

EYE2EYE



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Murali's Corner

Warm greetings to all of you.

The recent American Kannada Koota Association (AKKA – www.akkaonline.org) convention held in Baltimore was a big success and it was a big breakthrough for our cause. Thanks to AKKA, the hosts Kaveri Kannada Sangha (www.kaveri-usa.org), Mr. B.V. Jagadeesh, and others, several thousand Kannadigas are now champions of our cause and the Sankara Eye Hospitals (SEH) coming up in Bangalore and Shimoga.

AKKA attendees helped raise more than \$55,000 for our new hospitals and there is still time for the attendees to avail of the remaining amount of Mr. B.V. Jagadeesh's generous matching funds of \$100,000. Each and every AKKA registration packet contained information on our projects in Karnataka.

Become a founding member today- help us complete the Sankara Eye Hospital and Training Center, Bangalore in ten months from now and lay the next stone in "Vision 20/20 by 2020!"

Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has approved our project plan. Construction has begun and we hope the hospital will be functional by the end of 2007.

In addition to the AKKA activities, our Focus Bangalore team also organized a grand walkathon (iWalk) in Mountain View, California attended by over 600 walkers and runners. Our team came up with several new initiatives and raised the bar on how SEF organizes events.

Our Focus Gujarat team is probably the busiest team at SEF now and they are trying new things and taking us to new levels – the two SEF Dandia events (one of them jointly with CLiPS) at the Santa Clara Convention Center were executed meticulously and attracted around 4,300 people who participated enthusiastically. They also organized a stand-up comedy show by Mr. Dinkar Mehta all over California.

We are very fortunate to be partners with AAHOA – Asian American Hotel Owners Association, CLiPS (Charotar Leua Patidar Samaj of Bay Area and other organizations) in achieving Vision 20/20 by 2020 for Gujarat. Together, we are making a great progress towards our goal.

Our Southern California team organized a Light Music show by Nitin Mukeshji which was very successful. Our Seattle team organized a successful 'Tollywood Thriller' and our Detroit team organized a Charity Garba.

Overall, our teams all over the country are working enthusiastically to take us closer to our vision for our dear India every day. Please come and join us and participate in this wonderful journey.

We still have to raise approximately a million dollars each for the new SEHs coming up in Anand (Gujarat), Bangalore and Shimoga (Karnataka). Become a founding member of any of these projects and help us complete them by the end of 2007. This will help us get closer to our goal, and start looking at other states in the Northern India.

Yours Sincerely,
Murali Krishnamurthy



Progress Report:

Focus AP Phase II: VUDA has approved the SEH Guntur expansion to add 100 more beds. Construction starts in December 2006.

Focus Gujarat: Land has been acquired and the rezoning from an agricultural status to a non-agricultural status is expected to be approved in November 2006. Planned start date for construction is January 2007.

Focus Karnataka (Shimoga): "Katha", the official recording and documentation of the property, has been completed and we hope to begin construction in December 2006.

Eye Care: (January – August 2006)

SEH Coimbatore – 27,893 FREE Eye Surgeries
SEH Guntur – 7,645 FREE Eye Surgeries
SEH Krishnankoil – 5,855 FREE Eye Surgeries

We are pleased to share with all of you a happy news. Our Institution has been conferred "The Dr. R.K. Seth Memorial Award for Excellence in Eye Care". This Award has been instituted at Venu Eye Institute, New Delhi. On 7th October, we addressed a seminar on Challenges in Community Eye Care, and we received the award on 8th October 2006..

Calendar of Events

November 17, 2006: Bangalore Hospital Founders' Dinner, Santa Clara Marriot, CA

March-April 2007: Hariharan Live in Concert Concert, All over the country

June 3, 2007: 4th Annual SEF Golf Tournament, Coyote Creek Golf Course, San Jose, CA

August 25, 2007: iWalk-2007, Shoreline Park, Mountain View, CA

September/October 2007: 4th Annual SEF Dandia, Bay Area, CA



BATA Cup

BATA Cup is an annual 6 overs, 6-players cricket tournament conducted by Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA) to raise funds for Sankara Eye Foundation. Started in 2004, BATA Cup has rapidly become the most sought out cricket tournament in the Bay Area.

Despite the scorching temperatures (it reached 105 degrees), nearly 250 people took part in the tournament conducted on July 22nd and 23rd at Dunford grounds, Sunnyvale. With 42 participating teams including 32 all men teams and 6 all women teams, BATA raised \$1,500 from the event.

BATA Cup 2006 was sponsored by Deccan Pacific Medical Group (Platinum), Far East National Bank (Gold), Swagat Restaurant (Gold), Precious Dental Care (Silver), Namaste Plaza (Silver), Dr. Rajeev Awasty (Silver) and Cozite Inc.(Silver) and supported by Cric Bay and Tennisball Cricket Association.

