



Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation

(A Registered Canadian Charity)

Spring Issue

MSMF Newsletter

June 2002

Greetings from MSMF

As the spring renewal begins, we like to review last year's accomplishments and set goals for the current year.

Sarada Vidyalayam, the upper primary school, celebrated its tenth anniversary in February. The first batch of twelve grade one students, all of them, successfully completed their grade ten. We are waiting to see how many go to college.

Srikan Institute of Ophthalmology has set a new record for the number of surgeries performed in its blindness control program. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Help the Aged Canada and MSMF supported projects are the engines of growth.

Dr. Peter Kertes and Ms. Rosemary Bickerton, both from the University of Ottawa Eye Institute have visited Srikan and provided valuable training to ophthalmologists and ophthalmic nurses. Their recommendations will be most valuable in maintaining the excellent quality of eye care.

In this region around Kakinada, the need for services in other areas of eye care is steadily growing. To alleviate the existing space problems and to provide for the proposed new areas of eye care, construction began on a new hospital building.

Our first Co-op venture with the University of Ottawa has been very successful. Jaideep Mukerji has been awarded an honourable mention by the 2001 Canadian Association for Cooperative Education (CAFCE) Co-op student of the year award committee. MSMF has been recognized for mentoring. In 2002, a third-year student from Faculty of Science, Adrienne Fowle, spent three months conducting a survey for the Foundation in Kakinada.

Visits to our Foundation in Kakinada by Dr. W. R. Wilkinson from Nanaimo, BC, Mrs. Shashi Prasad from Collingwood, ON, Dr. Nirmala Rudraraju from Ottawa, ON, have provided tangible links to our efforts to serving the rural poor communities.

Congratulations Chandra Sankurathri !

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International named Chandra as a Paul Harris Fellow - "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world".

Sarada Vidyalayam

" ... all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be."

World Education Forum, April 2000, Dakar, SENEGAL.

A rallying call at the Global Movement for Children is educate every child -- all girls and boys must receive a compulsory free primary education of good quality.

United Nations Special Session on Children, May 8-10, 2002, New York, USA.

The Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA's) policy framework for Official Development Assistance identifies education as a basic human need and one of the main indicators of human well-being. CIDA believes that education is key to poverty reduction, to sustainable development, and to peace and stability within and among countries.

CIDA's Action Plan on Basic Education, April 2002, CANADA

The school, Sarada Vidyalayam, was established in 1992 with the aim to provide quality primary education, in a safe learning environment for girls and boys, free of cost, without any discrimination.

In 2002, Sarada Vidyalayam celebrated its tenth anniversary. The twelve students enrolled in grade one in 1992 have successfully completed their high school (grade ten) this year. We are waiting to see how many of the twelve will enter college!

This year's batch of all eleven grade seven students have written entrance examinations to Gurukula high schools, which are special schools, planned for educating rural children, with residential facilities, strict discipline, teacher supervision and guidance. The Gurukula schools are well-known for their excellent results. A high percentage of students graduating from those schools pursue higher education.

Sarada Vidyalayam is well equipped with excellent facilities to provide quality instruction up to grade seven. For grades eight to ten, Sarada's students will be encouraged to go to Gurukula schools.

Thanks St. Gregory !



The friendship between the two schools began in 1992 and the bond has grown stronger ever since. Every year, during Lent, the students of St. Gregory raised money by many enterprising methods and gifted those funds to Sarada's students. Chandra Sankurathri and other Members and Volunteers of MSMF visited St. Gregory School every year to express their sincere appreciation and thanks to the students, parents and teachers and also to brief them on progress made at Sarada Vidyalayam.

Prevention of Childhood Blindness

While the project objective is to determine the major causes of preventable childhood blindness and establish a well equipped eye care facility, and the purposes of the project are: collect data on prevalence, incidence and magnitude of childhood blindness, determine the major causes of childhood blindness, provide appropriate eye care services, and strengthen the eye care facility.

So far this study included school-going children by means of screening camps arranged in schools and pre-school age children, who were brought to Srikiran directly. As there is a large percentage of non-school-going children special screening camps are being planned to include them in the project.

