



aasai

American Association for Social Advancement of India

Wherever we live or work, we rely on the services of others whose opportunities may be less than ours.....so let us help them so they can help themselves

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Volume 9

December 2007



AASAI's children at AVVAI Home English Medium School

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India 60

I. Manickam

Web Master

Ms. Smitha Srinivasan

.....In the beginning of life, when we are infants, we need others to survive...and at the end of life, you need others to survive...But here is the secret, in between, we need others as well....

.....Tuesdays with Morrie

501 Suffield Drive, Gaithersburg, MD20878-2678

Phone (240) 683-9325

Email: we_care@aasai.org

It is indeed my great pleasure to communicate with you through this newsletter. At the outset, on behalf of AASAI family, let me be the first to wish you the happiest of holidays and a healthy and prosperous New Year to come. Let us hope and pray that our happiness and prosperity permeate the entire world and all beings around us. It is said that faith can move mountains. Let our faith in fairness and compassion will rid the world out of war, religious and sectarian violence, and terrorism. Let there be universal peace and happiness. We are ever so grateful and proud of our patrons who share this common vision with us and have contributed generously to this cause.

AASAI is privileged to have had very dedicated professionals in its Board. This year we start with several new board of directors who have agreed to share with us their wisdom and dedication for service. Our



sincere thanks to them. We also wish to record our sincere thanks to our outgoing board of directors who helped the AASAI to be what it is today.

AASAI is grateful for your continued generosity which enables us to seek and support several new projects. AASAI's new project this year is India 60, which provides shelter and basic living to deserving seniors at their own environment. Again, this year I will be visiting these organizations to convey your well wishes for their success and ensure that your contributions are well-directed. Of course these projects would not have been possible without your ardent support and generosity. Please continue to support us with your contribution and well wishes.

L.Raghavan

SHANTIVANAM, Trichy AASAI continues its support of the Home for the mentally disabled destitutes

AASAI is continuing its support of Shanthivanam, Trichy, Tamilnadu. It is the residential dreamland of wandering, homeless, mentally ill destitute patients. Here the abandoned, disowned and deranged mentally ill are brought and treated for professionally and cared with lot of affection and unconditional love. Most importantly, this is done at no cost. After stabilization, these patients are rehabilitated in a rehabilitation center and subsequently become independent. Thanks to the care at Shanthivanam, many of them have been united and are leading a normal life. True to its objectives to help others so they can help themselves, AASAI initiated a Cow farm project, This project not only provides for



Ghosala (Cow farm) At Shanthivanam

sufficient milk for the patients but also provides therapeutic effect as the cows have become their pets. Please donate generously to this great project. Please indicate on your checks that the donations is intended for Shanthivanam Project. Shantiva-

nam is run by a non-profit organization TRUST. Please visit their site www.trustshanthivanam.org

Dr. K. Subramanian



Let me enlighten

Keep your thoughts positive:

because your thoughts will become your words.

Keep your words positive:

because your words will become your behavior.

Keep your behavior positive:

because your behavior will become your habit.

Keep your habits positive:

because your habits will become your values.

Keep your values positive

because your values will become your destiny.

Arun Gandhi, Grandson of the late Mohandas K. Gandhi

Thanks to our friend and AASAI director Mr. Manickam, AASAI is supporting a new project, India 60 Senior Citizen Care in partnership with Sri Ramakrishna Seva Nilayam, Tenkasi, Tamilnadu. Commemorating the 60th anniversary of India's independence, the Seva Nilayam has decided to start a project to care for the senior citizens who are at least 60 years old. The overall objective is to support needy senior citizens who are not capable of earning a livelihood for themselves. Without any immediate family members to take care of them, they are left with no sustainable ways for food and health care.

relocate them from their familiar environment but rather will fulfill their needs where they are. The project will provide one good meal (lunch) a day, 2 sets of clothes per year, Rs. 50 per month (incidental expenses) and health care. The project aims to improve the self-respect of the individuals by avoiding loneliness, and improving health. To care for a senior citizen for 1 year it costs Sri Ramakrishna Seva Nilayam Rs. 8,000.



The project is unique in the fact that the seniors will not relocate. The Seva Nilayam is involved with several other projects, Fe-



Dr. Shyamala providing medicare to a senior

male Children's Home, Free Family Counseling Center, National Child Labor Project, Youth Development, Women Empowerment and De-addiction Center. Please visit India 60 website at www.srsntsi.org.

Please donate generously for this noble cause.