With ever gaining popularity, BATA Cup 2007 is already a much awaited event! - Kalyan

Dynamic Addition to SEH, Guntur

A young, dynamic and highly proficient eye surgeon, Dr. K. Chandra Mohan has joined SEH-Guntur. After an initial training period of 2-3 months at Coimbatore, Dr. Chandra Mohan would move to Sankara Eye Hospital, Guntur as Retina Consultant. He has extensive experience in the field of Vitreo-Retina. He is a highly-qualified eye surgeon and has quite a few scientific papers to his credit apart from a book, which he has co-authored. His academic excellence includes:

- FRCS, Royal College of Physicians and surgeons of Glasgow - February 2003
- Fellowship in Vitreo-Retinal Surgery, Aravind Eye Hospital - July 2002
- Clinical sciences Assessment Examination, International Council of Ophthalmology - May 2002
- MS Ophthalmology, Aravind Eye Hospital - May 2001
- Basic Science, Optics & Refraction Assessment Examination, International Council of Ophthalmology - April 2000
- MBBS, Sri Venkateswara Medical College, Tirupati - May 1996

Merits & Awards

- Padmabhushan Dr. P. Siva Reddy Endowment Medal, for standing first in the branch of Ophthalmology in May 1995
- Selected for the Gold Medal Examination in General Surgery-University of Health Sciences, Vijayawada
- Selected for the Gold Medal Examination in Social & Preventive Medicine - NTR University of Health Sciences, Vijayawada

He is a proactive eye surgeon and a good team player, who is willing to take up leadership initiatives. He will be settling in Guntur, which happens to be his native place

Let all of us welcome Dr. Chandra Mohan to the Sankara family.

SEF and AKKA Partner for Vision 20/20 in Karnataka

AKKA (Association of Kannada Kootas of America) held its 4th Bi-Annual AKKA World Kannada Conference at the Baltimore Convention Center over the Labor Day weekend. Over 5,000 Kannadigas from all over the world assembled under one roof to cherish their culture, values and traditions. The conference was not only about entertainment but also about business, spirituality and charity. In a move to address one of the most pressing challenges to rural health in Karnataka, the AKKA Charity Committee (ACC) formed a partnership with Sankara Eye Foundation, raising awareness about SEF's pioneering contributions towards community eye care.

The AKKA-SEF partnership highlighted the need for funds to construct two new Sankara Eye Hospitals, one in Bangalore and the other in Shimoga. The primary goal of these hospitals is free world-class eye care and surgeries for the poor and follows a tried and tested model of self-sufficiency wherein the cost of free care is met by revenues from paid patients.

Spearheading support for the AKKA-SEF partnership was B.V. Jagadeesh, GM and VP Citrix Systems and former CEO of Netscaler and Founder of Exodus, who pledged matching funds of \$100,000. Sri S.P. Balasubramaniam also appealed for support. Anil Kumble, a star of Indian cricket, provided souvenir items for the auction at the event. Raffles were held for hand made paintings donated by Mrs. Meera Mohan. The Kannada community opened their hearts and wallets to the cause, donating generously. Several donors became founding members of either the Bangalore or Shimoga Hospitals through the "1,000 families, \$1,000 each" program. Each founding member will be honored by inscribing their name or the name of a loved one on the "Wall of Founders" at the hospital of their choice.

Update- SEH Guntur

As of August 31st, we have covered over **695,000** people with **122** camps. **59,261** people were examined and **22,285** surgeries were carried out and eye glasses were distributed to the needy. After regaining the sight, most of these folks are going back to work in the field or home and becoming productive members of their village. With improvement in their sight, they are full of self confidence and self esteem. One 75-year old patient, Smt Bhagyamma says ***"Now that I have my vision, I can go back to work in the fields and not be a burden to my son any more."***

SANKARA – ORBIS Pediatric Ophthalmology Department was formally launched on 5th September 2006 at the hospital. This department is supported by an international non profit organization, ORBIS International, USA. With their generous support the hospital has started the specialized facilities for pediatric group. These

The AKKA-SEF partnership successfully raised more than \$55,000 in just three days at the Convention. This partnership is expected to grow in strength and to inspire the Kannada community to contribute further towards bringing Vision to Karnataka's poor.

The Karnataka Government delegation at the convention was impressed by SEF's vision and work. Honorable Deputy Chief Minister, Shri B.S. Yediyurappa and Minister for Major and Medium Industries, Shri Katta Subramanya Naidu met with SEF and AKKA leaders and pledged government support to make the Bangalore and Shimoga hospitals a reality.

About AKKA:

Association of Kannada Kootas of America (AKKA) is a cultural not-for-profit organization and it represents the Kannada speaking people from Karnataka State, India, who are settled in North America. The purpose of the organization is to preserve and promote Kannada language, culture and to undertake charitable work in Karnataka. AKKA has donated several thousand dollars to many charitable causes including tsunami rebuilding project.

AKKA was established in 1998 and nearly 30 Kannada organizations from US and Canada are members of AKKA. There are nearly 70,000 Kannadigas in North America. For more information please visit website at: www.akkaonline.org



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facilities are a boon to the children in this area. Doctors and Paramedical Staff have been given special training in Pediatric Ophthalmology at L. V. Prasad Eye Hospital (Hyderabad), Sankar Netralaya (Chennai), Aravind Eye Hospital (Madurai) and Sankara Eye Centre (Coimbatore).

We need your continued support to carry on with the Phase II of the hospital construction which will allow us to add 100 additional beds and enable us to do 20,000 free eye surgeries every year. We have raised about \$250K so far and have pledges for about \$50K. With this we are close to 60% of \$500K required to add the 100 beds.

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2006 SEF/CLiPS Dandia

On October 7th, Charotar Leua Patidar Samaj (CLiPS), Bay Area and Sankara Eye Foundation organized a joint Dandia at the Santa Clara Convention Center. 1,500 people attended the Garba/Dandia event, dancing to music by Rhythm Master Dimple Patel and Group. The CLiPS and the Sankara Eye Foundation communities joined together and danced to wonderful music. The event was a huge success and raised approximately \$25,000 in donations for the Gujarat Hospital.

CLiPS and SEF began this partnership in 2005 when they organized the 1st Annual CLiPS/SEF Dandia. During that event, \$20,000 was raised for the Gujarat Hospital. They have helped raise approximately \$75,000 over the past year. CLiPS



will be recognized globally as a partner once it reaches \$100,000 with their organization's name in a prominent location in the Gujarat Hospital lobby and an invitation to participate in the Bhumi Puja.

