

# EYE2EYE



## Murali's Corner

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Dear friends,

We wish you a very Happy New Year. Thanks to our solid partnership, we are making steady progress towards Vision 20/20 by 2020.

The construction of all our new Sankara Eye Hospitals is progressing very well. We still have to raise a good amount of funds to complete these projects - \$700,000 more for Anand, Gujarat, \$1 million for Bangalore, \$1.2 million for Shimoga, Karnataka and \$150,000 for Guntur Phase II. That adds up to \$3.1 million to be raised to complete all these projects by mid-2008. Inauguration of the Bangalore hospital is set for March 2008 and the exact date will be announced on our website at [www.giftofvision.org](http://www.giftofvision.org).

Let me bring you some exciting news. Association of Kannada Kootas of America (AKKA) has become a partner of our Bangalore hospital and they are now partners of this hospital along with Mr. B.V. Jagadeesh. Mr. Harshadbhai Patel of Irvine, California and Charotar Leuva Patidar Samaj of Bay Area (CLiPS) have become partners of the Anand hospital. Dr. Ashok Sonni and Dr. Rajeshwari Sonni of Florida are matching up to \$100,000 in donations to the Shimoga hospital made in 2007. Please avail this grand opportunity.

All three SEF-Dandia events in the Bay Area (total capacity 8,500) were SOLD OUT including our first event in Pleasanton. Our Detroit team organized a Garba in Dearborn, Michigan. We organized a grand Walkathon (iWalk) and a wonderful dance event (Roshni-Natyotsav) by a Bangalore group Articulate, which included five blind dancers, in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our Chicago team organized a Telugu Comedy show (Ananda Lahari) by a team from India. Booths and other initiatives are happening all over the country. SEF is also going through an external audit of our finances and it will be completed soon.

The leaders of our partner Sankara Eye Care Institutions (SECI), India, Dr. S.V. Balasubramaniam (Chairman), Dr. R.V. Ramani (Managing Trustee), Mr. Srivatsan (Hon. Director, Project Vision 20/20 by 2020) and others visited us for ten days and they were amazed at the commitment, dedication and hard work of our volunteers to achieve Vision 20/20 by 2020. SECI leaders met with community leaders, partners, press, Rotary members, volunteers and donors and together with us, held several strategy

planning meetings with them. We worked on the Master Plan for Vision 20/20 by 2020 and it will be ready soon.

SECI leaders attended a dinner meeting at Google and addressed a student gathering at Stanford organized by SEF volunteers Jyotsna Kakkia and Pradeep Rajendran, respectively. They also participated in our first volunteer off-site at Lake Tahoe. It was a great team building effort. More than sixty SEF volunteers participated in this off-site. In Dr. Ramani's words, 'the trip was rejuvenating, relaxing and packed with fun, very memorable indeed'. On November 5th, they left for India charged by the unbridled enthusiasm of SEF volunteers.

We are very happy to inform you that two more Eye Hospitals – one in Silvassa (UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli)) and one in Pammal near Chennai are being donated to us and when our current projects are completed next year we will be running a total of eight hospitals in India and performing over 100,000 FREE Eye Surgeries in 2008. Again, I wish to acknowledge that this is all possible only because of your unflinching support to our cause. Please be with us all the way until the year 2020.

SEF, USA and SECI, India are now ready to announce two new hospitals to be constructed in the Northern part of our dear India, but SECI, India has told us that it can happen only after we complete the current projects and this is where you need to help us in a big way. We still need to raise over \$3 Million dollars to complete the Anand, Shimoga and Bangalore hospitals and Phase II of the Guntur hospital. Please donate \$1,000 to any of these hospitals and become a founding donor. As a founding donor you can have the name of a beloved one on the Hospital 'Wall of Founders'. If you can help us more we also have several other sponsorships of \$5,000, \$10,000, \$25,000 and more. The FREE Patient wards at Anand and Shimoga are still not taken (\$100,000 for each 100 bed ward) and I am sure some of you can do it.

We are all volunteers working very hard to eradicate curable blindness in India and we invite you to partner with us in this great journey. Wherever you are, please contact us today at 1-866-SANKARA or [info@giftofvision.org](mailto:info@giftofvision.org) to volunteer or donate.

