

MISSION FOR VISION



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Chairman's Message

Message from Murali Krishnamurthy

Dear friends,

Thanks to your enthusiastic support, Sankara Eye Foundation, USA (SEF) is growing leaps and bounds. Our revenue until July 2003 has already surpassed the annual revenue for the year 2002 and we have five more months to go this year. SEF is now more than 250 volunteers strong and the SEF family is growing. Our donor base will exceed 10,000 families very soon. Sankara Eye Society, India (SES) is also growing. Our Sankara Eye Hospital in Coimbatore will perform anywhere from 45,000 to 50,000 FREE Eye Surgeries this year.

SEF events are happening all across the USA. 'Kanmaniye' in the San Francisco Bay Area, 'Yeh Safar' in San Diego, 'SEF Summer Fest' in Seattle and our first Company Picnic in the San Francisco Bay Area were well executed and very successful.

TANA 2003 in San Jose, California during the July 4th weekend was our biggest event so far and it gave SEF the much needed exposure amongst the Telugu Community from all over the USA. On behalf of SEF, I sincerely thank the TANA 2003 Committee, Convener Mr. Jayaram Komati, and the TANA volunteers for this great opportunity. Many thanks to the energetic and hard working Focus AP team, and the many groups within SEF who supported the ground level execution -- we were able to raise awareness of the magnitude of blindness in the state of Andhra Pradesh and how the upcoming Sankara Eye Hospital near Guntur can help.

The Hospital construction is on schedule and is set for inauguration in January 2004. Our commitment to this project is \$1.25 Million out of which we have raised \$500,000 so far. I am happy to report that Dr. Raja Veeraiha Kodali and his family attended TANA 2003 where they came to know about the Sankara Eye Hospital near Guntur and they are sponsoring the General Ward for the FREE patients. They are our single largest donors so far and are donating \$100,000. Pranams to the Kodali family of Pennsylvania.

TANA Foundation conducted a fundraising event in Detroit on August 17, 2003 to raise funds for the Sankara Eye Hospital near Guntur. Thanks to Mr. Rao Chalasani and other members of TANA Foundation, more than \$28,000 was raised for Sankara Eye Hospital at this event.

Dr. R.V. Ramani, founder of the Sankara Eye Society, India, along with the leading surgeon Dr. Jagadeesh Reddy came to attend TANA 2003 and gave lectures in various sessions. Meetings were also held in Dallas, Beaumont, Seattle, Chicago, Bloomington, and New Jersey where Dr. Ramani inspired many volunteers from all over the country.

SEF is actively spreading its wings across the USA. It is very heartening to see volunteers from all over the country keeping Independence Day booths in San Jose, Los Angeles, Dallas, Austin, Houston, Chicago, Seattle and Phoenix. I request all of you to continue supporting us all the way until we achieve "Vision 20/20 by 2020" for all of our dear Bharat Mata.

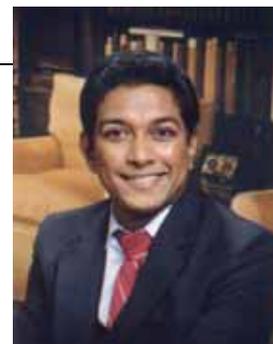
1,000 families \$1,000:

Even though our revenue will almost double this year, we need more! Yes. To continue marching towards our lofty Goal of 'Vision 20/20 by 2020', we need to successfully complete our current project. We want to complete the construction of Sankara Eye Hospital near Guntur by January 2004 and start our FREE eye surgeries immediately. This success will also give us the confidence to take on the next state without much delay.

The project cost is \$1.25 Million out of which we have raised \$500,000 so far and we still need to raise \$750,000 by end of December 2003. Funds are needed urgently and this is an earnest appeal to you to become a founding member of the Hospital by donating \$1,000 and have your name or the name of a dear one on the Hospital wall of Founders. Members of a family or a group of friends can collectively donate \$1,000 and designate a name for the Hospital wall of founders.

Thank you.

Murali Krishnamurthy
(Chairman, Sankara Eye Foundation, USA)



Eye Camp in Andhra Pradesh

15-year old Master Sateesh is from a family belonging to District Khammam of Andhra Pradesh - a family which is well below the poverty line. One thing that Sateesh liked to do was going to school, where he not only could mix with other children but also get exposed to interesting things by way of learning.