This event showed that two organizations with different goals can work together to achieve something that is dear to the hearts of both communities.

You can find information on CLiPS at <http://www.clipsbayarea.org>. - Bakul Patel



Dinker Mehta

Many families from Gujarat have taken up the challenge to raise money required to start the construction of the Sankara Eye Hospital in Anand. One such family is that of Ashvinibhai Patel. He organized and sponsored comedy nights with famous stand-up comedian Mr. Dinker Mehta from Ahmedabad in order to introduce SEF and Focus Gujarat project to his friends and acquaintances.

The show was held on 15th July in Fremont and 16th July in Sunnyvale, CA. Volunteers from Sankara Eye Foundation helped Ashvinibhai to carry on this event smoothly. Dinker Mehta was excellent in his delivery, evoking compassion and the Indian spirit. The message reached 250 attendees who came from all over Northern California. The event raised \$20,000 in pledges and \$1,500 cash donations, and was a kick start to a series of comedy nights in cities like Sacramento, Stockton, San Diego and Los Angeles supporting SEF.

SEF got an opportunity at all of the shows to introduce the project and spread the awareness. Laughter was in the air during and long after the show was over. Donations are still pouring in, making the effort worthwhile. We thank Ashvinibhai and encourage other families to come forward and support us. - Ritesh Tandon

Volunteers

"We are looking for volunteers all over the USA to manage our exciting growth towards Vision 20/20 by 2020.

We need volunteers who can keep Booths, organize Events and coordinate volunteers.

Please call us today at 1-866-Sankara (1-866-726-5272) or eMail us at volunteer@giftofvision.org"

Volunteers



SEF Presents
Hariharan - Live in Concert

*Please visit www.giftofvision.org for Venues and dates.
Contact info@giftofvision.org for sponsorship opportunities.*

A Lucky Break: A Vision Retained

The night of 4th October 2006 was rather an unfortunate night for Mr Thota Jagannadha Rao. A 60-year old gentleman who had no vision in his left eye due to glaucoma, was in a road traffic accident at around 6 PM at Ponnuru (about 40 kms away from Guntur).

According to him, his two wheeler skidded and he fell on to a bicycle. The bicycle handle and the brake damaged his left eye beyond recognition. He had multiple lid tears on both his left upper and lower lid, along with huge corneal tears with prolapse of intra-ocular contents.

He was rushed to the Sankara Eye Hospital, Guntur at around 7 PM and attended to by the doctor on call. He was admitted and immediate first aid was given in the form of injections, since the wounds were extensive. As there was a lot of tissue swelling we had to wait until the next morning for the medicines to act and reduce the swelling.

He was operated on the 5th October early in the morning at 7 AM. The operation was conducted under general anesthesia by Dr. Kamala. The surgery involved meticulous repair of the lids, as much of the tissue was almost dying. Approximately 100 sutures were applied to the lids. His cornea was also sutured. The operation lasted three and half hours.

He stayed in the hospital for the following two days for regular cleaning and dressing of the wounds. He was recovering very well and was discharged on 10th October. We saw him again on the 13th October. All the wounds were well healed and a very good anatomic integrity was achieved. However, due to extensive tissue loss, his lower lid was pulled down. He is due for a plastic surgery after about four months when a skin grafting to correct the lid is planned.

The aim of surgery was to save the structure of the eye and avoid removal of the eye ball. This was very successfully achieved.

The patient and his relatives expressed their gratitude to the surgeon and the hospital for timely and efficient care rendered. It was a matter of great satisfaction to the surgeon to see the patient recover so well after an extensive surgery. - Naushik Desai

SEF Dandia 2006 - "A Vision of Beauty and Grace"

If you did not get to experience Navaratri SEF style this year, then I urge you to try it next year! The SEF dandias were held at the Santa Clara Convention Center on September 23rd with singers Madhvi and Asim Mehta, and on October 7th (in partnership with Clips), with Rhythm Master Dimple Patel & Group and Disco Dandia by DJ Toofan. The attendees for both the events totaled over 4300 people, which made these dandias one of the largest in the history of the Bay Area. The 2006 dandias were fund-raisers for the Gujarat Hospital.

SEF held to its tradition of providing free dandia lessons an hour before the event and free dandia sticks to those who qualified by buying tickets early until the quota was reached. The organization and execution of this event was incredible and done in the typical "SEF style" that we have all become accustomed to and grown to love. The hospitality, courtesy, organization, timeliness and friendliness of every SEF volunteer are still talked about by those who attended the dandia. Both days were filled with beautiful music and a variety of dances with plenty of space to dance.

There was a small area for VIPs where the invited guests came and met SEF board members and had their questions answered. Among the VIPs were the representatives from AAHOA, Sunnyvale Hindu Temple, various news media, and well-known entrepreneurs,.



Every detail was well thought out and planned from the beginning when the shoes were taken off, to the end when the prasad was distributed. There were brief speeches in between the dancing to remind us why we were all there, besides the enjoyment of the dandia. There were many thank yous for all of the generous sponsors, partners and ticket sellers. There was a wonderful dedication to all of the hard-working SEF volunteers who put in countless hours and endless personal time in preparing for this event and other SEF events, with such devotion and passion for the purpose of eradicating curable blindness in India.