Fifteen months into the three year project, the number of schools visited, the number of screening camps conducted and the number of children screened, all exceeded the estimated numbers. Also, the number of workshops conducted to educate teachers on children's eye problems and the number of teachers attended exceeded estimates. Now the teachers are playing a major role in monitoring and motivating the parents and children with their eye care needs.

Progressive Elimination of Avoidable Blindness

This three year project's goal is to eliminate avoidable and curable blindness due to cataract and glaucoma for a population from 550 villages, mostly rural poor.

Since the project began in April 2000, by the end of two years, out of a total of 26,225 people screened for cataracts in 99 eye camps, 7,716 needed surgeries. During the same period, 444 cases were treated for glaucoma. Canadian volunteers, Dr. Peter J. Kertes, MD, FRCS(C) and Ms. Rosemary Bickerton, BScN, RN, both from the University of Ottawa Eye Institute, visited Srikiran.

Dr. Kertes provided vitreo-retinal care to a region that has no vitreo-retinal surgeon. During his short stay, just eight days over the Christmas and New Year holidays, he consulted on 102 outpatients, performed 13 laser procedures, and operated on 13 eyes of 12 patients. He also gave two lectures and two more informal seminars and did a great deal of patient-centered teaching. In Mumbai, Dr. Kertes addressed the Ophthalmic Society about photodynamic therapy, the treatment of choice for age-related macular degeneration.

Ms. Bickerton is a clinical manager. During her 10 day stay at Srikiran, every morning she conducted lectures to nurses and technical staff on topics: Anatomy and Physiology of the Eye, Taking an Ophthalmic History, Review of Ophthalmic Abbreviations, How to take a Visual Acuity, Glaucoma and its Treatment, Principles of Surgical Asepsis and Sterile Technique, Surgical Instrument Care and Handling, Endophthalmitis, and Universal Precautions. She also made a number of recommendations based on her observations of the conditions and practices at Srikiran.



Dr. Nirmala Rudraraju, Ottawa, ON,
giving dental check-ups to Sarada's students.

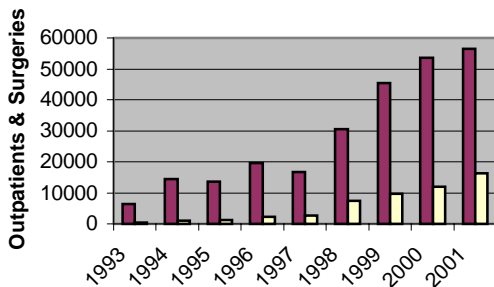
Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology

The main objective of Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology (Srikiran) is the elimination of preventable and curable blindness. Srikiran’s policy is that no one will be denied access to eye care services for not being able to pay, and the quality of services must remain at the same high standard for all.



Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology

In its nine years of existence, Srikiran’s growth and performance has been remarkable – the outpatient count has increased from 6,425 in 1993 to 56,457 in 2001, and the number of cataract (which is the major cause of blindness) surgeries performed increased from 475 in 1993 to 16,313 in 2001.



In keeping with the goal of making eye care available to the poor, in the past nine years, the Institute provided free services to 74% of the outpatients and performed 90% of the surgeries free of charge.

Srikiran is located in Kothuru, a village about 14 km from Kakinada, which is the headquarters for the district of East Godavari. This district has a population of 5 million. Using the WHO statistics, it is estimated that there are about 70,000 (1.4%) blind people out of which 35,700 (51%) are blind as a result of bilateral cataracts, 9,100 (13%) due to glaucoma and the rest 25,200 (36%) due to other causes. Another important parameter, the

blindness due to cataract alone is increasing by 2.5% per year.

The district has ten major population centers. Eye care services are available from two government hospitals, about fifty private clinics and eight non-government organizations. In 2001, about 65% of the total number of surgeries done in the district were performed at Srikiran. At this rate, the blindness backlog will continue to increase about by 10,000 every year.

As the demand for eye care is growing, the existing infrastructure at Srikiran is no longer adequate to handle the incredible need.

Recognizing this need, a project has been initiated to construct a new building and equip it with state of the art diagnostic and surgical equipment. The new building will provide more outpatient areas, operation theatres, wards, and specialty clinics like cornea, glaucoma, retina and pediatric units.