SRI AHOBILA MATH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACHIEVE STATE RANKS AGAIN

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
Congratulations to top achievers in 2007 higher Secondary Public exams
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
B. Poorinima
H. Karthikk
M. Meera
C. Aswini
R. Shylaja
R. Srividya
S. Badrinarayanan
S. Sudha
D. Harini
R. Suganya
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

AASAI EXPANDS SUPPORT TO DEENA SEVA SANGA SUPPORT FOR ABANDONED STREET CHILDREN

Deena Seva Sangha (DSS) started in the year 1930 by Gandhian workers to provide rehabilitation to over 20,000 orphan and destitute children in the slums of Bangalore. Under the 'Makkala Ashraya Yojane' project DSS was supporting destitute abandoned street children who would otherwise be in city jails. DSS provides these children shelter home, education and a mentor at Pestalozzi village, a 90 acre campus in Bangalore. AASAI plans to double our support to 20 children by year 2009. During this past year, Prema, one of the children who has been under our

care for over four years was united with her mother and has gone to live with her. It was a pleasure to see her rehabilitation. We hope to increase our involvement in other projects of DSS, such as education, and an old age home .



In addition, AASAI is providing midday meals to over 150 children, perhaps for many of them their only meal of the day. AASAI also provides morning milk and biscuits to children. Please continue your support.

TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN AT AVVAI HOME

Feature article from our young volunteer from America

Ms. Ashwini Mohan



AASAI volunteer . Ashwini Mohan is a senior at Wooton High School, MD.

As I walked down the dirt road into Avvai Home and School for underprivileged, a breeze rare to Chennai flirted with the scanty leaves of the trees. The air resonated with the jovial laughs of children at play. It was lunchtime at Avvai and the children, clad in their checked green and white uniforms, were enjoying their time with friends and siblings. The first observation I made at the school where I would serve as a volunteer for one month, was that no social status, no skin color, no amount of wealth could ever mar a child's innocent love for play, for friendship, and happiness.

Sent to volunteer at Avvai through AASAI (Association of American Social Advancement in India) for which I had been volunteering since the age of 12, I was pleased to learn from the headmistress that I would be teaching Spoken English, a course that had yet to be officially instated into the curriculum, to the 6th and 7th grade classes. I would also be teaching written and spoken Tamil in the Activity Room, a unit designed

to replicate Western style of education by taking them from rote memory lessons to interactive classes that incorporate art projects with learning. Having tutored children for a few years now where I live, I had gained some knowledge on how to ensure that children are grasping the content being taught. Yet working at Avvai would mark the first time I taught children in India. A twinge of intimidation prodded me, and I made a mental note to make sure my English did not sound too "American."

Within moments of my arrival, as I walked through the open and airy campus, the students had encircled me, intrigued that I, an American, was also a Tamilian. Many of the girls, though in their teens, seemed much younger because of their malnourishment and stunted growth. A mixture of anxiety, sympathy, and passion surged through me all at once as I became acquainted with the girls.

When I began the spoken, or conversational, English curriculum, I noticed the girls yearned to fall back on their native tongue whenever the English proved to be too difficult. Thus, I did not reveal to them for a few days my fluency in Tamil, a tactic which would encourage the girls to speak English, as they saw it the only option if they wanted to satisfy their curiosity of this new volunteer who had come to teach English to them. In addition to the spoken English, I brought in

several donated American story books. The moment I set foot in the small, cement classroom with the books, all 23 girls rushed over to me, pushing each other to grab a book from my arms. They ran back to their seats, grasping their books possessively. The unfortunate few who did not get a book looked up at me dolefully, eyes brimming with tears as they slid back into their row with hung heads. Those expressions, both of utter ecstasy and indescribable disappointment will remain with me forever, reminding me each day of how much these children value their education.

On my last day, the sixth grade girls grabbed me by my arms during lunch and told me to close my eyes. I felt their little palms pushing me gently, their bare feet crackling against the dried leaves on the dirt road. When they had sat me down on the bark of a chopped tree, and were unable to suppress their excitement any longer, they all yelled for me to open my eyes. From each of their lunches, the girls had placed some food on the lid of a lunch box, spelling out "We miss you." And while I may have gone to Avvai as a teacher, I left as a student, wondering how the girls can be so compassionate, so content despite the pain and grief the world has forced them to endure.

....AASAI is proud of our young Ashwini Mohan for her service...

A Few of AASAI's Projects - Miles to go



Raghavan at Shantivanam - home for mentally destitute. A mentally ill delivered this baby in a garbage can and rescued by Dr. Ramakrishnan. AASAI director Dr. Subramanian handing over our contribution to Dr. Ramakrishnan.