Studying in the 10th standard, he was a bright and enthusiastic student, always curious to learn. One day during recess, while playing with a pen something gave way. The next thing he knew his right eye was injured and he was suffering in pain. Progressively, his vision reduced and he was unable to continue his schooling. He was torn between his desire to go to school and his sheer inability to do so because of impaired vision.

In March 2003 their parents heard that some hospital in Tamil Nadu was coming to their town/village and would treat patients with eye problems. They decided to take Sateesh to the camp - which to them looked like a village fair. They could see a banner reading Sankara Eye Centre, Coimbatore.

When the Doctors at the camp examined the boy and told them he needed surgery the parents were devastated because they could not afford the fees. And when the Doctor told them that they would not have to pay for it, they just did not believe that to be true. In April 2003, the team went to Khammam for an out reach eye screening program. Sateesh was identified in this camp. At Sankara Eye Centre, Coimbatore, he was operated for cataract with IOL implant, cared for and fed. And the best part was, he had his sight restored. His happiness knew no bounds. He could see... He kept saying "now, I will go back to school" in his native Telugu. And truly, his parents did not have to spend a rupee for all that the hospital did.

Today not only has his sight been restored, but a brighter way of life has opened up for him and his family because he can pursue his studies and later possibly become gainfully employed.



Dr. Raja Veeraiah Kodali and his family attended TANA 2003 in San Jose, California, where they came to know about the Sankara Eye Hospital near Guntur.

They are sponsoring the General Ward for the FREE patients.

They are our single largest donors so far and are donating \$100,000. Thanks to the Kodali family of Pennsylvania.



Every year the Livermore Shiva-Vishnu Temple designates a portion of its annual budget for Human Services activities through its Grant-in-Aid program to non-profit organizations.

Sankara Eye Foundation was one of the few grantees this year. A special function was organized on June 1st, 2003 by the Temple to award the grants. Our volunteers received the award from Chief Guest, Janet Lockhart, Mayor, City of Dublin.

Our thanks to the Temple committee for recognizing our mission to eradicate curable blindness.

SEF thanks the TIE organization for giving us exposure in the TIE 2003 conference in Santa Clara, CA.



San Francisco Bay Area: Our reach out, your support

This year has been a great year for SEF booths. We have had extensive involvement from all our dedicated volunteers and have been able to set up nearly 35 booths to date at various cultural and community events in the bay area.

SEF booths at TANA 2003, Zee Heritage Festival of India in Pleasanton, Sunnyvale Art and Wine Festival, Sudha Raghunathan's concert by SIFA, ILP race in Shoreline Park in Mountain View, Bharat Natyam by Lasya Dance Academy, TIE conference, Bay Area Tamil Manram, Sunnyvale and Livermore Temple and EkalVidyalaya events were much appreciated by the bay area residents.

SEF booths at such events have now become customary and exemplary. The booths are well represented by committed volunteers. Because of such booths, volunteer sign ups and donations are steadily increasing. Our booths at such events have also got good coverage by local TV channels.

SEF thanks the sponsors of Kanmaniye



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One Stop Shop for the South Asian Community in Bay Area



Madras Café, 408-737-2323

SEF garners Kudos and Support from TANA for their 20/20 vision program and Hospital Construction in Andhra Pradesh

Focus AP Team

The 25th anniversary celebration of the Telugu Association of North America (TANA) was celebrated in grand style from July 3rd to 5th in San Jose, CA. Over 7000 Telugu people attended this premier event from all parts of the US, Canada, Mexico, UK and included invited guests from India. It was indeed a wonderful opportunity for SEF to collaborate and work with TANA in spreading the SEF mission as well as informing the community about the construction of the SEF hospital on the Guntur-Vijayawada highway. Just as TANA was in preparation for 12 months or more, the preparation by SEF volunteers over the last 9 months working side-by-side with TANA volunteers paid off!

SEF's objective in participating in this mega event was to raise awareness and educate the Indian community about eradicating curable blindness in India. A key ingredient of the SEF strategy involves building community eye care hospitals in areas of need to serve as a base for SEF's award winning rural outreach program. This program run by our sister organization in India has conducted rural outreach camps every week for the last 25 years!! In just the last year, about 40,000 free cataract surgeries have been done by the hospital in Coimbatore. The new hospital under construction in Andhra Pradesh will replicate the infrastructure and best known methods to serve the community within the state of Andhra Pradesh.