Have a great 2008!

Yours Sincerely,  
-Murali Krishnamurthy

## Calendar

We will be organizing several exciting events all around the country in 2008 as well. Details will be available on our website at [www.giftofvision.org](http://www.giftofvision.org).

### Houston

The Independence Day in Houston got to a fantastic start with Sahana Rao and team setting up the SEF booth at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The booth attracted many visitors who were interested in knowing more about our activities. The Houston team is actively looking for new volunteers. Contact Sahana at [sahana\\_new@yahoo.com](mailto:sahana_new@yahoo.com) for more details on upcoming activities.

### Phoenix

Ravi Balakrishnan, Mouli Subramanian and team extended their marathon SEF booth drive in Phoenix by organizing an Independence Day booth. They have been organizing SEF booths throughout the year during Indian Events. To help SEF team in Phoenix, contact Ravi or Mouli at (623)-225-5619 or (480)-278-1450, respectively.

### Boston

Raagini Jawa and team set up the SEF booth at the India Day celebrations, organized by India Association of Greater Boston on August 12th. A few visitors had heard about SEF in from TV advertisements. Others, hearing about SEF for the first time, were interested in knowing more. Few people, who were treated for eye ailments in Coimbatore, visited the booth and were pleased to see SEF in the US. Great show Boston team!!!

### New York

The weather was gloomy and it drizzled at times, but that did not stop proud Indians from attending the 60th Independence Day celebrations at the Madison Square Park. Bareerah, a long time volunteer, organized the booth on August 19th and brought in other new volunteers including Arjun Ram, Arun Deora, Nikki Rai and Deepa Chaudri.

Around 200-300 people visited the booth and wanted to know more about us. While some assumed that the booth was conducting free eye exams, others enquired about eye care for their family members in India. A small group, who was familiar with SEF, stopped by to donate and they also took donation forms to give to their friends. The booth increased awareness of our cause. - Nikki Rai

***SEF booths were also held at Independence Day events in Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia, North Carolina and the Bay Area. This was made possible thanks to new volunteers. The target for next year is booths in 20+ cities. For information on starting a SEF chapter in your city, contact Murali at (408)-425-1268***

### Austin

Syama Poluri, Neelima Chimalamarri, Ravi Dasari, and Niranjana Gudipati organized the Independence Day booth in Austin on August 18th at the Atkins High School. Around 1,200 people visited the event and got to know about SEF. To help SEF Austin team, contact Syama at (512)-743-5005.

### Detroit

SEF Michigan volunteers Tarun Desai, Swapna Bhagat, Jyothi and Chandra Mohan set up the booth in India Independence Day Celebration at Detroit on August 12th. The booth location was perfect and attracted 22 new volunteers and more than 100 visitors. During the day, we were able to get SEF connected with three other forthcoming events, namely Dandia in October, South Asian Federation Conference in St. Louis and a SEF fundraising Music night in September. The objective of spreading the SEF mission for vision was well achieved during this day long event. - Chandra Mohan

### LA

The Southern California SEF team hosted a booth at the Servite High School in Los Angeles during the Indian Independence Day Event organized by the Federation of Indo-American Association. To help SEF in Los Angeles, contact Sankar at [sankar@giftofvision.org](mailto:sankar@giftofvision.org).

## **Sankara Eye Hospital gets Two Partners in Service- *Smita Patel and Bakul Patel***

### **Charotar Leua Patidar Samaj of Bay Area**

The Charotar Leua Patidar Samaj (CLiPS) of Bay Area (<http://www.clipsbayarea.org>) was founded in 1990 with a membership of 20 families. Today, the membership has grown to over 400 families in the Bay Area. The CLiPS organization was created to maintain and promote the culture of the Patidars of Charotar. This community migrated from the Charotar District of Gujarat, India. As time evolved, the CLiPS organization has established



Charotar gams and Gors and expanded the Patidar community to include Patels with origins in Kheda, Amdavad and Vadodara Districts. The goal of the CLiPS organization is to foster a community where Patidars can come together to bond with their fellow Patidars. CLiPS's mission is to –

