



# 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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Mark of great society...together we can wipeout tears  
from each and every eye

*I can give not what men call love  
But wilt thou not accept not what the heart lifts  
above and the heavens reject not  
The desire of the moth for the star, of the night  
for the morrow  
A longing for something afar the sphere of our  
sorrow*

Shelly

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It is hard to believe that another year has passed since I had the great pleasure of communicating with you all through this letter. As usual let me start this column with my sincere wishes to you, your family and all others around you for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to come. Let us together pray that the world will rid itself out of war, religious and sectarian violence, and terrorism. Let there be universal peace and happiness.

Thanks to your generosity we continue to have another wonderful year. We have initiated support for several new projects and continue to support current projects. Thanks to the dedicated service of a young man

from Ohio, Mr. Doug Jones, our project of caring for abandoned street children at the Pestalozzi Village, Bangalore is a great success. Over 150 children get free midday meal and morning milk and biscuits.



Please read the story on page 3. Shantivanam, is a new project in Trichy, Tamilnadu where several poor mentally challenged receive medical care and

are on their way to be integrated into mainstream of our society. Thanks to our young donors like Mr. Subash Mani and his friend, AASAI is supporting the Aduthurai village school to build a good library. AASAI has commenced a new project in Bangalore to build a 34 room senior citizen home and an adjacent orphanage. These are a few of the projects that AASAI is involved. And we have miles to go. AASAI is confident that with your overwhelming continued support, we can help the full range of our society to be self reliant and enjoy the same opportunities that we all have. L. Raghavan

**Announcing AASAI—SHANTIVANAM, Trichy Home for the mentally disabled destitute**

Thanks to our good friend and an ardent supporter of AASAI, Dr. K. Subramanian, Massachusetts, AASAI has embarked on a new project in Trichy, Tamilnadu. Shan-

**Shantivanam**



thivanam is the residential dreamland of wandering, homeless, mentally ill destitute patients. Led by a team of enthusiastic noble-minded medical professionals, staff, volunteers and donors, Shanthivanam serves the basic needs of these socially under

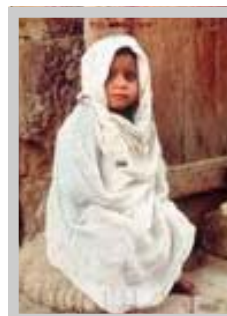
privileged citizens of India. Shanthivanam also seeks to care for the rights of these clients to live with self-respect and dignity. Shantivanam is run by a non-profit organization TRUST: Training & Rehabilitation of Underprivileged members of Society, Trichy. The TRUST cares for over 100 mentally disabled. The patients are poor, men/women/children, educated/

**Shantivanam Patients**



illiterate and from all parts of India, who have left their homes due to mental disabilities and hence unaware of their homeless conditions; they are housed at Shanthivanam facilities, medically cared and counseled. The goal is to reunite the cured and rehabilitated clients with their families or other foster families. AASAI proposes to raise an endowment fund for long term sustainable services of Shanthivanam,

Please donate generously to this great project. Please indicate on your checks that the donations are intended for Shanthivanam Project.



Let me enlighten

You are truly blessed: If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are luckier than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation..you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you can read this message that you have just read, you are more fortunate than over 2 billion people who cannot read at all.

As you are aware, AASAI started a project few years ago in cooperation with Deena Seva Sangh., a Gandhian organization, to care for abandoned street children. The project, Makkala Ashraya Yojane (MAY) now cares for our eight children who reside at the Pestalozzi Children's Village (PCV). Last year, a young American Mr. Doug Jones approached AASAI to initiate a milk project for the poor children housed at PCV. This is the remarkable story of Doug Jones, and his dedicated service to the humanity.

**Doug Jones with Dr. Gopinath (AASAI) and Srimantharajan (DSS) At the Pestalozzi Village**



Doug was at the PCV for about 9 months until September 2006, living as a householder with the children, learnt Kannada, and taught the children English. He assisted the teachers in organizing the children and on our request, did a special evaluation of the children under the MAY scheme, identifying learning disabilities and made recommendations for action.