New Hospital Building (Under Construction)

The project has the support of Dr. V. K. Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS, President of Eye Foundation of America and one of the founders of Srikiran. He is determined to further develop this Institute for the benefit of poor and needy in this region.

A few impressions ...

“Thank you for allowing me to visit and to see the excellent care that you provide. I am impressed by the level of dedication shown by everyone involved.”

Dr. Kjell Dahlen, Eye care for the Adirondacks, Plattsburgh, NY, USA.

“Your Institute is the state of the art for providing eye care and hospitality incredible. Thank you.”

Dr. Linda Lawrence, MD, Kansas, USA.

“Thank you an oasis. I hope the work for blind children has been conceived today”

Dr. Allan Foster, Christoffel Blinden Mission, Germany.

“Your Institute is most impressive.”

Dr. Robert Devenyi, MD, FRCS(C), Toronto, Canada.

Experience in Kakinada at the Srikirana Institute of Ophthalmology

I was asked to participate as an ophthalmic nurse consultant for the project of Progressive Elimination of Avoidable Blindness due to Cataract and Glaucoma in Kakinada, India. My mission was to help the Srikirana Institute of Ophthalmology by observing operating room procedures and nursing standards of practice and to present lectures to the nursing and technician staff.



I arrived in Kakinada March 30, 2002 and planned to stay for 10 days. I was kindly taken under the wing of Dr Chandra Sankurathri and his sister Hema. Initially, I was overwhelmed with all that I saw. In the middle of rural India, here was an eye hospital doing amazing work. Children and adults receiving first-rate eye care for free. Highly skilled surgeons performed seemingly endless numbers of cataract surgeries daily. All patients received up to date preoperative testing, antibiotic drops and detailed instructions about their surgery. Post-operatively, patients were instructed on how to care for their operated eye and given the proper eye drops, eye shield and sunglasses. Follow up is very important to the Srikirana Institute and all these patients would be brought back at 1 week and 1 month for their follow-up visit. Truly an amazing feat as these patients live hours away with no transportation of their own. I was very impressed.

The nursing staff was extremely dedicated and willing to learn. I was very impressed with the way all the staff worked so well together. They were proud to work at the Srikirana Institute and it showed in their work. I lectured daily on topics such as principles of sterile technique, handling of surgical instruments, ophthalmic diseases, infection and universal precautions. Since I could not speak Telugu, Dr's Madhavi Madhu and Gopalakrishna kindly translated for me. They listened attentively and helped stimulate questions and discussion following the lectures.

By the end of my stay I was well adjusted to the heat and the simple and uncomplicated way of life. The MSMF's staff were extremely kind to me and helped me learn and understand the local customs. I even wore a sari for the last day which was much appreciated by the local

people and hospital staff. The school children giggled in delight as I accompanied them home on their school bus. "Oh Madame, you look very beautiful in your Sari" Ever polite, these darling children kept my attention each day as they studied for their government exams to be held at the end of the month. The school was very well organized and the children were not only instructed in their lessons but also learned the importance of hygiene, nutrition, and the environment that they live in and must protect. The MSMF's dedication to these school children is incredible and they are helping so many of these rural children gain a solid education. It was certainly a memory that I brought home and shared with my children and family.

I am certainly most grateful for the experiences that I gained from the MSMF. It has left a profound impact on me that such a well run and worthy project is truly doing the work that it sought out to perform. With the help from donations this project will continue to grow and to perform at a high level. It is truly making a difference to those less fortunate in rural Andhra Pradesh. I certainly commend the work that is being done and hope that one day I may return to this truly unique experience.

Rosemary J Bickerton
Clinical Manager

University of Ottawa, Eye Institute

Vision 2020 – The Right For Sight

What is new about the WHO's Global Initiative?

1. The common objective of eliminating avoidable blindness by 2020 will enable all partners to work in a focused and coordinated manner.
2. Vision 2020 will further develop and strengthen the primary eye health care approach to the problem of avoidable blindness.
3. The initiative will seek broad regional alliances and, eventually, a global partnership for eye health.

Srikirana is participating in the Vision 2020 project in true spirit.

Appeal for your continuing support ...

We urge you to continue to support generously 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.

MSMF, 23 Mary Dr., Gloucester, ON, K1V 1G9, Canada
email: msmf@cyberus.ca - Phone: (613) 523 5413.