1. Create and pass on the legacy of cultural values and provide a forum with a community voice to the next generation.
2. Strengthen community bond and social cohesiveness among CLiPS Patidars and other Indian communities.
3. Promote advancement of education within the community.
4. Provide matrimonial and social services to the CLiPS community in meeting the community needs.
5. Maintain and coordinate liaison with other CLiPS organizations within USA and abroad.
6. Provide and promote moral and financial support to the Patidar community and others in a crisis of need including during a disaster or a natural calamity.
7. Establish an Evergreen Club to support and satisfy needs of our elderly.
8. Development of youth programs to support our youth and women auxiliary to promote CLiPS Patidar community and social values among women and families.
9. Promote and support cultural and charitable activities for our members.

CLiPS joined SEF in the mission for vision due to Anand Hospital being built in the heart of Charotar. As our mission states, we want to give back to the community that we come from.

CLiPS raised \$100,000 for the Anand Hospital and are now a Partner In Service with SEF. They are proud to be a part of this mission and will continue to work until Vision 20/20 by 2020 is accomplished.

### **Harshad Patel**

Harshad Uka Patel from Los Angeles, CA has become a Partner in Service for Anand Hospital. Over the last few years, Harshadbhai has raised over \$150K for the Gujarat Hospital by donating his personal funds, organizing several fundraising activities in LA area and persuading potential donors to donate. Born in Satem near Navsari, he graduated as a Chemical Engineer and relocated to Los Angeles in 1975. In 1999, he started Q-Flex Inc. ([www.QFLEXINC.com](http://www.QFLEXINC.com)) - a prototype manufacturing and design company for the flexible circuits and assembly.

Harshadbhai is a quintessential humanitarian. He is actively involved with an Emancipation Network that promotes 'Made by Survivors'. The network fights against global slavery and sale of young girls into prostitution and helps them lead an independent life. He is also involved in a NPO in his village which operates a small hospital and a state of the art high school. In the LA region, he is actively involved with Matiya Samaj (SOCAL) and Federation of Indian Associations (FIA)



We at Sankara are very fortunate to get someone of Harshadbhai's caliber fully involved in carrying our mission further. In his own words, here is how Harshadbhai got involved with SEF:

"Fate has a strange way of bringing together a group of people.

**Continued on Page 8**

## **SEF Dandia raises \$144,000 for Gujarat Eye hospital – Hema Chamraj**

SEF, in partnership with CLiPS, celebrated Navaratri with grandeur and style. Over 8,000 people participated in the two events held on October 20th and 27th in San Jose and Santa Clara convention centers respectively.

Friends and families enthusiastically danced the night away, gracefully performing traditional Garba and Dandiya Raas. The participants young and old alike, were dressed in vibrant colorful attires. It was a breathtaking sight to see the humongous dance floor halls blanketed with huge crowds. It seemed like the crowd had fallen into a trance swaying to the tunes meted out by fabulous singers. But all this was for a serious cause.



The event was a fund raiser for our Sankara Eye hospital in Gujarat. Dr. Ramani, spoke of the magnitude of the curable blindness problem in India when he mentioned that someone becomes blind every 2 seconds. The powerful speech from Jyostna Kaki who lost her eyesight in 2004 due to a surgery, profiled her experience as a bad dream. She urged the audience to transform such nightmares to beautiful dreams for the so many visually handicapped in India.

We broke all records. The event, now in its fourth year, was sold-out a week prior to the event. We raised \$144,000. This was accomplished with the pledges and donations along with \$50K in matching funds from our staunch supporter Harshad Patel (aka Harshad Uka) from Irvine, California. Mr. Harshad Patel also became a "partner-in service" by donating \$100,000 to our cause after he was impressed by the vision and dedication of the Sankara Eye Foundation. Also CLiPS (an organization with a mission to give back to their community of origin, Charotar in Gujarat) became a "partner-in-service" by raising \$100,000 for the Gujarat hospital (which happens to be located in the heart of Charotar district). Bhindi Jewelers sponsored a jewelery set worth \$1,400 for the raffle. Zee TV, HSBC and Microsoft were our major sponsors.

*"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](mailto:volunteer@giftofvision.org)"*

### **Umang's Birthday Gift to Sankara**

Sir/Madam

I would like to share the positive effect of your commercial on my son with the management of Sankara Eye Foundation.