SEF has experienced two consecutive years of success with these events being sold out and we hope we did not disappoint too many of you who could not buy tickets for the sold out events. We urge you to buy early next year as SEF dandia will be back again! From our SEF family to your family- "We hope you had a very joyous Diwali and a naya saal mubaarak!" - Sangita Mody



Caffeinated SEF-Seattle

Starting in 2003 as a small chapter, the Seattle SEF chapter has grown tremendously in the last 4 years. Suveen, who has been a volunteer from the beginning of the chapter, recollected how the enthusiasm and involvement among the volunteers has grown manifold. The Seattle chapter had conducted a few fund raisers in 2004 and 2005. This year in July they conducted an event with local talent called "Tollywood thriller". This event was an instant hit among the 300 plus audience and generated \$10K. Another fundraiser was conducted recently at Microsoft. Microsoft, as a company policy, encourages and matches employee donations to NPOs and has selected October as the "Annual Employee NPO Giving Month".

The SEF team working in Microsoft planned ahead for the fundraiser during the month and sent emails to employees, conducted various info sessions to spread the word about SEF and created posters and flyers for displaying them in vantage positions. This fund drive was a huge success in not only getting donations and matching contribution from Microsoft but also in spreading the word about the projects in Karnataka and Gujarat. Participation in these projects among the Microsoft community is expected to increase in the coming months.

Seattle ended 2005 with approximately \$180K and is expected to surpass that amount in 2006. Some of the dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers in Seattle include Suveen, Raju, Hari, Sandeep, Sridevi, Amar, and Sharad. - Bharatwaj Ramakrishnan



At Shoreline Park in Mountain View on a chilly morning, around 15 people dressed up in jackets took out tables, chairs and canopies from a UHaul. They were setting up booths for iWalk-2006 on August 26th. At 7:30 AM people slowly started pouring in. By 8:00 AM registration table had a long queue. iWalk-2006 was a huge success in every aspect. About 610 walkers and runners participated at the event. Many participants came to support the cause. We also had quite a few serious runners. The winners of 5K and 10K Run completed the race in 18 minutes 24 seconds and 36 minutes 27 seconds respectively.

The warm-up started at 8:15 AM under the instruction of Dawn Shepard of Dhan Yoga, Santa Clara. The walk was flagged off at 8:30 AM sharp by the Vice Mayor of Mountain View, Greg Perry. A biker led the way to show runners the path. Three water stations were arranged on the way. Volunteers distributing water, also directed the participants to make sure they were on the correct path. Food was sponsored by Flavors, Sitara, Southern Spice, Ruchis, and Mother India Curry House and served in Indian style for the participants and their families.



iWalk-A Mission for Vision



DJ started the music at 9:00 AM and played a wide variety of songs from classic rock to new Indian numbers. At 9:30 AM the prizes were distributed by the chief guest Anu Natarajan. Murali, the Chairman of SEF, gave a short speech.

Event booths were visited by all. The bone marrow transplantation booth had over 100 visitors and collected 85 samples. 24 hour Fitness Center, a silver sponsor, featured a Wheel of Fortune. Many people won water bottles and key chains, and a few won 3-month membership as prizes. Volunteers also had set up mehendi and face painting booths. Games were conducted for children. Cricket booth setup by Sports Basement was extremely popular.

Over \$25,000 was raised in pledges. Many local non-profit organizations sent walkers to support the cause. Silicon Andhra had 52 walkers. BMC Software was the platinum sponsor, 24 Hour Fitness and Channel Real Estates were the silver sponsors. Crowds stayed up to 11:30AM creating a festive atmosphere. Members of BATA (Bay Area Telugu Association) helped in cleaning up after the event. Upbeat volunteers have already started planning iWalk-2007. - Manjula Jonnalagadda

SEF, A Reality Check

A year ago, if you had asked me to describe the vision of the Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF), I would have readily given you the contents of the brochure – “Vision 20/20 by 2020” followed by surgery statistics, upcoming projects, founding principles; and perhaps ended with a request for your support and sponsorship. I knew the facts as well as any other volunteer.

Booth after booth, concert after concert, I had done my bit for promoting SEF’s vision. I had even made a trip to San Diego. But in all my efforts, I had only a vague sense of what I was supporting. When people asked, “Why should I donate?” or “Why should I help?” my only answer was based on my feeling that helping the blind and needy was good. SEF was an organization that I had faith in, that I felt happy to promote, that I knew would benefit millions. Here was an entirely volunteer-run association that I had supported since sixth grade; it included so many nice people and it was clear that we were impacting many lives.

But something told me there was more to it than just doing a “good thing” or even the “right thing” – something more than what the brochures and photographs and statistics said. I decided to visit the hospitals in India and see for myself what was happening. It took some convincing – first I had to convince myself that I was committed to spending three weeks on this; then I had to convince my parents that this was better than doing another summer course and getting ready for college. As soon as I finished my high school junior year exams, I boarded a plane to India – all by myself, for my first ever solo international trip. Armed with my camera, notebook and pen, I was ready to observe, document and absorb whatever India had to offer.

Tuesday, June 13th 2006 - I arrived at the hospital in the heart of Coimbatore to begin my internship. The dust, the rubble, and the essence of cow dung would soon become a familiar part of my surroundings. Although my role here was not a medical student, I intended to use this opportunity to broaden my horizons and better prepare myself to support the foundation back in the US. Little did I know on that day, that my experience would go far beyond the hospital, eye charts and other materials that I would read.

During the first few days in the hospital my roommate and I spent a majority of our time in the pediatric and adult wards of the non-paying camp patients. While exploring the hospital, we noticed several things that we felt could be improved upon. We listed these and presented it to the doctors and administrative staff. They listened to our suggestions but quickly dismissed them. We felt slightly dejected, but decided to keep moving – we were here to listen, learn and understand. This was our first lesson in the significant differences that separated the American culture from the Indian one, in the handling of interns.

