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eyelights



AMERICA



Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust Inc.,

**Sankara Nethralaya
OM Trust, USA**

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The SN OM Trust- A 30 year old Indian American saga of bringing back vision to those who cannot afford to 'See' the World!



S V Acharya receiving the 'Sankara Ratna' award from David T.Hopper,US Consul General in South India



Leela Krishnamurthy with Sudha Ragunathan, Anupam Ray, Consul General and prominent Houstonians

The SN OM Trust- A 30 year old Indian American saga of bringing back vision to those who cannot afford to 'See' the World!



Dr Seshu Sarma & Dr Ravi Sarma with Sudha Ragunathan and co-trustee Murthy Rakepalli

The story of Sankara Nethralaya, the Chennai based eye care pioneer, a registered non-profit and service institution started by the humanitarian, visionary and living legend Dr S S Badrinath, an institution which has the pride of reviving the lost vision of millions and almost half of it totally cost free, an institution popularly referred to as 'Temple of the eye', is not just a story of clinical/research excellence or advanced infrastructure, but the story of blessings and support of countless well wishers and supporters that has made it what it is today.

One of the most poignant among them is the story of the visit of an Indian American Mr S V Acharya, a senior finance professional with the Federal government in the USA, to the institution, a visit that would sow the seeds for massive awareness creation and support for its cost free eye care initiatives from the Indian community in the USA. The year was 1987 and Mr S V Acharya was accompanying his father needing eye care to the centre (A positive example of reversal of preferences, an Indian from the US seeking healthcare for his father in India, when many Indians were looking up to the West for advanced healthcare). His firsthand observations at the centre and most importantly his meeting with the legendary Dr SS.Badrinath, the founder and leading light of the institution had a deep impact on him and impressed upon him on the need to support the institution's cost free community eye care. The suffering of the visually impaired multitude in India moved his heart greatly, while most people are moved momentarily by instances of suffering and misery of fellow humans, that they come across, quite often these sentiments fade off as time runs and the place changes, but Acharya's desire to support quality, cost free vision care to the indigent, visually impaired in India was

not just a passing thought but a deep rooted commitment to alleviate the suffering of the poor and needy living in a world of dependence and darkness, a conviction backed by an unshakeable confidence and trust in Dr SS.Badrinath and his institution, as the best option to do so.

Back home the senior finance professional got down to work in right earnest and the 'Sankara Nethralaya Ophthalmic Mission Trust Inc,USA' was born in year 1988 at Maryland, as an IRS registered (501) (c) (3) charity, the crusader against blindness framed its governing laws with the help of legal professionals and laid down its objective in the most unambiguous terms as 'Raising funds in the USA and transferring the same totally to Sankara Nethralaya to support its cost free eye care initiatives to poor visually impaired in India'. In keeping with the adage 'Do a good thing and many good people will follow' many compassionate, spirited and service oriented men and women from diverse backgrounds, bound by a common passion to bring the light of life and smile back into the face of their less fortunate brethren in India, joined as trustees and started chapters of the SN OM Trust at Washington, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco

At the 30th year of its service the trust is administered by Founder and President Emeritus Mr S V Acharya who continues to lead it from the front with the same enthusiasm and compassion with which he started it, a man to whom nothing is more rejoicing than reports of the ever increasing number of men, women and children that his charity could bring the light of vision and life back. Mrs Leela Krishnamurthy, a well known social worker, a warm and compassionate person and long time crusader of social causes who sits on the boards of well known service

SN OM Trust becomes “Combined Federal Campaign” partner of the US Federal Government



We take great pleasure in sharing that the US Federal government which had declared the SN OM Trust as a Tax Exempt Charity under IRS 501 (C) (3) has now approved its participation in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of its employees/retirees. The US office of Personnel Management has listed the Trust as an 'International Independent Agency' bearing CFC NO- 68803. This acknowledgement places the SN OM Trust with a select group of charities enjoying such accreditation. This will come into effect from year 2019 and open the doors of the Trust to a large number of employees/retirees of the federal government.