In addition to his time and efforts, Doug's family and friends have been busy raising funds in the US and Canada to support the initiatives like mid-day milk for the children that he has started. To date, they have donated \$ xxx to AASAI towards these initiatives.

Appended below is a report received from him, that shows his enthusiasm for the social service that he has been engaged in. We hope his positive experience leads to more such youths getting involved in our efforts.

In his own words:

"My long journey here began back at the University of Notre Dame learning about Mahatma Gandhi and the fascinating philosophical teachings of Hinduism. Upon graduation, I spent the next two years as a volunteer, teaching math and computers, at an orphanage in Central America.

Then came two more years in San Diego, CA living in a Yoga ashram and working as a child development counselor with troubled youths. During all this time, I harbored a great desire to travel and work in the great country of India. And I was fortunate enough to come across a saintly woman, Ms. Lily Krishnan, who mentioned that she had worked for a children's hostel in Bangalore run by a Gandhian organization [our DSS] of great esteem. When I told her of my desire to volunteer in India, she immediately offered her assistance and suggested DSS.

The time I have spent here has been both joyous and challenging. Living and working in a foreign culture with English as a second language and having to supervise over fifty children nearly everyday sometimes all day long can be a bit draining but of course rewarding. I live as a housefather (although I am called, "Brother" by all the kids) in one of our hostel homes with about 12 boys of various ages. In the morning, I wake up all the kids and help them bathe and do their chores before leading a Yoga

meditation session and giving them their daily glass of milk. Next, I lead a study session before breakfast and get them off to school by 10:30 AM. Then I help supervise their recreational period after school (my skill at cricket has improved considerably yet still leaves much to be desired!) and lead another study session in the evening, teaching math and English to our older children. For the last few months, I have desperately been trying to prepare our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students for their difficult college entrance examinations because they were nearly all failing in most subjects, especially math. The days are long and with the constant demands, the mosquitoes, and the incredibly irregular power supply, my patience can be strained. Yet when I tuck the little 5-year-old Aruna (whose mother recently committed suicide due to the abuse of his drunken father) into his blanket on the floor at night and he smiles at me with such complete unconditional love, saying, "Good night, Bwother!" I realize that this is where I want to be."

Our humble salute to Doug.

**AASAI Children with Doug Jones and Dr. Gopinath at the Pestalozzi Village, Bangalore**



## SPIRITUALITY: INNER HAPPINESS THROUGH SELF-LESS SERVICE

Dr. K. Subramanian and L. Raghavan

Spirituality is an innate quality in all of us. Philosophers would say that the universe exists in a spiritual harmony. What inhibits us and hence the need for constant discovery of this harmony, is our individual perspective. Our choices and preferences in our thoughts limit our ability to see beyond such choices. Much of our experience - acquired through the Body, Mind and Intellect – are a measure of our Spirituality. Our inner agony and hence a lack of true inner contentment, also arises out of our unwillingness to explore the life, with an attunement for spirituality.

This is also made succinctly clear in the Buddhist concept of the four brahma-viharas, or sublime abodes. The basic concept is for an individual to achieve total fulfillment by reaching out to embrace, and be embraced by, other beings in a shared condition of fulfillment. The brahma-viharas enshrine the Buddha's awareness that individual suffering is intimately bound up with the suffering of all sentient beings, and therefore, that individual enlightenment cannot be dissociated from collective redemption. This approach is not merely a philosophical statement but a

rather statement of social and political reality, to quote our late beloved Prime Minister Nehru “The present division (of wealth) is morally indefensible, socially and politically dangerous and economically harmful to the rich as well as to the poor.”

Buddha teachings like in Hindu preachings attribute individual sufferings to the selfish desire that causes us to crave for sensual gratification, greed (possession) and control. And since the world does not always cater to our whims, we are seized by frustration and inadequacy; we dwell ourselves in rage, hatred and lust, and plunge deeper into the mire of delusion.