Aasai continues to reward ranking students - Dr. S. Natarajan, AASAI President Chennai handing cash awards to Ahobila Math School student AASAI has been providing cash awards since the last seven years to the Ahobila Math students



Recognizing their scholastic achievements. AASAI is proud of these students. Most of them come from families of rather modest means. With your help and generosity, AASAI will continue to honor their achievements.



Meet Keya , Damini and Michelle our special children at Little Angels School in Mumbai where they get special attention so that they too can lead a confident and independent life. Won't you please help these Angels glow!



Makkala Ashraya Yojane—a project for abandoned street children in Bangalore- AASAI's Prema is now united with her mother—A success story...Dr. Natarajan is tasting the food provided to the children as part of midday meal program

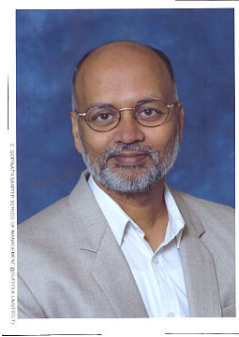


Meet your Board



L. Raghavan, Founder and Chairman of AASAI, is an engineer with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. A resident of United States since 1970, he is deeply involved in several social and cultural organizations. He is also the president of the Academy of India Performing Arts, Massachusetts. He splits his life between Massachusetts where his wife Jothi Raghavan runs a Indian classical dance school and in Washington DC where he is employed.

Dr. C. Gopinath is a professor at Suffolk University, Boston, MA and a visiting professor at the Institut d'Administration des Entreprises, Aix-en-Provence, France. His areas of teaching, research and consulting are strategy and international business. Prior to his position in academia, he spent over 12 years in industry in India. His publications include 'Strategize!' (2005, Thomson Southwestern), 'Managing in a globalized world' (2003, ICFAI University Press), and 'Globalization: A multidisciplinary system' (Sage, forthcoming.) He writes a bi-monthly column for 'Hindu Business Line,' a business daily.



Ilagnayeru Manickam has more than 25 years of experience in the IT industry. He has held both technical and management positions in various capacities. He is currently working as a Director in one of the leading software manufacturing company. He believes in giving back to the community and does community services both in India and USA. He is actively involved in the elderly care and education of youngsters in India. He sponsors our activities associated the India60 project.

