



Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation

(A Registered Canadian Charity)

Autumn Issue

MSMF Newsletter

October 1999

MSMF Is Ten Years Old



Manjari

Sankurathri Memorial Foundation (MSMF), is proud that it has provided ten years of dedicated service to rural poor in the coastal area around Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh, India, and looks forward to continue to serve for many more years.

Dr. Chandra

Sankurathri, the Founder of MSMF, from Nepean, Ontario, spent three years around Kakinada exploring ways to alleviate the burden of poverty. This resulted in starting a free school, Sarada Vidyalayam, in 1992, for children from rural poor families. A major contribution to this effort came when Dr. V. K. Raju, President of Eye Foundation of America, joined forces and lead the way by starting Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology in 1993. Now, while the School opens the intellectual eyes of children metaphorically, the Institute truly eliminates avoidable blindness and restores and preserves the eye sight of one and all without prejudice of any kind.

Many of you know about MSMF from Chandra directly or from the many interviews on TV and Radio, and articles published in the Newspapers: the Globe And Mail, the Ottawa Citizen, the Edmonton Journal, the Nanaimo Harbour City Star, the India Abroad, to name a few.

From MSMF, we thank all of you for sharing our concerns and supporting our efforts to alleviate rural poverty. Some of the Organizations, who are providing sustenance to our programs and strength to our Institutions are:

- . Eye Foundation of America, Morgantown, WV
- . Eye Care for the Adirondacks, Plattsburgh, NY
- . Help the Aged (Canada), and the Canadian International Development Agency
- . Christoffel Blinden Mission, Germany
- . St. Gregory School, Nepean, ON
- . Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
- . Elmridge School, Gloucester, ON
- . Asha Arizona, Phoenix, AZ
- . Rotary International

Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology

The WHO Fact Sheet (February 99) reads:

"Today, there is an estimated 180 million people worldwide who are visually disabled. Of these, between 40 and 45 million persons are blind and, by definition, cannot walk about unaided. They are usually in need of vocational and/or social support.

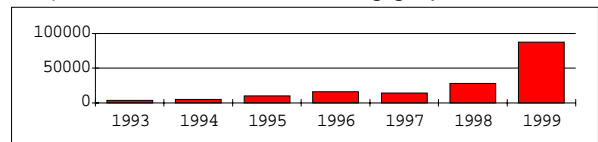
The loss of sight causes enormous human suffering for the affected individuals and their families. It also represents a public health, social and economic problem for countries, especially the developing ones, where 9 out of 10 of the world's blind live. In fact, around 60% of them reside in sub-Saharan Africa, China and India."

The 1995 WHO Bulletin published that the major causes of bilateral blindness in India are, Cataract (51%), Glaucoma (13%), Trachoma (10%) and the remaining 26% due to several other causes. The global distribution of blindness by age shows that nearly 90% of the blind are from 45+ age group.

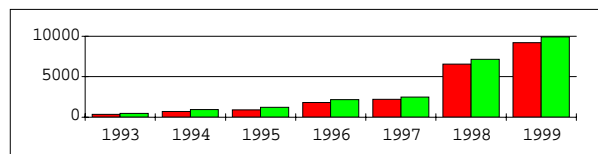
In rural Andhra Pradesh, India, while 1.62 % of the population agonize from cataracts, 3.5% suffer with glaucoma. The cataract onset age is about 40 and everyone over 35 is advised to have regular checkups for glaucoma.

For this region around Kakinada, with a rural population of over 2 million poor living in 550 villages, Srikiran is a highly accessible eye care facility striving to progressively eliminate avoidable blindness.

Since Srikiran was started in 1993, its outpatient number has grown steadily (to 90,000* in 1999), as seen from the following graphic.



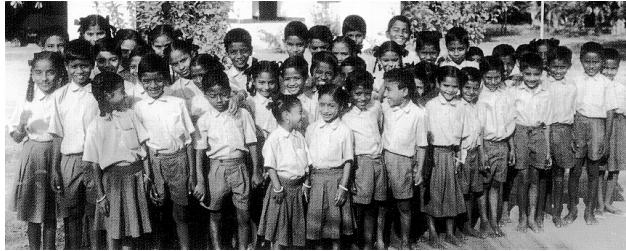
Since 1993, the increase in the total number of cataract surgeries done (10,000* in 1999) and the number of free surgeries (9,250* in 1999) from that total, which is about 92.5%, are shown below.



* The 1999 totals are from 9 month averages.

News from Kakinada ...

After Summer holidays, Sarada Vidyalayam was reopened this year in June. A new batch of 24 children, 11 girls and 13 boys, were admitted into Grade 1. Also, instruction in Grade 7 began for the first time this year. Those, who graduated from grade 6, were admitted into grade 7. The total enrolment of the school is 98, 53 girls and 45 boys. They are taught by 10 teachers.



Thanks to our visitors ...

From Houston, Texas, Dr. Chittenraju Vanguri, and Mrs. Padmasri and Mr. Raja Choudary Mutyala, visited our Foundation in Kakinada. Dr. Vanguri is an author and a prominent member of the Telugu literary community. Mrs. Padmasri Mutyala is the President Elect of the Telugu Association of North America (TANA).

We are very much encouraged by their visit and their concern and commitment to support the humanitarian work in progress.

Fund-Raiser ...



Ms. Deepti Gupta, a well known Kathak exponent from Ottawa, who now lives in Delhi, India, gave a benefit concert in December 1998, Sufi Songs - A Solo Performance, in Southam Hall, Carleton U, Ottawa.

His Excellency, Shree Rajanikanta Verma, High Commissioner for India, and his wife Shrimati Mrinalini Verma were the chief guests.

We thank Deepti and her friend Ms. Saveeta Sharma for their compassion.

Thanks to our volunteers ...

This year, we had two young volunteers: Ms. Nagasree Atmuri from Winnipeg, Manitoba and Ms. Vandana Parnandi from Ottawa, Ontario.

They both enjoyed their work in the eye hospital, in the screening camps and with children in the school. We enjoyed having them and it has been a valuable experience for all of us.

Ms. Diane Kennedy, a software specialist from Kingston, Ontario, spent three months with us developing the Institute's database system.

Mrs. Lakshmi and Dr. Ram Murthy from Peterborough, Ontario, spent about 4 months. Dr. Murthy taught Math in the school and also helped Chandra with his work. Mrs. Lakshmi Murthy, a computer specialist, developed procedures for managing the computer centre, trained the staff and also completed and installed the database software Ms. Kennedy had developed.

Nepean Days ...



Vandana Parnandi, Chandra, Suman Chagarlamudi

This year, Chandra Sankurathri arrived in Ottawa on 25 May. In the next 40 days, before he returned on 6 July, he traveled extensively across the United States and Canada : Ottawa - New Orleans - Houston (Dallas, Beaumont) - Denver - Nanaimo - Edmonton - Winnipeg - Toronto - Ottawa - Plattsburgh - Ottawa.

Every where he went, he renewed his earlier contacts and made some new ones. He addressed gatherings: in Houston, Nanaimo, Edmonton, and Winnipeg, visited schools: Park Avenue and Hammond Bay Schools in Nanaimo, and St. Gregory and Elmridge Schools in Ottawa, and was interviewed by reporters: the Harbour City Star and the Shore Cable TV in Nanaimo, BC. He met friends, supporters and well-wishers in Ottawa on two occasions: at the Nepean Days and the MSMF Open House. It is indeed very gratifying for him to see that his humanitarian work is well appreciated and generously supported.

Please send us your comments and concerns.
MSMF, 23 Mary Dr., Gloucester, ON., Canada.