We request our esteemed readers serving in the various departments of the US Federal Government to choose the SN OM Trust as their preferred CFC charity and mark CFC number 68803 in their contributions, we also request readers to share this news with friends and relatives serving in the US Federal Government.

SN OM Trust Inc, USA expresses it's sincere thanks to the US Government for this generous gesture towards a noble cause.



and relief bodies like the UNICEF & Houston Habitat for Humanity, serves as the President (2018) and Dr Seshu Sarma, Medical Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, GA, a tireless social worker, passionate teacher and cultural ambassador par excellence, engaged in a multitude of 'giving back to society' endeavours through a gamut of social, religious and cultural endeavours along with her partner in life and service Dr Ravi Sarma, serves as the Vice President (2018). The SN OM Trust is served by 18 trustees from across USA rendering their services cost free, this means low administrative expenses and higher transfer of the funds to the purpose it was collected. The excellent reputation of Sankara Nethralaya the beneficiary institution and the rapport and goodwill of the SN OM Trustees often result in fund raisers where the artists either perform totally free or on a 'at actual cost' basis leading to significant cost reduction. The SN OM Trust has conducted highly successful fundraisers by music legends like Lalgudi Jayaraman, N.Subramanian, Ronu Majumdar, T.M. Krishna, Sudha Ragunathan, K.J. Jesudas, Anoushka Shankar and A.R. Rahman. A classical music fundraiser by singing legend Padmabhushan K.J. Jesudas at the Lassiter High School, Marietta, GA in year 2017 will be remembered as among the most successful events conducted by the Trust.

The reach and impact of the support rendered by the SN OM Trust in eradicating blindness among the poor and needy has over the years made it a most preferred non profit to support and plan their tax savings among the Indian community. The trust has mobilized more than a million US\$ for the noble cause of blindness eradication among the poor in India to support the most complex eye care processes totally cost free at all the Sankara Nethralaya centres, conduct comprehensive eye screening

camps in remote regions of the country, bring patients needing treatment to the base hospital, provide free food and stay for the patient and attendant, medicines and drop back to the village, conducting exclusive children screening camps in rural schools (Sankara Nethralaya holds the 'Limca world record' for screening the largest number of children in a single day!)

India has the dubious distinction of being home to 1/3rd of the world's blind, visual impairment is not only a physical handicap that robs the joy of seeing one's near and dear ones and the beautiful world but a rude interruption into the profession/trade/education of the poor, leaving them non-productive, dependent on their family and society for their survival and sustenance which is an emotional pain to those already living in a world of darkness and loneliness. It is this segment that the SN OM Trust helps in regaining their vision, revival of their profession, making them self supporting, self reliant and contributing men and women living with dignity, it also helps a child whose education is rudely interrupted by blindness to regain vision and go back to his/her books and the playfields and a carefree childhood.

The SN OM Trust welcomes you to donate/volunteer for this most noble cause of reviving the lost vision and joy of the indigent blind in India.

Please contact

Mr. S V Acharya, President Emeritus

301 529 7377 / acharya@snomtrust.org (OR)

Mr. Bala Reddy Indurti, President

(770) 569-5817 / bala@deccanabroad.com

to know how you can enrol as a member or start a new chapter of the SN OM Trust in your hometown.

A 'Voice for Vision' rises gloriously at a most sanctified premise



It was a classic example of music assuming a divine quality, songs invoking and appeasing the Almighty being rendered with devotion in a divine place of worship, but what made the event supremely divine was the fact that it was being rendered as a homage to HH Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal, the God who lived among us and to support 'Maanave Seva' propounded by him, by the institution which came into being on his divine Will. The event was organized by the Bharati Kalai Mandram the well known, social and cultural body at the request of SN OM Trust President and friend, Mrs Leela Krishnamurthy, at the Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, Texas on the 15th of April, 2018