We spent the rest of the week observing different aspects of the hospital and gained a better understanding of the hospital operations. We conducted interviews with the camp patients and documented their time in the hospital by meticulously taking photos and recording special interviews. The



management team assigned a number of projects to us including surveying Glaucoma patients. We even had the opportunity to conduct English comprehension classes for the nurses on staff in an effort to boost their confidence when dealing with English speaking patients.

The nurses, who were also part-time medical students, were very enthusiastic and motivated to the cause. For a hospital that specialized in treating non-paying patients, cleanliness, hygiene, and safety were not compromised at all. The accommodation for visiting guests was excellent, and patient care was very organized and efficient. All this was achieved in a caring context. Once, I volunteered to participate in a night shift (until about 2 AM). During this time, new patients were brought to the hospital from their respective villages on hospital buses. As soon as they arrived, they were cleaned, fed, and registered. The patients were immediately put at ease – beginning their treatment and recovery even before the first doctor had seen them.

The pediatric ward was my favorite – a place I could best relate to. Every now and then, I would sneak back into the pediatric ward. On one occasion I introduced myself to a girl named Sindhu. She was 11 and had just had a DCT completed on her left eye – a procedure to correct the water leaking from her left duct. She was quite bored and I decided to dedicate my free time amusing her. I spent about three hours in the room and taught her how to spell some words in English – animals were her favorite. I also taught her how to draw the corresponding pictures of the animals. She was thrilled and taught me the names of the same animals in tamil: varikuthirai = zebra!

I spent a number of hours speaking to the patients who had undergone surgery and urged them to tell me their life stories – why they needed eye care; how they earned their living; and more importantly, who was at home waiting for them when they returned, and how their life had been impacted and what they thought of the hospital. I recorded one of my interviews with a train station coolie (laborer), who had a more interesting story to tell than most movies and soap operas. He spoke about the kind-hearted doctors and staff at the hospital and the reason behind his commitment to his job and his family. Despite his lack of education and literacy, he fluently

talked about the vast range of experiences in his life. At one point he likened the hospital to his mother – thanks to the recovery of his eye sight, he had been reborn!

Now I knew why I was supporting SEF; why it is a good thing to contribute my time and energy to this cause – it was because of the way the hospital was touching the lives of so many people – not just performing surgeries, but giving re-birth – providing hope and independence to thousands of people who are just looking for a chance to be led from darkness to light.

For the record, we had a very educational time - filled out numerous surveys, watched live surgeries performed before our eyes, and learned more in these three weeks than we could expect to from just our regular textbook education.

At the cost of sounding corny, I must admit that my time at the Sankara Eye Centre in Coimbatore was an “eye opener”. The experience enabled me to gain a higher level of respect not only for the medical professionals and the skillful management team that



runs this hospital, but also for the tireless staff who took the initiative to make us feel very welcome and our stay as enjoyable as possible.

I am now a senior at Monta Vista High School, in Cupertino and can speak with full confidence when I say that the Sankara Eye Foundation and Eye Centre are creating a real impact on a large population. The Silicon Valley is known for innovation. From the internet to the iPod – two things I cannot live without – the spirit of the valley has been about changing people’s lives through technological innovation. This summer, I just found out that even the simple technologies and small amounts of money can have an incredible impact on many people.

When it comes to giving back to your community, you don’t need an incentive or a reason. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Be the change you wish to see in this world.” Clearly, what we wish to change in the world cannot be achieved in one summer or even in one lifetime. Perhaps my trip to Coimbatore was just a leading step in the right direction.

- Anagha Vaidhyanathan

A Special Thank you: To all the tireless staff members who brought us water at 7:00 in the morning, fixed our sink when it was leaking, meticulously washed and folded all of our clothes, and chased away lizards and wasps when we were too afraid to do it ourselves. Mercy Sister and team, your hospitality will never be forgotten.

Small Eyes/Grand Vision

Our family attended a party where Muralij opened a letter from a donor who mentioned that their family had guests donate money to SEF in lieu of gifts for their daughter’s wedding. That night when we left the party quite tired, my then 6-year old son said “mommy, my 7th birthday is coming up and what if I have all my friends give money to SEF instead of bringing gifts?” I guess the reading of that note left quite an impression on such a young mind. My husband and I were quite impressed and encouraged his enthusiasm. He has in the past given \$30 for a cataract on his birthday but never such a grand gesture! Many weeks had passed and we started to discuss plans for his putt-putt golf party. I wanted to make sure that he really wanted to have all the money go to SEF, and he insisted he did, so we drafted a letter to send to all his friends. The letter explained to all his friends that he was blessed with so many things and he wanted to help other people by having his friends donate to SEF instead of bringing gifts. He asked all of his friends to visit www.giftofvision.org with their parents to learn more about Sankara. I was so touched that I told him that his father and I would buy him one gift that he really wanted.

The morning of the party, my son and I made an eye out of a cardboard box to collect everyone’s checks and money. He was so excited to see how much money he would collect. Then the young mind impressed me again as we were talking about playing games, and he came up with the idea that it would be great if all his friends could feel for a moment what it would be like to be blind. He was hard at work drawing a large eye on a cardboard. He thought it would be great if he could pass that drawing around so his friends could close their eyes and try to write their initials in the center of the eye.