My son Umang just turned four last week. Sometimes he watches that Indian program (Namaste America) with us on Saturdays. Whenever he sees the commercial from Sankara Eye Foundation, he tells us to send some money to your foundation. He says "Mom, Why don't you send some money to them for me so that doctors can fix their eyes." He has been saying that for a year.

One day Umang was playing with my calculator. Randomly he punched a few numbers. I asked him "what are those numbers?" He said "I have this much money" pointing his finger at the displayed numbers. I saw the number and it was 500 million. Then I asked him "What are you going to do with the money?" He said "I will keep 50 dollars and rest I will give it to those doctors so that they can fix these peoples' eyes." Very very caring thinking from him!

Thanks for your foundations dedication and hard work. We truly appreciate it!

Please accept \$101 gift from Umang to foundation for his birthday gift.

Regards  
Yogesh  
Falguni

### 3rd Annual Sankara iWalk completes a successful FINISH

It was 6.30 am at Shoreline Park where the early morning sun was just peaking over the horizon. The otherwise quiet and serene atmosphere of the Shoreline Park was buzzing with activities as SEF team prepared the site for the runners. The parking areas, the trail routes, turn around points and water stations were all setup well in advance.

The Half Marathon runners, who had been training under Rajeev Patel and Anuradha Singh promptly showed up to collect their bibs and T-shirts. While Anuradha led warm up stretches, the food team served up beverages and refreshments. At 7:30 AM, runners took off starting the first ever half marathon at Shoreline Park. At 8:30 AM the 5K and 10K runners followed.

It was just perfect weather and the scenic bay land trails provided a treat to the participants. Kermit Cuff, the winner of the half marathon, finished in 1 hour 19 minutes. Awards were given away to the runners in all age groups and the first 100 half marathon finishers received a medal. It was a day of fun for the whole family who were treated to delicious food, music and fun filled carnival and games including a 50 meter run for the 5 year old.

BMC Software and Visa were silver sponsors for the event. Global Ways and HCL sponsored T-Shirts. Mpingi, Running Revolution, Road Runner Sports and Sports Basement were the other sponsors. Finisher medals were sponsored by Sweat Studio. Cupertino based Organization of Special Needs Families, a non profit organization that works for families with special needs, provided free canopies just like the previous year. Food and drinks were sponsored by Nestle, Snickers, Ganesh Bhavan, Southern Spice, Dosa Place and Café Bombay.

All were winners at this event as the event with 764 runners was a smashing success. The event was attended by accomplished runners and as well as people who just came to support the cause. The participants were extremely energized by the event and look forward to the next annual iWalk. - **Hema Chamraj**



## SEF East Bay Dandia - *Rekha Thakur*

The first SEF East Bay Dandia event was held on November 10th. After several years of sold out events in the South Bay, the East Bay group decided to introduce SEF and its mission to the people residing in this region. As the event was held during the festival of lights it was called East Bay Diwali Dandia. The idea was conceived just two months before the show, and since it was the first of its kind event in the East Bay, we targeted an attendance of about 500 people. With a great team effort by East Bay and other volunteers we organized a SOLD OUT SUPER HIT SHOW.

It was a vibrant and colorful evening for friends and families to get together. The audience of all ages danced away their Diwali night to the folk tunes of Dimplebhai and his group. The hall was lit with Diwali Diyas and decorated with flowers to give it a festive look.

\$8,810 were raised for the Gujarat Hospital. Chairman Murali Krishnamurthy and board member Divyogi Patel introduced SEF to the audience and talked about the upcoming eye hospitals. Everyone is now looking forward to another show same time next year.

### Sachin and Sarveshs' Noble Deed



Our parents have been involved with SEF for a long time. We read the newsletters sent out by the foundation. At my last birthday party, we enjoyed the company of friends and I was wondering all the time, that there are people who can't even see any of the things that we are having fun with. So, my younger brother and I decided to save a big part of our birthday gifts and decided to give \$200 to SEF. Helping restore eyesight for several people is the best birthday present anyone could ever want. We want to make a difference in this world.