Philosophers, who have extensively reflected on these matters, suggest that the first step in the spiritual journey of life is to engage in all our activities with a motive that is larger than the self-driven needs. It is much easier said, than done! Let us agree that such engagement in self less acts is not possible all the time, unless one evolves to the highest spiritual attunement. However, Charitable acts are excellent examples of simple deeds for Spirituality

in practice. Through such acts, we engage ourselves to help those who are in need, in the process expanding our influence and outlook on life that encompasses many in farther reaches of the world. An individual can and should redeem out of ones narrow individuality to realize the larger oneness of life and achieve inner happiness through universal harmony.

Dr. K. Subramanian  
L. Raghavan

**AASAI is proud to recognize the following Sri Ahobila Math students with cash awards for their achievements**

**N. Kavya  
T.M. Vijay Varadharaj  
S. Deepika  
S. Aishwarya  
S. Sindhuja  
K. Priya  
S. Satyanarayanan**

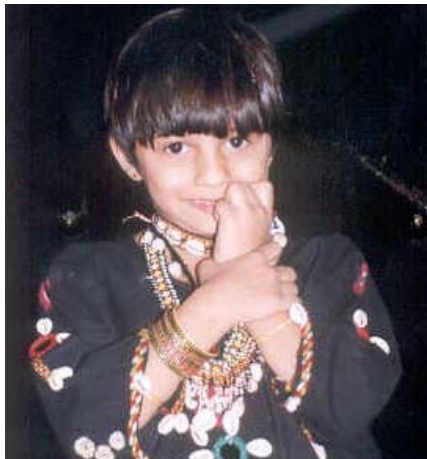
**AASAI Director  
Dr. Natarajan giving  
out awards to students**



# A Few of AASAI's Projects - Miles to go

## LITTLE ANGELS, BOMBAY

Founded in 2002, the school teaches young children with multiple disabilities to become independent, confident, and integrates them to mainstream. AASAI has adopted 8 children in the school and provided partial funds for a van to transport the children.



## DEENA SEVA SANGHA, BANGALORE

DSS a Gandhi an organization has been taking care of over 20,000 slum children. In its home at Pestaalozzi village AASAI supports 10 abandoned steer children and provides free midday meals to over 150 poor children. Perhaps this may the only meal for them.