We had about 20 - 25 kids attend the party and managed to collect over \$500 (one family even set up a company match for their contribution). The parents were quite impressed and the kids were quite curious. If nothing else, it made many of us, young and old alike, think about helping a complete stranger just because we are so blessed and we can! Some of his friends donated money as well as brought him a small gift because they were so touched. My son was wondering why he got both when he had said no gifts and just money for SEF. All I could think of was, “When you do a good deed for someone else, something good may also happen to you!” My husband and I decided to add to the amount collected so that we could give SEF a \$1,000 for their Wall of Founder’s program for the Gujarat Hospital. My son’s mind automatically went to work and said, “Mom, that is so cool and that means we can help at least 30+ people to see again!” - Sangita Modi

Macular Degeneration

Macular degeneration is one of the leading causes of severe vision loss in people over age 60. It occurs when the small central portion of the retina, known as the macula, deteriorates. Because the disease develops as a person ages, it is often referred to as age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Although macular degeneration is almost never a blinding condition, it can be a source of significant visual disability.

There are two main types of age-related macular degeneration:

Dry form: This is characterized by the presence of yellow deposits, called drusen, in the macula. As they grow in size and increase in number, they may lead to a dimming or distortion of vision. In more advanced stages, the light-sensitive layer of cells in the macula may thin down leading to atrophy, or tissue death. In the atrophic form, patients may have blind spots in the center of their vision. In the advanced stages, they lose central vision.

Wet form: This is characterized by the growth of abnormal blood vessels from the choroid underneath the macula. This is called choroidal neovascularization. These blood vessels leak blood and fluid into the retina, causing distortion of vision that makes straight lines look wavy, as well as blind spots and loss of central vision. These abnormal blood vessels eventually scar, leading to permanent loss of central vision.

Most patients with macular degeneration have the dry form of the disease and will not lose central vision. However, the dry form can lead to the wet form. Although only about 10% of people with macular degeneration develop the wet form, they make up the majority of those who experience serious vision loss from the disease.

It is very important for people with macular degeneration to monitor their eyesight carefully and see their eye doctor on a regular basis. This disease may be hereditary. Smoking increases the risk.

Symptoms: In its early stages, macular degeneration may not have symptoms and may be unrecognized until it progresses or affects both eyes. The first sign is usually the distortion of straight lines. This may progress to a gradual loss of central vision.

Symptoms of macular degeneration include:

- Straight lines start to appear distorted, or the center of vision becomes distorted
- Dark, blurry areas or white out appears in the center of vision
- Diminished or changed color perception

If you experience any of these symptoms, see an ophthalmologist as soon as possible. Early detection of macular degeneration is very important because there are treatments that can delay or reduce the severity of the disease.

Treatments

There is currently no cure for macular degeneration, but treatments may prevent severe vision loss or slow the progression of the disease considerably. Some of them are:

- Vitamins:** Vitamins C, E, beta carotene, zinc and copper can decrease the risk of vision loss in certain patients with intermediate to advanced dry macular degeneration. Ask your eye doctor if these vitamin supplements will benefit you before taking them.

- Laser therapy.** High-energy laser light can sometimes be used to destroy actively growing abnormal blood vessels.

- Photodynamic laser therapy.** A two-step treatment in which a light sensitive drug is used to damage the abnormal blood vessels. A doctor injects the drug into the bloodstream to be absorbed by the abnormal blood vessels in the eye. The doctor then shines a cold laser into the eye to activate the drug, damaging the abnormal blood vessels.

- Anti-angiogenesis drugs.** New drugs are being used to slow down or prevent the growth of the abnormal blood vessels within the eye.

- Low vision aids.** Devices that have special lenses or electronic systems that produce enlarged images of nearby objects. They help people who have vision loss from macular degeneration make the most of their remaining vision.

Researchers are studying new treatments for macular degeneration. The following treatments are considered experimental.

- Submacular surgery:** Surgery to remove the abnormal blood vessels or blood.

- Retinal translocation:** A surgical procedure used to destroy abnormal blood vessels that are located directly under the center of the macula, where a laser beam cannot be placed safely. In the procedure, the macular center is rotated away from the abnormal blood vessels to a healthy area of the retina, thus preventing the formation of scar tissue and further damage to the retina. Once moved away from the abnormal blood vessels, a laser is used to treat the abnormal blood vessels.

Unfortunately, macular degeneration can recur even after successful treatment. Because of this, individuals with macular degeneration must test their own vision regularly and follow up, as recommended by their ophthalmologist. The various procedures, however, can slow the rate of vision loss and hopefully preserve some sight.

World Sight Day

World Sight Day was celebrated at Sankara Eye Hospital, Guntur, on 12th October, to focus the attention of the community on the preventable eye problems. The following activities were carried out for a week in Guntur & Vijayawada:

Between 12th and 14th October 2006, children from the schools in Guntur, Vijayawada and Sathenapally were invited to visit the hospital. They were given a talk on the causes of blindness, eye injuries, their prevention, and first aid. Taking advantage of this opportunity, 378 children visited the hospital with their teachers. They were provided educational material and refreshments.



On 12th October, a free eye screening for preschool/school children at a slum area, Swarnabharathi Nagar, was carried out. A total of 390 children were examined, and 18 children were advised to go the hospital for further tests.

On 17th October 2006, an Eye Screening camp was conducted for residents of SKCV Children's Trust (Trust for Street Children) Bhavanipuram, Vijayawada. 207 children were screened. Six children were prescribed eye glasses which will be delivered to them, and nine children were referred to the Hospital.

The response from various organizations and media was encouraging. -SEH Guntur



The Humanitarians within The Hospitalitarians



The desire to serve its needy customers has been the key to SEF's success and has allowed it to perform over 300,000 eye surgeries. Another such organization whose members are equally poised to serve its customers is AAHOA – Asian American Hotel Owners Association. Representing more than 8,300 members, AAHOA is one of the leading forces in the hospitality industry, and one of the most powerful Asian American advocacy groups. Together, the members own more than 20,000 hotels, which have 1 million rooms representing over 50 percent of the economy lodging properties and nearly 37 percent of all hotel properties in the United States. When two such wonderful organizations join hands – miracles happen!