Sachin and Sarvesh Sadana (Ages 10 and 7)

# AKKA and SEF



The AKKA (Association of Kannada Kootas of America) held its 4th Bi-Annual AKKA World Kannada Conference at the Baltimore Convention Center during September 1-3, 2006. The conference was not just 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 (ACF) partnered with SEF. The AKKA-SEF partnership highlighted the need for funds to construct two Sankara Eye Hospitals in Bangalore and Shimoga.

The AKKA-SEF partnership has successfully raised approximately \$100,000 for Sankar Eye Hospital, Bangalore since the Convention. This partnership is expected to grow in strength and to inspire the Kannada community to contribute further toward bringing Vision to Karnataka's needy.

### About AKKA

Association of Kannada Kootas of America (AKKA) is a cultural not-for-profit organization and it represents the Kannada speaking people from the state of Karnataka who are settled in North America. The purpose of the organization is to preserve & promote Kannada language, culture and to undertake charitable work. AKKA was established in 1998 and 30 or more Kannada Organizations from US and Canada are members of AKKA. There are nearly 70,000 Kannadigas in North America. AKKA has conducted 4 successful World Kannada Conferences and the 5th conference will be held in 2008 in the city of Chicago.

In addition to cultural activities, AKKA has involved in various charitable activities including:

- Donated several thousand dollars to provide assistance to primary schools across Karnataka.
- Partnered with Sankara Eye Foundation for the Eye Hospital in Bangalore project.
- Distributed used Clothes, Toys and Children books for needy people of Karnataka.
- Raised funds across USA to help the orphanages in Karnataka.

For more information about AKKA organization, please visit website at: [www.akkaonline.org](http://www.akkaonline.org)

## Colors of India - Sindhuri Gollamudi

San Mateo High School Indian Club conducted a dance and musical show on November 17th called "Colors of India". This show was a fundraiser for Sankara Eye Foundation. The club's goal was to raise \$10,000 and by the end of the concert, they raised \$11,031. The audience was pleasantly surprised by the club's effort and their dedication to the cause.

The show was a musical extravaganza that ran for two and half hours with a 15 minute recess. The event started with Sindhuri Gollamudi, the president of the Indian Club, welcoming the audience. She was the person behind this whole concert from beginning to end and motivated rest of her club.

The show encompassed well choreographed dances from both Indian and western cultures. The audience was extremely impressed with the flawless performances by Mehek Talwar, Sindhuri Gollamudi, Sharad Bharadwaj, Shareen Pabla, Natasha Sharma, Carolyn Bufford, Lily Zhi, Samata Katta and Nidhinesh Singh. Mehek Talwar choreographed most of the dances performed that day.

Drumstix, a local telugu band that took birth recently, was then introduced by Sindhuri. Drumstix performers played several popular hits from Hindi Films. They also played one Telugu Song. The performance was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. The band thanked Sindhuri and the management of San Mateo High School for giving them a chance to perform.

Sankara Eye Foundation was represented by Mr.Murali Krishnamurthy. He thanked Sindhuri and San Mateo High School Indian Club for their efforts in putting up this show for a noble cause. The Indian Club presented a check for the funds raised to Murali. This was followed by a presentation on SEF and its activities.

To avail tax deduction for this year, your checks must be post-marked by 31st Dec 2007.



Sindhuri thanked all the Indian Club Members, San Mateo High School Staff, Parents and Sponsors for their heart felt blessings. Mehek, Jithan Tennakoon, Ms.Jain, and Mr.Carville, along with Sindhuri Gollamudi helped out with the concert behind the scenes.

In the end it was a memorable evening for the students, staff and parents of San Mateo High School that was shared with 300 people who will cherish it for a long time.



## Funny Show for a Serious Cause



SEF presented Anandalahari, an energetic Telugu musical comedy show on October 5th at Samarathi Auditorium in Chicago Area. Shiva Reddy, a well-known comedian and mimicry artist in Andhra Pradesh, together with Vijayalakshmi, a Tollywood playback singer entertained all the Telugu audiences. This event raised funds for the expansion of Sankara Eye Hospital, Guntur.

The program started on time with prayer by Manasi Oleti and Saanvi Nayakanti. Vijayalakshmi sang both old and new Telugu film songs. Then Siva Reddy sang and danced, and he imitated Andhra Pradesh top politicians and movie actors.