Sri Venkaiah Naidu, Chief Guest of TANA 2003 visited the Sankara Eye Foundation booth and appreciated their work in the area of community Eye care. In his keynote address he called for community support to help complete the eye care hospital in Andhra Pradesh, "Sankara Eye Foundation is a very disciplined and devoted organization. They have been doing good work in Coimbatore, providing free community eye care. They are expanding their free services to Andhra Pradesh, and coming up with an eye hospital near Guntur. It is a very noble cause. Every one should encourage such efforts. Of all kinds of donations, 'donation for vision' is most important. I urge all the people, particularly the Telugu community to support the cause of setting up this free eye care institute. The institute benefits the people of Andhra Pradesh for generations to come."

The level of commitment from TANA towards successful completion of the AP hospital exceeded SEF expectations and as Shri. Jayaram Komati, TANA2003 Convener said, "I am extremely impressed with the operations and facilities at the Coimbatore hospital. I have never seen any hospital with so much dedication and excellent service doing it all free of cost. I am very happy that Sankara Eye Society is coming up with their next project in Andhra Pradesh. I appeal to all Telugu people to come forward and help complete the hospital construction."



While this event has given the community an opportunity to learn more about the work that needs to be done in India, it is important for them to come forward and support SEF with donations. SEF's program of "1000 Families, 1000 dollars" will require the community to come forward and as family (or friends and family) donate \$1000.

Donors, families, or groups contributing \$1000 will be recognized on the hospital's "wall of founders". In addition, there are other opportunities for our friends to participate and support SEF. Please visit our web site <<http://www.giftofvision.org/>> for more information.

The SEF organization and volunteers thank the Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA), TANA and TANA 2003 organizers and participants for their support of SEF's mission to eradicate curable blindness in India by year 2020.

SEF Southern California chapter is growing quickly. We have had 13 booths so far (till Aug) this year. A lot of new volunteers have signed up.

A dinner banquet was organised when Dr. Ramani came to LA in July this year. The response was very encouraging.



Upcoming Booths / Events

- * Booth at the AAPI annual banquet - October 4, 2003 - New York / New Jersey
- * Diwali and Ganesh Chaturti Booths
- * Our first fundraiser is scheduled for March 27th 2004

If you would like to volunteer email sef_scal@yahoo.com

We thank State Bank of India (Mr. Chandni) for sponsoring our Independence day booth





I'm Sharada Dharmasankar. I'm 11 years old, and I live in Aurora, IL. My father told me about the Sankara Eye Foundation sometime ago. I thought it was great that people were helping the blind that couldn't get proper medical care in India. My parents both encouraged me to collect donations to help the Sankara Eye Foundation in achieving their goal, 20/20 vision by 2020.

I started out by getting donations from family, and friends. Most of them were very willing to help; the others said they would donate once they had the opportunity. I got the idea of spreading word of the Sankara Eye Foundation at school. I had a few conversations with the principal, and I also had to get permission from the teacher. My teacher said it was ok, and I gave a speech about the Sankara Eye Foundation and what it did. I set up a donations jar, and pretty soon, I collected about \$50.00, which was pretty good for the class. I told everyone about the organization, and plan on putting together ways to collect more donations.

My good friend Vamika Venkatesan has also joined SEF. She is an excellent volunteer. She can work independently and also in a team. Vamika and I plan on doing a lot more. At functions, we can give people the papers about the SEF. We could put up notices at the Temple, which we also plan on doing. The best way to collect donations is by word of mouth. It's the best way to get people's attention and it allows them to have their questions answered. I think the Sankara Eye Foundation is a great program, and I will continue giving the program donations to help it accomplish its goals.

**Summer Feast - Seattle
Suveen and S.R. Nair**

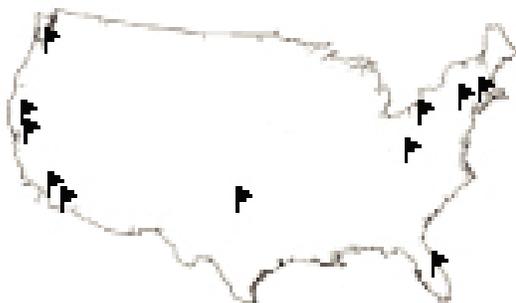
SEF volunteers in Seattle organized a picnic with the aim of creating awareness of SEF's goals. The event, titled Sankara Summer Fest 2003, was held in Marymoor Park, Redmond on Sunday, July 13, 2003. Volunteers served food for a nominal price.