The fact that AAHOA has a dedicated Humanitarian Team reflects AAHOA's deep commitment to giving back to the community. When this committee was tasked to identify two charities to endorse this year, a unanimous decision was made to promote SEF as one of the two charities. A letter from AAHOA's Chairman Mr. Mukesh Mowji, Humanitarian Team's head Mr. Hemant Patel, and Southeast Regional Director Sanjay Patel, asked its members to show their support to SEF.

Both organizations were introduced to each other at the annual AAHOA convention in 2004 in Florida. Since that time, the two organizations have joined hands to raise a significant amount of funds for SEF and in particular the Sankara Eye Hospital – Gujarat. SEF has been given access to AAHOA's members through its publications, conferences and the annual conventions.

We are extremely proud to be selected as a Charity of the Year for AAHOA. Now that the visionaries who serve the millions through the ownership of 20,000 hotels have joined hands with us, we'll eradicate curable blindness in Gujarat and India! - Amit Patel



Bharatanatyam Arangetram

On this special event in my life, my Bharatanatyam Arangetram on August 12th 2006, it was my pleasure to share my gifts with Sankara Eye Foundation. Sankara Eye Foundation is a great organization whose mission is to help those who cannot "see". Every dollar given to Sankara goes a long way in helping the neediest people in India.

So when I decided to perform my Arangetram, I was happy to donate all the gifts to them. I knew that with so many people who need help,

Sankara could use any money it could get. It makes me feel even happier to know that hundreds of people would be regaining one of the most important things in their life - vision.

Anjali Takkar is a Junior at Presentation High School, San Jose, CA

A Ray Of Hope

Seventy five year old Kumarayee of Alampatti village had lost vision in both the eyes due to cataracts. Besides being almost blind, she suffered from physical impairment in both her legs, preventing her from walking or freely moving about without help.

After being identified as someone we could help at the Pudukottai eye camp on April 4th 2006, she was brought to Krishnan Kovil Hospital on a motorcycle and surgery was performed on both the eyes on June 5th 2006 and June 8th 2006 respectively. The surgeons who operated on her were Dr. Vijaya & Dr. Samiksha.

Kumarayee has now regained vision, and can perform her daily activities without much help, limited only by her physical impairment. However, she did not present herself for a post-operative review after 30 days so the hospital staff called on her. We were happy to find her much more cheerful and happy. There are thousands and thousands of Kumarayees out there seeking help and solace, and Sankara Eye Care Institutions are reaching out to them to provide them with a "Ray of Hope". -Naushik Desai





“Kal Ki Yaadein ”- SoCal Fund Raiser

On 21st July SEF organized its first event in Southern California, at the La Mirada Theater of Performing Arts. The event was a concert by Nitin Mukesh called “Kal Ki Yaadein - A Tribute to Mukesh”. He is the son of the legendary singer Mukesh. Over 1,000 people were treated to the Music of yesteryears.

Nitin Mukesh started the concert with a Mukesh classic “Jeena Yaha Marna Yaha”. He enthralled the audience with a collection from whole career of Mukesh including “Hum tujhse mohabbat karke Sanam” from Awaara, “Aa laut ke aaja mere meet” from Raani Roopmati, “Dost Dost na raha”, etc and some his own hits. He also sang “Kisike muskuraha-ton pe ho nisaar” on Murali’s request.

Speaking in between the songs Nitin Mukesh added his voice to our effort by asking all to open their hearts and purses and donate generously. He also shared some of his father’s experiences with the audience. He was accompanied by his sister Namrata Mukesh Seth, Mrinalini Naik and Manasi Parajpe.

SEF chairman Murali, emcee Hamid Wagle, Daaji Praboo Gosai and Harshad Uka presented SEF’s cause to the audience. The event raised \$102K. Rasthal restaurant of Southern California sponsored free food to entire audience for the event.



New York - New Jersey joins Vision 20/20 by 2020 Movement

SEF volunteers from Bay area visited New York/New Jersey area in August to spread the word of "Vision 20/20, by 2020". As invited guests to Sardar Patel University Alumni (SPU) gathering, SEF's presentation was very well received by the crowd of approximately 300. "For such a great cause, especially in Anand, we support SEF's cause", said Mr. C. Z. Patel, a prominent figure in the tri-state area. SEF volunteers also participated in the FIA parade in New York where more than 80,000 people attended the event. Thanks to help from local SEF volunteers, our booth was visited by over 500 people, who all welcomed our approach in eradicating curable blindness in India. Mr. Ramesh Patel, Chairman of NFIA, later spent about half an hour discussing SEF's goals in Gujarat, during the FIA banquet at "Albert's Palace" in New Jersey. Mr. Albert Jasani, the owner of "Albert's Palace", another prominent Gujarati, welcomed the idea of doing a banquet at his hotel for the benefit of SEH Anand, Gujarat.

Meetings were also held with trustees of Vallabh and Savitaben Foundation, Inc. as well as with Mr. Jayprakash Patel (JP), President of ICA, and his board members. The willingness to help generate \$1.8M for SEH Anand, Gujarat, was obvious during all the discussions. It took less than 10 minutes for Mr. Rajesh & Dushyant Patel, two brothers of the ICA Board, to pledge \$5K towards the hospital. "For the cause and intentions that SEF has, I have no doubt in my mind that your project will bring a lot of value to the very needy Gujaratis in Anand and its neighborhood" said JP.