Sudheer Chemudugunta presented SEF's cause to the audience and requested people to support SEF. Crowd in the auditorium touched by SEF's video presentation donated generously. Many people became new volunteers.



At the end Sunil Oleti, the event coordinator thanked all sponsors, volunteers and local telugu cultural association members (TAGC and TTA) who supported this event. SEF volunteers Anil Nandakumar, Srinivas Rachapalli, Mogili Ramababu, Rohini, Sri Vaishnav and others were instrumental in making this event successful. Everyone had a great time at the show.

**-Sudheer Chemudugunta**

### **Continued from Page 3**

Ram Dutt, a friend, introduced me to SEF. Although I liked the cause, I had so many other activities on my plate that I didn't consider this on the top of my list.

One day, I was talking to a group of people about one of the charity projects I was involved in. My wife, Nayna, says to me – 'you are spending so much time on all these projects, why don't you look at SEF? Which project gives the most benefit to ones who needs the most?'

Then I realized that this was something I need to consider. 'When you build a temple, who benefits? The people who visit the temple... Are they poor? Are they not capable of building one? Do you have to have a multimillion dollar temple? How much community work is done by a limited number of people? Who benefits? Are the beneficiaries not capable of doing what the limited number of people are doing?' I realized the simple fact that SEF helps people who are in no position to help themselves.

Throw in the facts that SEF is non political, non-religious and the accounting is crystal clear, the issue was clear in my mind. Majority of my commitment right now is for SEF and Emancipation Network."

Harshadbhai has completely embraced SEF and has been leading the fundraising efforts in Southern California and beyond for Sankara Eye Foundation.



**When Rachna Guntu turned six, she requested her father, a long time SEF donor, and her friends to do something different for her birthday. She asked them to donate to SEF instead of giving her a gift. Later Rachna visited an SEF booth and gave the donations to volunteers.**

**– Ravi Balakrishnan**

## **Update: Sankara Eye Hospital, Guntur - Venkat Maddipati**

I am pleased to inform you that Guntur Hospital is doing extremely well and is very close to achieving self sufficiency. This means that maintenance cost will be borne by the paid patients. We are well on our way to perform 10,000+ free eye surgeries this year. The expansion of the hospital started in February is progressing well. Our goal is to complete this expansion in March of 2008 doubling the capacity to 20,000+ surgeries per year.

We have to raise about \$150,000 more for this expansion work. You can donate \$1,000 and become a founding member. About 500 families have become founding members of this hospital to date. By becoming a founding member, you can have your loved ones name on the wall of founders either in English or Telugu.

There are other sponsorship options you could consider contributing to:

Kitchen and Cafeteria building	\$62,500
Half of the 100 bed General ward	\$50,000
Guest house	\$37,500
Patient Waiting Area	\$15,000
Doctors Quarters	\$12,500 per each of the 4 quarters
60 seater bus	\$30,000

As you might know Maj. Gen. Dr. Mohan Chander garu who had efficiently run the hospital for the last three years, decided to move back to Hyderabad for family reasons. He was a great asset to our hospital and we dearly miss him. We wish him the very best!

Before he left, Maj. Gen. Dr. Mohan Chander brought onboard his friend and colleague Brig. Dr. Bala Krishna garu. We welcome and send our warm wishes to him.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me either at (408)-421-6372 or at [vmaddipati@gmail.com](mailto:vmaddipati@gmail.com)

## **Update: Sankara Eye Hospital, Anand, Gujarat - Rajesh Kotadia**

With approximately \$1.7M collected and pledged, Sankara Eye Hospital, Anand is well on its way to become a reality. For the last three months, construction has been in full swing with the ground floor almost finished. This fully equipped 200 bed state-of-the-art eye hospital is expected to be operational by the summer of 2008. This hospital will be the first of its type in Gujarat serving the poorest of the poor in the remote areas of Panchmahal with its "Patient Out-Reach Program". According to Dr. Ramani, the staff of SEH Anand is already training at Coimbatore Hospital since July 2007 and will meet the needs of the Hospital when it opens. With \$700K more to be collected, Focus Gujarat team is now planning for a banquet in the Bay Area in March 2008. SEF is actively seeking donors for General Ward that will house for the poorest of the poor.