Various games and activities were organized for children, and adults played volleyball and cricket. A donation booth was setup with fliers containing information on the various activities of Sankara Eye Society and SEF. Some visitors donated generously. There was a turnout of around 100 people who paid an entry fee of \$5 each for participating in the event. The event was a success, given the fact that the Seattle chapter of SEF is very new and the number of volunteers very small. Though the event was organized primarily to increase awareness of SEF and its goals, the event also served as a fund raiser. The Seattle chapter has plans to conduct different events throughout the year and hopes more volunteers will join its efforts to make the "Vision 20/20 by the Year 2020" a reality.



Start a SEF Vounteer Network in your state.
For more information please send an e-mail to info@giftofvision.org.

**For vounteer opportunities please call
1-866-SANKARA**



SEF remembers Sreeraman..



It is with great sadness that we share the loss of Mr. T.R. Sreeraman. He died in a car accident in Los Angeles on 16th August, 2003.

Mr. Sreeraman was the first treasurer/accountant for SEF, and he was one of the first five members. One can still see some of the traditions that he brought to SEF- being meticulous about finance, keeping track of every penny and being very prompt about responses.

He was also a dear friend to many of Sankara volunteers. He is remembered as kind, smart, extremely honest & straightforward and hardworking.

A day of surgeries and annadhanam was dedicated to the memory of Sreeraman in Sankara Hospital, Coimbatore on August 19, 2003. SEF remembers him fondly and sends our sympathies and support to his family. We share their loss.

Yeh Safar event in San Diego. (A JOURNEY THROUGH MUSIC AND DANCE)

Niranjan Krishnamoorthy



The first ever SEF Fund Raiser in San Diego!!! . A great event organized by Amish Patel and his friends on Saturday the 10th of May 2003. After attending an SEF meeting last November, Amish and his friends have been relentlessly pursuing to organize this great event and put in so much of hardwork, time and efforts for SEF. Kudos to the young energetic team to have organized this in a very professional and splendid way.

The total number of attendees were about 1100 people. The event was organized at the San Diego Symphony hall. A great hall for this event. We kept a booth in the front of the hall near the ticket counter. The programs began at 7.15pm and were beautifully coordinated. Just before halftime, SEF video was shown on a large screen and an announcement was made on what motivated these youngsters to organize this wonderful event. We had a huge crowd coming to our booth for donation as well as inquiring about SEF.

We heard a lot of great reviews from the public. They gave us great comments like "You guys are doing a wonderful job. Keep up the good work" etc..

All in all, the program was a great success and the fact that we had about 1100 new people knowing about SEF, our word could successfully be spread in this southern california community . I would like to take this opportunity to thank Amish Patel and all his friends who made this event possible and made it a phenomenal success.

Dr.Ramani & Dr.Reddy visit United States

S.R.Nair

Dr. R. V. Ramani, the founder and Managing Trustee of Sankara Eye Society (SES), and Dr. J. K. Reddy, the Trust's foremost eye surgeon, recently undertook a whirlwind tour of the United States. Landing in San Francisco on July 3, 2003, they kicked off their tour with addresses to the Telugu Association of North America (TANA), at the 14th North American Telugu Conference held in San Jose.

Reiterating the goals of SES, Dr. Ramani said, "**We at Sankara Eye Society believe that every human being deserves perfect vision. Our goal is to treat all patients with empathy, irrespective of socio-economic background. We would like our work and services to spread like light without boundaries. To spread the light to remotest corners, we have to replicate in other places, what we did in Coimbatore.**"

Urging the delegates to support SES, TANA2003 convener Mr. Jayaram Komati said, "I am extremely impressed with the operations and facilities at the Coimbatore hospital. I have never seen any hospital with so much dedication and excellent service."

The duo was interviewed by several media organizations including India Post TV and Voices of India Radio show in the Bay Area.

Dr.Ramani also visited Beaumont, TX to meet with well known ophthalmologist Dr. Raj Singla, a proposed SEF advisory committee member. Visited several of Dr.Singla's clinics.

He then flew to Chicago and addressed volunteers and supporters at Buffalo Grove, IL and DePaul University, IL.

He met and addressed volunteers and friends at Burrige, Bloomington, Naperville, and New Jersey.



Dry Eye - Some information

Information courtesy - <http://www.eye-care.org.uk>

What is it?

