the backbone of MSMF. Our volunteers are from all walks of life, all age groups, and all across Canada. To recognize the devotion of our volunteers to the humanitarian cause of MSMF, the Humanitarian Awards were conceived and they were presented for the first time in 1997. This year we are happy and proud to recognize two of our volunteers, Mrs. Vilma Dube from Nanaimo, British Columbia and Ms. Deepti Gupta from Ottawa, Ontario.

Mrs. Dube, a school teacher, and her husband, Makhan, who practised family medicine, arrived in Canada from Trinidad 31 years ago. Her association with MSMF is from the beginning, since 1989, having personally known Manjari and Chandra Sankurathri for many years. She has been instrumental in the development and promoting support for the programs of MSMF.

Ms. Deepti Gupta, an accomplished Kathak dancer, choreographer, costume designer – a multi talented artiste, who performed nationally and internationally and received many awards – has been drawn by this cause also. She has given performances over the years to help raise awareness and funds to support MSMF programs.

In her recent performances for MSMF in Ottawa and Toronto Deepti co-opted three highly talented musicians from Toronto.



Vineet Vyas, Deepti Gupta, Azalea Ray, Aditya Verma

**Dr. Peter Kertes  
visits Srikirana**

I recently had the good fortune to travel to Srikirana Institute of Ophthalmology in Kakinada, India through the generous support of Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation (MSMF), Help the Aged Canada (HTAC), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). As most of you are well aware the hospital was conceived of and built by Dr. Chandra Sankurathri, a Canadian who moved to India and gave his life over to philanthropic activities shortly after the tragic death of his wife and two children in the Air India disaster of 1985. The mission of the hospital is to provide quality eye care and eliminate cataract blindness in the region of some five million people, irrespective of their ability to pay. The second mission of the Sankurathri foundation is an elementary school on the site that provides quality education to some of the region's children.

I was in South India from December 25, 2001 to January 3, 2002 to help provide vitreo-retinal care to a region which has no vitreo-retinal surgeon. During my short time there, I consulted on scores of patients and did multiple laser procedures and complicated vitreo-retinal operations. These were done on patients that did not have the wherewithal to travel to larger centers to seek out this type of subspecialty care and would have otherwise been left with a significant visual disability. While there, I also had the opportunity to give lectures and informal seminars to the hospital's ophthalmologists and to other ophthalmologists in the region.

The operation of the hospital is most impressive. Under the leadership of Dr. Sankurathri, two senior ophthalmologists, and a dedicated hospital administrator the Institute is able to efficiently provide the highest level of



medical and surgical ophthalmologic care to an incredible volume of needy patients. In 2001, some 16,000 cataract operations were performed, 90% of which were done on uninsured non-paying patients. Not only is their surgery done for free but also they are bused into the hospital for the surgery and all their post-operative visits. Their medications and glasses are also provided to them free of charge.

The hospital is also an important training center where post-graduate trainees can gain valuable additional experience before setting out on their own, and where more senior ophthalmologists come for a two month period to learn how to perform extracapsular cataract extraction with insertion of posterior chamber intraocular lenses. In addition, the hospital has some 120 employees, most of them have received their training on site. Their work has helped to provide a livelihood and meaning to the lives of these members of the community with few other employment opportunities.

I believe Dr. Sankurathri has achieved what many felt to be the impossible. I congratulate MSMF, HTAC, and CIDA for having the vision to support this most worthy project.

Peter Kertes, MD, FRCSC  
Vitreo-retinal Surgeon  
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology  
The University of Ottawa Eye Institute

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***Please support ...***

We urge you to support our education, eye care and disaster relief programs. Donations to MSMF qualify for tax credits in Canada. Donations to our partner organization, Eye Foundation of America (1460 Anderson Avenue, Morgantown, WV, 26505), qualify for tax exemption in the USA.

***Thank You.***

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