## **Update: Sankara Eye Hospital, Shimoga, Karnataka - Hema Chamraj**

Karnataka is ranked 3rd in blind population in India. Shimoga hospital is a step towards accelerating coverage of community eye care for the entire state. Shimoga falls almost in the centre of Karnataka and is surrounded by districts with poor eye care facilities. It is also strategically located to serve the Northern and Western parts of Karnataka. This project will include 200 beds for free patients and 25 beds for the paying patients.

While heavy rains have slowed the construction, Footings, Base Concrete, Plinth Concrete and Columns up to ground floor roof level have been completed. Shuttering work for Ground Floor Ceiling Concrete is in progress. To complete construction, the hospital needs another \$1.24 million.

Mr. Anil Lal, an ardent SEF supporter pledged support with his donation of \$25K. Dr. Ashok Sonni from Florida attended the KSMD convention and was impressed by SEF's vision. He has become a new champion for the Shimoga hospital. He is encouraging the Kannada community to donate by matching his donated funds, up to \$100K. SEF appeals to the Kannada community to support this cause and become a founding donor of the Shimoga hospital.

## Roshni Natyotsav: Enthralls and Inspires - *Hema Chamraj*

Roshni - Natyotsav, an Indian classical dance ballet by the Articulate dance troupe that includes five visually impaired dancers was delivered with perfection at the Foothill College, Los Altos on September 15th. The performance left the full house audience pleasantly surprised and inspired. The show collected over \$41K in donations.

### Panchavaktram:

The feature Panchavaktram, the five faces of Shiva, touches on the Hindu mythical belief that Lord Shiva in order to create this universe, manifests into five forms. In association with Shakthi, he creates the five elements - earth, water, fire, air and space. Panchavaktram was performed using art forms of Bharatnatyam, KuchiPudi, Yakshagana, Perini and Bahuroopiya. Artists performing the roles of Shiva and Shakthi were highly proficient in the respective art forms and in translating the essence of each of the elements.

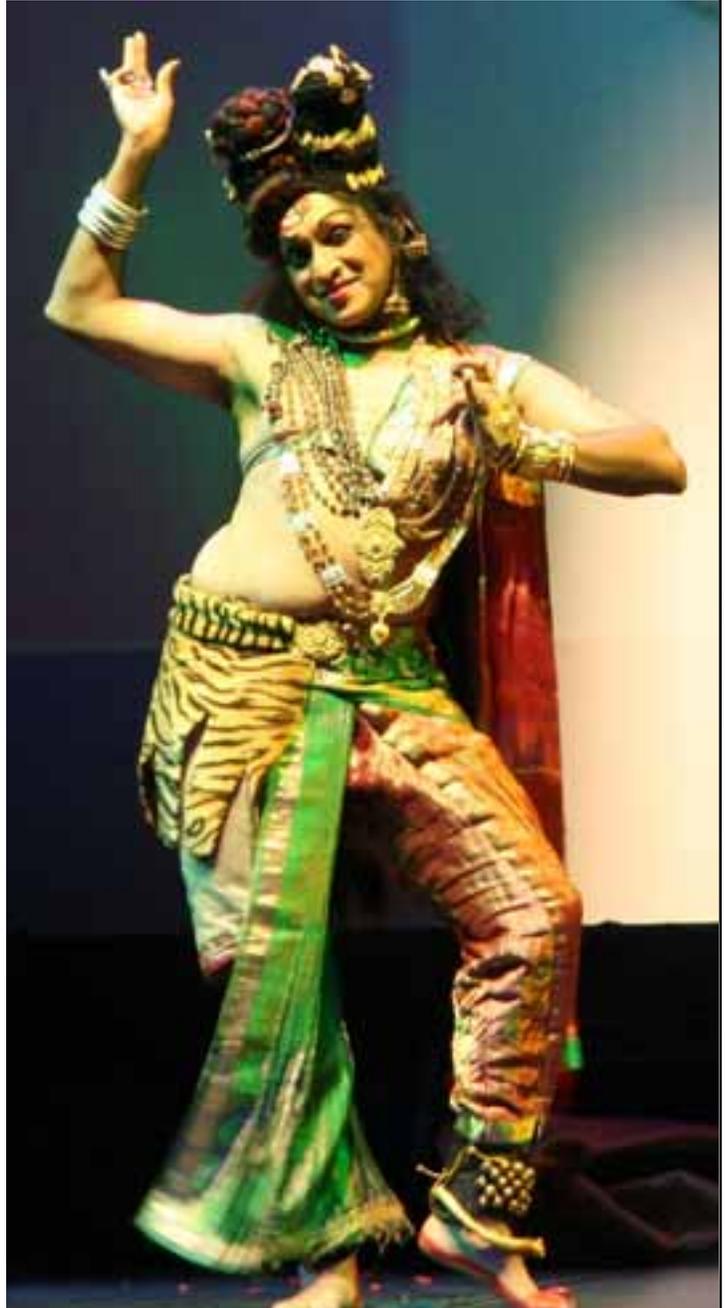
### The Highlight:

The highlight of the show was the depiction of the elements' energies by the visually impaired dancers. They mentally measured the footsteps on the stage and used their fine tuned hearing capabilities to deliver an amazing performance through superb coordination.

### The Inspiration:

It was an evening of not just entertainment but of inspiration and motivation. The five young visually challenged dancers had overcome adversity and blindness to channel their energy into creative and artistic forms, while achieving dignity and means of livelihood with self reliance. With the help of Mysore Nagaraj, the artistic director, the dancers mastered the dance ballet.

All of them suffered the onset of blindness early in age due to lack of the right treatment. These tragedies could have been prevented through proper eye care and this cause aligns very well with our mission.

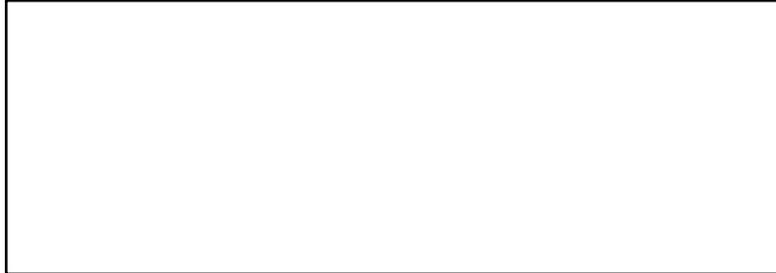




Sankara Eye Foundation, USA  
3175 Arcola Ct  
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### **A Suitable Bride – Naushik Desai**

Krosuru is an idyllic village situated about 60 Kilometers from Guntur. Sivanagaiah lives here with his son and two daughters. One of his daughters is Ms. Koteswaramma, now 26 years of age. A good student, she passed her intermediate and her Hindi Pandit exams and now teaches others in a local private school.

She had one defect in her physical appearance, a squint in both her eyes. Otherwise her eyesight was normal. Her squint existed from her childhood, but nobody bothered to take her to a doctor. It is believed that squints are lucky for the children.

As Koteswaramma came into marriageable age, matches came her way but nothing materialized as her squint became an obstacle. She and her family were frustrated.

They were advised to get the eyes checked as her friends told them that squints are correctable by surgery. They looked around for a dependable hospital. They had heard about Sankara as an excellent eye care hospital – many of the people in the area have had surgeries performed at the hospital, brought from our outreach camps.

Koteswaramma visited our hospital early this year and was examined by Dr Mahesha. She poured her heart out to Dr Mahesha of her predicament. She was diagnosed with exotropia for near and distant vision with equal preference in both eyes (an outward looking squint in both her eyes). Dr Mahesha advised her to go through surgery under general anesthesia. Despite many misgivings from her near and dear ones about the outcome of the surgery, Koteswaramma had the guts to forge ahead.

12th February was the D-Day for our gutsy Koteswaramma. The post operative examination that day indicated the success of the procedure. She could not believe that her eyes looked as normal as anybody else's.

Life changed for Koteswaramma. She became a desirable bride and had the privilege of choosing her husband from numerous matches that came her way. We could sense her happiness in her voice when she called Dr Mahesha to convey the joyous news of her impending marriage. Today, Koteswaramma is a happily married woman.