Tears serve to lubricate the eye and they are produced around the clock, but when insufficient moisture is produced stinging, burning, scratchiness and other symptoms are experienced and may be referred to as Dry Eye, Keratitis Sicca, Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (KCS) or Xerophthalmia.

When we blink, tears form a film which spreads over the eye, making the surface smooth and optically clear and enabling good vision. There are three layers in the thin film of tears: an oily layer, a watery layer and a layer of mucus, each with specific function. The outermost, oily layer is produced by small glands at the edge of the eyelid (meibomian glands) and the main purpose of this layer is to smooth the tear surface and reduce evaporation. The middle, watery layer, is produced by small glands scattered through the conjunctiva, (the delicate membrane lining the inside of the eyelid) and by the large lacrimal (tear) gland. This layer cleanses the eye and washes away foreign particles or irritants. The innermost layer consists of mucus which allows the water layer to spread evenly over the surface of the eye. Without mucus, tears would not adhere to the eye.

What causes it?

Dry eye is caused when the tear gland produces insufficient tears. This can happen as part of the normal ageing process, and is more common among women. So although the condition is not common it tends to occur with increasing age, but it is not always noticed because the effect of dry eye tends to balance another age-related change; poor tear drainage. The result of this is a balance between not making too much lacrimal fluid (tears) and not being able to drain away much lacrimal fluid.

The main causes of an insufficient film of tears are deterioration of lacrimal tissue, dysfunction of the Meibomian gland destabilising the film of tears or a blockage in the excretory ducts of the lacrimal gland. People with Sjogren's syndrome are at risk of dry eye as part of a more systemic problem involving salivary glands and other sites of mucous membrane. Salivary gland involvement produces a dry mouth as well. This syndrome and dry eyes generally, may be found in people with rheumatoid arthritis.

Effects of the condition:

In the early stages there is an increase in mucus strands and as the tear film breaks down, the mucin layer becomes contaminated. Where this contaminated matter cannot be dispersed it tends to move with blinking. Mucin is a substance that dries very quickly and rehydrates very slowly. People with dry eye rarely have a sensation that the eye is dry but instead experience irritation, burning, a sensation of having a foreign body in the eye, mucus discharge and possible temporary blurring of vision.

Avoiding the following situations will minimise your risk of Dry Eye :

1. Reduce the dry atmosphere caused by central heating by using a humidifier.
2. Avoid car heaters, particularly at face level.
3. Sit away from direct heat such as gas or electric fires.
4. Use eyedrops just before activities which cause additional pain or discomfort such as television, reading, sewing and writing.
5. Remember to blink regularly, particularly when doing close or concentrated work. Blink properly with full lid closure, not "half" blinking.
6. Avoid smoky atmospheres.

Progress in Construction Work - Guntur Hospital



Hospital construction is expected to be completed by January 2004.

Slab concreting of both the ground and the first floors of the north block completed.

Slab concreting of the ground floor of the south block completed.

Slab concreting of the corridor area is in progress. Brick work in both the north and the south block completed upto 95%

90% of PCC concreting the flooring area in the north block ground floor completed.

Power House and Generator shed : Concreting of the roof of Power house and the generator shed would be completed by 25th August.

Sump : Concreting of the sump is complete..

Canteen Block : CRS work for the wall in the basement floor upto the ground level completed.

Pillars in the basement floor raised upto the roof level.

CHICAGO - Volunteer Network update

Anita Chatterjee & Kavita Ramanathan

There has been a steady growth in the number of SEF volunteers in Chicago and surrounding areas - thanks to the advertisements in Namaste America, Penn Masala fundraiser in January 2003 and the visit by SES Chairman Dr. Ramani and SEF Chairman K Muralidharan in July 2003.

The presentations by Dr. Ramani and K. Muralidharan was a source of inspiration to the existing and the new volunteers. We are now very aggressively planning to spread awareness about SEF. We are also working with DePaul University to implement a study abroad program that would include volunteer work at the SEF hospitals in India.

Some booths being recently held :

1. During May 2003, we had a very successful booth at the Gujarati Samaj.
2. On Aug 3 - On the occasion of the Balaji Temple Summer Picnic at Aurora, IL, the highlight of our booth was that two young girls **Sharada** and **Vamika** volunteered, handing out newsletters and directing people to the SEF booth.
3. Aug 10 - Summer Mela at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago, Lemont IL.
4. Aug 16 - Booth - during the India Independence Day parade celebrations

Some events being planned currently are :

1. Booth at the mayor's office in Chicago - as a result of the dinner with Dr. Ramani as a key note speaker, Dr. J Ross has agreed to provide us the same.
2. September - The Bengali association of Greater Chicago has invited us to speak at the annual Durga Puja .
3. Fall 2003 - We are planning to organize a Talent Competition as our next fund rasier event.