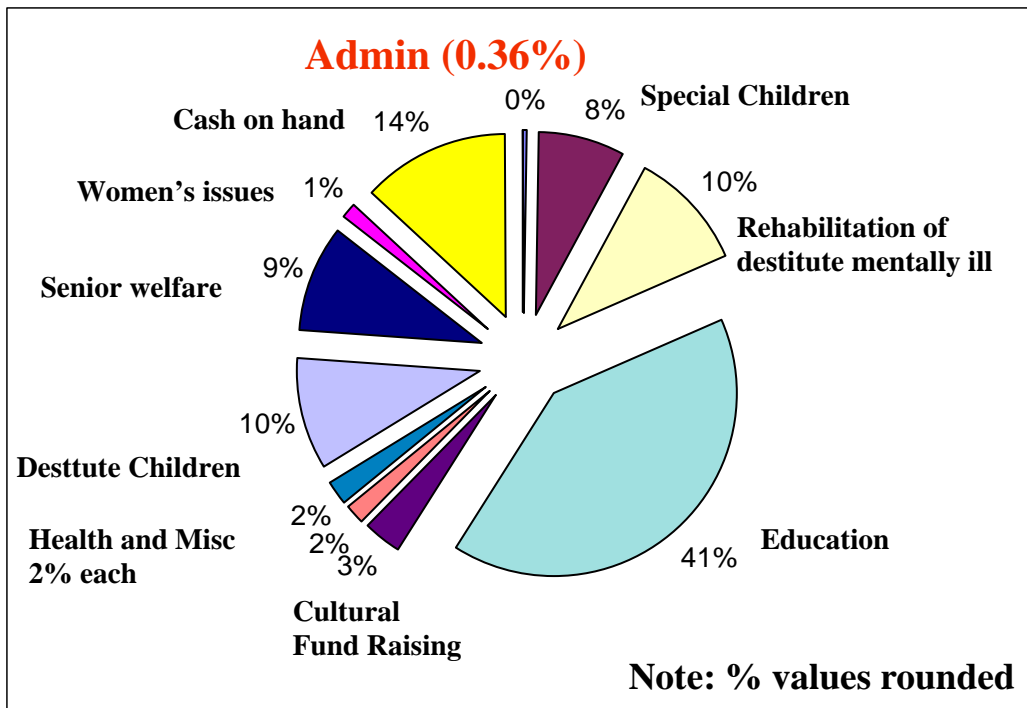
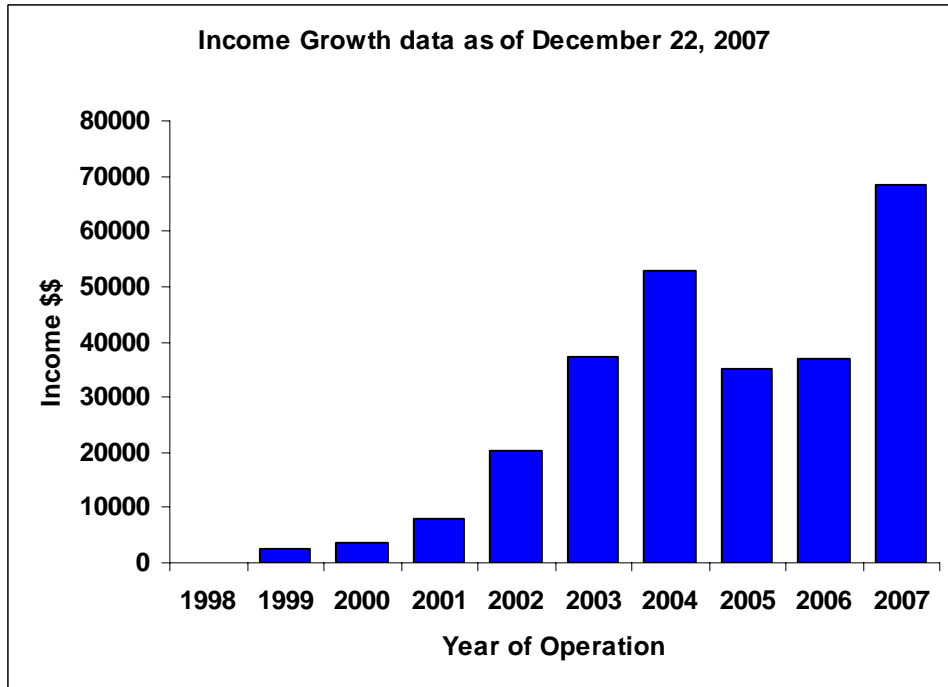
Dr. Srinivasan is a product of the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, a premiere, Indian Council of Medical Research organization. He is currently involved in research at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute, Bethesda, MD. He is an active volunteer in the community. He is part of a W/E program (Weekend volunteering) of the Montgomery County and represented the county in a competition for All American Community competition (judged on diversity, core community activity etc) in Alabama. He is a founder director of AASAI and is actively involved in its success.



Muralidharan, treasurer, is a senior consultant with IBM. A longtime resident of MD is an active supporter of AASAI.

Dr. K. Subramaniam, Lexington, MA, is the Director of Technology with St Gobain, a major French firm. He is actively involved iCare and Share, a net working support group that provides relief from the stresses in ones life. He is AASAI's director involved with Shativanam,, home destitute mentally ill patients in India.

Vaidyanathan, a resident of NJ is a computer engineer who oversees AASAI's Little Angel, school for special children in Bombay.



Total Distribution as of December 2007

Goodness is the only investment that never fails---Thoreau

American Association for Social Advancement of India, Inc.
501 Suffield Drive, Gaithersburg, MD20878-2678
Phone: (240) 683-9325 Email: we_care@aasai.org

Yes I would like to become a member. Annual dues \$120

Yes I would like to contribute \$_____

My address:

Email:

Telephone:

Our Projects:

Education

- Aduthurai Rural School for poor children
- Sri Ahobila Math High School - Educational excellence
- Shree Parashara Gurukulam - Modern education through traditional values
- Avvai Illam - Girl's English medium school

Children Welfare

- Little Angels, School for special needs children
- Children's Garden School—Midday meals
- Balavidyalaya - School for hearing speech impaired children
- Deena Seva Sangha - Rehabilitation of abandoned children

Elder Welfare

- Sri Poorna Mameru Trust - Home for destitute elders
- India 60 -Elder care

Health

- Voluntary Health Services—medical needs of the poor and middle-income groups
- Shantivanam—Home for destitute mentally ill

“Goodness is the only investment that never fails” - Thoreau

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