Your small  
.....change

For a world of  
.....changes



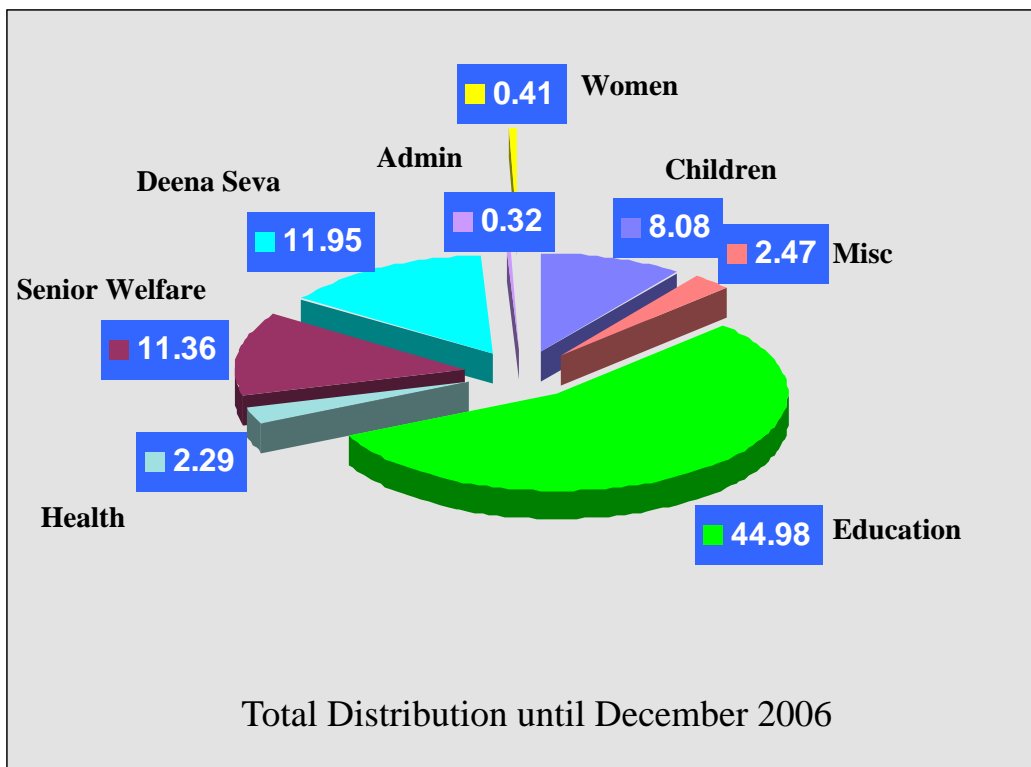
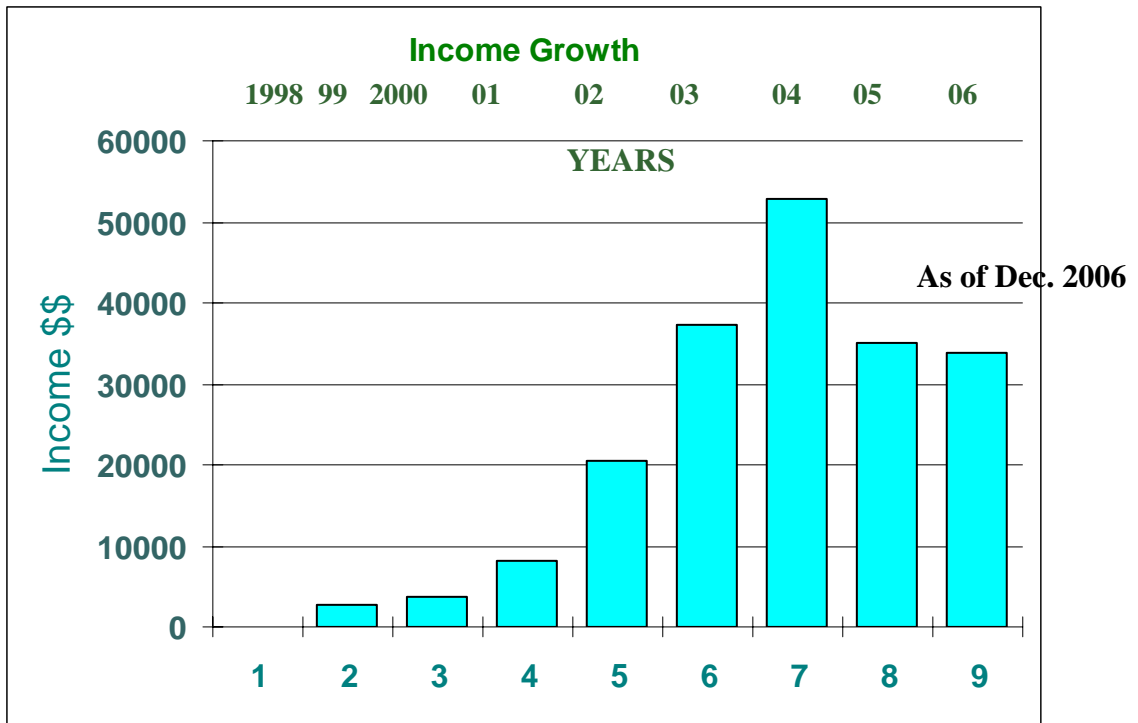
## Sri Mahameru Trust, Chennai

The Trust runs Shanti Niwas where over 60 elders, who are destitute and with ailments needing help for day to day life, now live a secured life and with dignity in their waning years. They are provided with total support including medical care, all totally free.



## Sri Ahobhila Math School, Chennai

Here students are trained in modern subjects with a vedic foundation.. The students are from lower strata of the society but are rich in brain power. Year after year, they achieve top state ranks. For the last 5 years AASAI has been recognizing their achievements by cash awards.



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

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

Yes I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_

My address:

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### Our Projects:

#### Education

Aduthurai Rural School for poor children  
Sri Ahobila Math High School - Educational excellence

#### Children Welfare

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

#### Elder Welfare

Deena Seva Sangha - Home for destitute elders

#### Women Welfare

Avvai Illam - Young girls school

#### Health

Voluntary Health Services—medical needs of the poor and middle-income groups  
Shantivavnam - Care and rehabilitation for mentally challenged

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

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