DALLAS - Need volunteers

Sailaja Seethamraju

We have been actively involved in spreading the word in the Dallas area about SEF's mission to eradicate curable blindness in India by the year 2020.

We had successful booths in Richardson - The First South Asian Bridal Extravaganza, Women's Forum by Indian Association of North Texas, Ugadhi Celebrations of Kannada Mallighe Sangha.

We are actively looking for volunteers in the Dallas area. Please send us an e-mail to info@giftofvision.org if you are interested.

Donate Your Old Vehicle to SEF

Over the last 2 years our Vehicle Donation Program has picked up a lot of momentum. The program was started in 2000 and every year the number of donations has increased significantly.

We are on track to exceed our goals for this year. We thank our donors for their generous support. For more information, please send an email to cargiving@yahoo.com.



Dr. Ramani speaking at the Los Angeles SEF dinner meeting SEF SoCal Dinner Nite, July 6 - 2003

SEF thanks the sponsors of Kanmaniye

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Kanmaniye...: Anthems for Vision

Kumar Iyengar, Sandhya Girish & Muckai Girish

Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF) successfully held another sold-out fundraiser, Kanmaniye, a Tamil light music program by Thillana Productions, a popular bay area group known for its energetic and crowd-pleasing performances, on April 27, 2003 at Chabot College in Hayward, CA. This event's title, Kanmaniye, literally means Pupil of the Eye and was chosen to reflect Sankara Eye Foundation's "Mission for Vision".

The arriving audiences were led to background sounds of a Chennai bus terminal interleaved with messages about the prevalent blindness in India. The stage and the lobby were decorated with movie posters specially imported from India depicting a street corner bus stop. The program started promptly at 4:59 PM and the talented Thillana musicians took the audience through an evening of great melodies and tunes. The music was enhanced with suave dance moves and interwoven with a skit about a US returned bachelor seeking a bride.

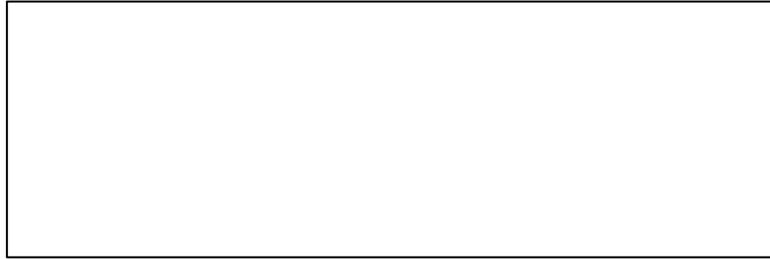
The Thillana team was highly motivated for the cause and presented a composition dedicated to SEF.

Throughout the show SEF continued to inspire and motivate the audience in its mission to eradicate curable blindness in India. With this concert SEF is getting closer to its goal of Vision 20/20 by Year 2020.

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If you have questions, please contact us at
1-866-SANKARA or email us at
info@giftofvision.org.

SEF, USA thanks you for
your kind donation.

Your Gift of Vision



Master Salman Khan is a poor village lad from Vaniyambadi and born of a consanguineous marriage. Both his parents are daily wage earners.

Though three of his sisters and brothers are normal, Salman was the unfortunate one who had reduced vision in both his eyes. Though he was managing with his school during early childhood, by the age of 7 he found it impossible to continue his studies and was confined to his home.

A kind neighbour informed his parents about the eye hospital from Coimbatore which conducted some kind of out-reach program for community eye care. Dressed in his best, Salman was brought to the camp at Vaniyambadi by his parents, for that Ray of Hope.

After investigations, the doctors recommended surgery - and the parents face fell. Where would they bring money for surgery? But the next thing the doctor told them surprised them: they don't have to pay. He was operated in his right eye at Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore. Within a few days, he had good vision in his right eye.

Having had the Gift of Vision in one eye, the parents brought the child this year to Sankara Eye Centre and got his left eye operated too.

Today, Salman is like any other child running around happily with perfect vision in both the eyes, thanks to that Gift of Vision from Sankara.