



# Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation

( A Registered Canadian Charity )

**Spring Issue**

**MSMF Newsletter**

**May 2001**

## *Greetings from MSMF*

Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation (MSMF) is a non-profit charitable organization in Canada aiming to promote rural community development in India through education and vocational training, health care, and emergency relief.

Collaborating with its counterpart, Sankurathri Foundation (SF), a non-profit charitable organization based in Kakinada, India, the work in progress includes eye care and blindness control programs at Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology (SIO), free primary education program at Sarada Vidyalayam and occasionally responding to local emergencies such as cyclones along the coastal area.

Chandra Sankurathri left Canada in 1988 to personally manage the projects at SF in Kakinada and because of his dedication, the growth has been steady and the quality of work excellent.

## **Chandra Sankurathri's Visit to Canada...**

This year, Chandra is arriving on 20 June and returning at the end of July. After the Public Engagement programs in Ottawa on 25 & 26 June, he is planning to attend meetings of the Telugu Association of North America (TANA) held in Philadelphia at the end of June. The visits to other Canadian Cities will take place following his US visit.

## **Ottawa Program Announcement ...**

Deepti Gupta, no stranger to Ottawa, has kindly agreed to give a benefit performance in support of the services MSMF provides to about 2 million rural poor living in 550 villages around Kakinada, India.

The program, An Evening of Kathak (an elegant dance form of India), with Deepti Gupta, is presented on two days – Monday, 25 June and Tuesday, 26 June, in the National Arts Centre Fourth Stage. The performance begins at 8 PM on both days. *For information please call (613) 723 4752.*

## **News from Kakinada**

### **Sarada Vidyalayam ...**

The school is in recess now for summer. Another batch of grade 7 students, all 15 of them, have been successful, 11 in first class, in their attempt to enter into grade 8, in the public schools. When Sarada reopens in June, we are hoping to have again about 100 students in grades 1 to 7.

For the ninth year in a row, students, parents and staff of St. Gregory Catholic School in Nepean, Ontario, have raised funds towards the educational needs of students and staff at Sarada Vidyalayam. Their commitment is commendable and the friendship between the two schools is growing stronger.

### **Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology**

We have completed one year in the three year project, Progressive Elimination of Avoidable Blindness due to Cataract and Glaucoma, supported by Help the Aged Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The annual report shows that we are achieving and in some cases exceeding the set targets.

Another project, Prevention of Childhood Blindness, supported by CIDA,

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### **Toronto Program Announcement ...**

The program in Toronto for the benefit of MSMF is a generous contribution by Anuradha Nainpally from Austin, Texas, and Bageshree Vaze from Toronto. While Ms. Nainpally is a Bharata Natyam exponent, Ms. Vaze will complement the program with Kuchipudi and Kathak.

This is an excellent opportunity to witness the three beautiful traditional styles of Indian Classical dance.

The performance on Friday, 27 July, in the Betty Oliphant Theatre, starts at 7:30 PM. *For information please call (416) 588 8612.*

**CO-OP Student from the U of Ottawa**

Jaideep Mukerji, a communications student spent ten weeks in Kakinada volunteering at Srikirana Institute of Ophthalmology. He says, "When I arrived in Kakinada, India, on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001, I was nervous with excitement and unsure of what to expect. I had come to MSMF for a two-month period in

order to work on two projects and wondered what my life would be like in a place so different than anything I was used to.

My first project was to help create a co-op program at MSMF to allow students from the University of Ottawa to volunteer for one semester every year. The second project was to shoot a video on the work MSMF did with the poor in order to provide information, publicity and raise funds.

I had a lot of work to get done in a short amount of time so almost as soon as I arrived, I started working. The first thing I did was to meet with Dr. Chandra Sankurathri and Mr. Madhu Kutumbaka. They explained to me the work MSMF did, gave me a tour of Srikirana Institute of Ophthalmology and Sarada Vidyalayam school and listened patiently as I asked question after question.

The very next day I went to my first MSMF eye camp. It turns out I picked a good day to attend, the camp was the biggest one in MSMF's history. Over 700 people showed up of which about 140 needed surgery. Seeing the work that took place at the camp turned out to be a most fitting introduction to MSMF's work.

The amount of work that went into making that camp a success was a strong indicator of the overall commitment MSMF has to achieve its mission. From the doctors, to the nurses and even the bus drivers, I was simply amazed at how hard every one worked. I was also impressed at the fact that no matter how busy or hectic things got the patients were treated with the utmost respect. I had

never seen anything like that, the impression it made on me was a very profound and lasting one.

My experience at MSMF was truly unlike anything I had ever done. I ate wonderful food, lived with MSMF's staff, slowly learned Telugu and participated in local customs. All the while, as I spent more time at MSMF seeing what went on there, I continued to gain a deeper appreciation for how special MSMF's work is and how much it benefits the local community.

Two months can go by very quickly, it seemed that before I knew it I was off again to come home. Although leaving was not easy for me, I left feeling grateful to have lived an experience that so few Canadians get to partake in. MSMF's staff truly made me welcome, and although my work term is done, I am already looking forward to my next chance to go back to MSMF."

MSMF appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Co-Operative Education Program, provided by the University of Ottawa.

***Srikirana ... Continued from page 1***

started in January 2001, began with two workshops to Ophthalmologists, family physicians and pediatricians regarding children's eye problems.



The workshops were conducted by a very well known pediatric ophthalmologist, Dr. Eugene M. Helveston, Professor Emeritus at University of Indiana, U.S.A.

Looking at the achievements, six months into the project, the progress looks good.

**Appeal for your continuing support ...**

*We urge you to continue to support our education, eye care and relief programs generously. Donations to MSMF qualify for tax credits in Canada. Donations to our partner organization, Eye Foundation of America (1420 Anderson Road, 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](mailto:msmf@cyberus.ca) - Phone: (613) 523 5413.