Sikkil Gurucharan among the foremost in today's young talent in Carnatic music and his accomplished accompanists Sanjeev Kumar-Violin and R.Shankarayanan-Mridangam enthralled both seasoned connoisseurs and budding fans with a well chosen selection of songs including Mahakavi Bharathiar's Veenaiyadi Nee Enakku, Yaaro Ivar yaaro, a song with the eye as the central theme. The memorable feast for the ears was followed by a sumptuous complimentary feast by Shri Rajan Radhakrishnan of the 'Madras Pavillion' the most preferred cuisine destination for Indians in Texas. The musical evening was graced by Shri Arumugam, Past President, Shri Mani Vaitheeswaran, President, Mrs Priya Chandru, Vice President, Vidhya Venkatesan, member, Bharati Kalai Manram., Shri Rajan Radhakrishnan-Proprietor 'Madras Pavillion', Mrs Leela Krishnamurthy, President, and Dr KSVasan, Trustee, SN OM Trust Inc, USA. The event helped in creating awareness and raising significant funds for the cause of cost free community eye care by Sankara Nethralaya.

A touching recognition to the spirit of service and deep compassion!

Prominent local citizen, member of the Board, UNICEF & Houston Habitat for Humanity, and President - Sankara Nethralaya SN OM Trust Inc, USA are some proud credentials that could describe the persona of Mrs Leela Krishnamurthy. It was a proud moment to the local Indian community and the service bodies that she serves when the long time champion of social causes and compassionate and caring individual was honored as 'Mother of the Year' by the Tamil Nadu Foundation, (TNF) Houston Chapter. The honor was bestowed at a well attended function held at the Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, Texas on 6th May 2018.

The Sankara Nethralaya family joins the members of the SN OM Trust in expressing its pride and joy at the President of its US arm being conferred with a warm and highly touching accolade.



Sankara Nethralaya seeks your support for its most ambitious cost free eye care initiative since inception!



We take pleasure in sharing that SN has embarked on its most ambitious cost free eye care initiative with the construction of a 46,274 sq ft exclusive community hospital. The facility is coming up at St.Thomas Mount, right at the entrance to Chennai on the highway leading to the city. It is a massive project involving a huge financial outlay and when functional it will dispense world class eye care totally cost free and revive the lost vision of a large number of poor patients from all over the country.

Your donations small or big will go a long way in completing this most noble and compassionate initiative.

SN OM Trust leverages large footfall at major regional meet at Houston to gain high visibility and support for its cause

The SN OM Trust booth at the World Telangana Convention- (WTC-2018) being organized by the American Telangana Association (ATA) at the George Brown Convention Center, Houston from June 29th to July 1st 2018 registered a high footfall, drawing many first time visitors from across the USA and Canada. SN OM Trust President (2018) and prominent local citizen Mrs Leela Krishnamurthy made the best use of the opportunity by staying on at the SN OM Trust booth set up at the venue, all through the three days, speaking to the steady stream of visitors, distributing flyers, responding to their queries, she was assisted by co-trustees Dr KS.Vasan, his wife Mrs Nimmi Vasan and Mr Jawahar Malhotra. Long time friends and well wishers Sai Chailakapati, Roopa, Abhishek Bala, Prabha and Sesh Bala, Priya Chandru and daughter Nethra, Rosemin



Premji, Padma Srinivasan and Vivek and Nimmi Menon rose to the occasion magnificently, helping in taking SN OM Trust's role and noble goal of supporting cost free eye care to the indigent in India. Mrs Leela Krishnamurthy expressed Sankara Nethralaya's and the SN OM Trust's sincere thanks to Bangar Reddy Aaloor, convenor of the convention and Veerendar Devi Reddy team member for their support in setting up the booth at the high power event. The event helped in spreading awareness on Sankara Nethralaya and raised significant funds for its community endeavors.