The next event scheduled for NY/NJ will be a banquet supported by many of the prominent Gujaratis and Gujarati Organizations. - Anjuben Desai



Focus Gujarat Update

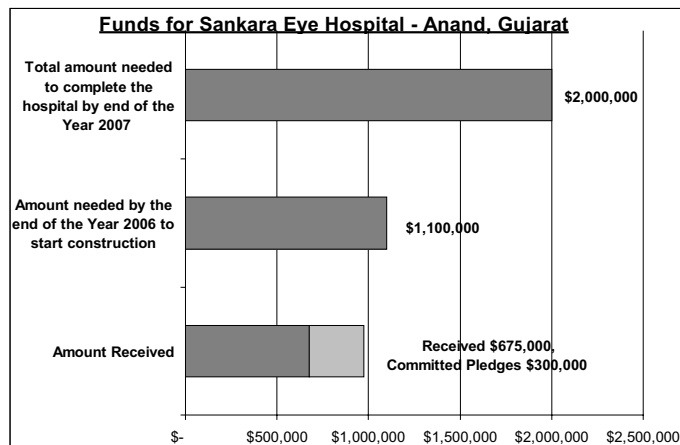


SANKARA EYE HOSPITAL, ANAND
In the heart of Gujarat
Projected Cost - \$1.8 Million

- 5 acres of land located on the Ahmedabad-Vadodra Highway, (about 4 km from Chikhodra Ni Chokdi near Anand) has been acquired. Cost of the land is about US \$200,000
- The Government of Gujarat has approved the project and a 25% deposit has been made
- Expect to convert the land to 'Non-agricultural' (NA) status by Nov 2006



\$1.1 million needed to start construction!
\$675K has been collected and over \$300K has been pledged
We are almost there!



Join 999 other Founding Families and become a Founding Member

Donate \$1,000 and have a name of your choice inscribed on our Wall of Founders



Sankara Eye Foundation, USA: Donation Form

501 (C)(3) Non Profit Organization, Tax id: 77-6141976

3175 Arcola Court, San Jose, CA 95148.

www.giftofvision.org

www.giftofvision.org

Contact Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Spouse Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email address: _____

I would like to volunteer, please contact me

Donate in several ways:

Cash: Check: Credit Card: Amount Enclosed: _____

If check, make it payable to: Sankara Eye Foundation, USA

If Credit Card, enter Credit Card #: (Only Visa and Master Card)

Expiry Date: _____

A One time donation: Monthly Donation (Open an Eye a month):

Company Name: _____

(Helps us find if they match your contribution.)

For used car donations, contact SEF at cargiving@giftofvision.org

Sell an item on ebay and donate proceeds. Go to <http://givingworks.ebay.com/>

and select Sankara Eye Foundation as charity

Visit www.giftofvision.org for stocks, payroll, bank transactions or online donations.

Capital Projects	Central Services	
	Surgeries	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus AP - Phase II	<input type="checkbox"/> Cataract Surgery (\$30 each)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food for patients (\$200 a day)
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Karnataka	<input type="checkbox"/> Corneal Transplant (\$100 each)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Staff Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Gujarat	<input type="checkbox"/> Cataract Endowment (\$300 each)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Entire Service activities of the hospital (\$400 a day)
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Bangalore	<input type="checkbox"/> Corneal Endowment (\$1000 each)*	

*Endowment: 1 surgery every year for 10 years

Special requests: _____

(E.g. Donate "In the name(s) of" / "In memory of" a dear one and/or preferred date of surgery/food for patients.)

If first time donor, how did you hear about us? _____

Mail it to:

Sankara Eye Foundation, USA

3175 Arcola Ct

San Jose, CA 95148

For more information, or to volunteer your time for this noble cause, please call us at 1-866-SANKARA (1-866-726-5272) or (408) 528-9570 or write to us at info@giftofvision.org.

If you have any other comments, please write to us. We really appreciate and value them.



Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
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1-866-SANKARA
(1-866-726-5272)
<http://www.giftofvision.org>
info@giftofvision.org
Fax 408-528-9540

Thank you for your support

Illathu Pillaiyar Kalyana Mandapam

At the free eye camp conducted at the Illathu Pillaiyar Kalyana Mandapam in the town of Srivilliputhur on 29th of January earlier this year, Mrs. Jerina Begam, a 55-year old physically handicapped lady, was one of the beneficiaries. Upon examination, it was determined that she had a mature cataract in both her eyes.

Upon the recommendation of our team, she was brought to our hospital at Krishnan Kovil and surgery was performed on February 1st by Dr. Umesh. She was discharged on February 3rd, with post operative vision in both eyes being 6/18.

After 30 days, we went to Mrs. Jerina's home for a post-surgery review. She was extremely happy when we told that we are the team from Sankara Rural Eye Hospital, Krishnan Kovil. She told us that she could see very clearly now with both eyes. She expressed her gratitude to our team of Doctors and Staff and blessed everyone. She said that she had lost the use of both her legs due to rheumatic fever at the tender age of 17. In spite of her efforts she was not cured. She became dependent on her brothers and sisters.

For the last 5 years she was totally confined to the house because of her vision loss due to cataract. Because of poverty, the surgery was out of question. While in this situation she got the notice about the free eye camp at Srivilliputhur, which was like manna sent from heaven. She completed her narration by saying that she was pampered like a child during her stay at our hospital. She also said that the staff was happy that she could see again.

We took leave of Mrs. Begam after giving her eye drops which will be sufficient for a month. We left behind Mrs. Begam who feels strongly that it was 'Sankara' who gave her a second birth and a new meaning in her life. - Naushik Desai



Join Sankara in Our Mission For Vision