Unison of music forms and synergy of melody melts hearts and moves souls



Sowmiya Narayanan, Ghatam exponent and SN OM Trustee from Maryland leveraged his immense talent and goodwill with the Carnatic music fraternity to organize two highly successful fund raiser concerts, one at Tampa Bay, Florida and the other at Maryland. The experimental nature of the music being conducted in the ancient 'Jugalbandhi' style was a 'First time' musical experience and quite naturally raised a lot of excitement and expectation among music lovers in the regions where the concerts were being held. The sublime and mellifluous mixing of the tunes from the wood wind section and chordophone instruments by Maestros Ronu Majumdar-Bansuri Flute, Kamalakiran Vinjamuri-Violin, Amit Kavthekar-Tabla, Vignesh Venkatraman-Mridangam and Sowmiya Narayanan-Ghatam exceeded

the expectations of the rasikas making the first experience an unforgettable experience. The event was co-sponsored by 'Thaiya Thaiya' the popular event management company at Tampa bay with Latha Kumar founder of the unit joining the organizing trustees and volunteers in organizing the event while local friend and supporter Dr. Meenakshi Jain extended support at Lanham. The novel musical endeavor helped in reaching across the message of supporting cost free eye care to the indigent in India to the Indian community living in the two regions and raising support for the noble cause.

**A Gentle Note
to our
esteemed
donors**

SN OM Trust, Inc. is the only body authorized to collect contributions on behalf of Sankara Nethralaya, India, in the USA

Please ensure that you make your donation checks only in favour of **SN OM Trust, Inc.**

a 501 (c) (3) IRS registered tax exempt charity and ensure that your valuable contributions directly support the high quality, cost free community eye care services to the poor visually impaired, by the Sankara Nethralaya, the pioneer in eye care, started four decades ago by the Living Legend Dr. SS Badrinath

Melodious music touches the soul and moves hearts at Lemont!



The auditorium at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago, Lemont presented a festive picture on the evening of Sunday, August 12th, 2018 with Carnatic music aficionados from Lemont and neighbouring areas gathered in good numbers. The occasion was a Carnatic music concert to create awareness on the cost free community service to poor visually impaired patients in India, by Sankara Nethralaya, the premier non profit eye hospital in Chennai, among the local Indian community and raise funds in aid of the same, organized by Mrs Vanita Achar, a long time well wisher, supporter of the institution and grand niece of Dr S.S. Badrinath, Founder and Chairman Emeritus, Sankara Nethralaya. Mr Vignesh Ramakrishnan the 'Master of Ceremonies' (MC) introduced the 4 artists of the day's concert, Smt Minu

Pasupathi of Akshaya Music Academy, the lead vocalist, Ms Akshaya Kannan providing vocal support, Shri Rishabh Ranganathan on the Violin and Shri Sivagangai Vishvak Kumaran on the Mridangam, all of whom were performing cost free, for a noble cause, in response to a request made by Mrs Vanita Achar.

The highlight of the concert was its thematic presentation, the special effort to choose Kritis having a direct connection with the eyes, vision and awakening was very evident and impactful. The soulful rendering of songs on the eyes was followed by an 8 minute video on Sankara Nethralaya and its services, especially to the weaker sections of society and the need to support its noble initiatives.

This was followed by an 'Eye Donation Pledge' drive by Dr Raj Rajaram, supporter and well wisher of Sankara Nethralaya. He highlighted that there was no greater gift to mankind than the 'Gift of Sight' and fervently appealed to the gathering to help in bringing the lost light and smile back on the face of the poor visually impaired in their motherland, by donating generously.

The event concluded with a warm felicitation of the artists, with a stemmed rose and draping of a Pashmina Shawl. Smt Minu Pasupathi the lead artist was honoured with a special memento from Sankara Nethralaya.

Rains fail to dampen the spirit at SN OM Trust's epic fund raiser

Ksheera Sagara Mathanam (Churning the ocean of milk) the epic dance ballet fund raiser held on the 9th of September 2018 at the Infiniti Energy Centre, Metro Atlanta had all



the elements that have by now become synonymous with events conducted by the Atlanta chapter of the SN OM Trust. It was not just the theme of the fund raiser that was adapted from an epic, the scale, the grandeur, the distinguished attendees and most importantly the large number of lives the funds raised will help in transforming, were of truly epic proportion. While the dance drama by Kuchupudi exponent Guru Sasikala Penumarthi of the Academy of Kuchupudi Dance and wife of long time friend and supporter of SN OM Trust Ravi Penumarthi who co-planned the event to perfection, mesmerized the large audience who had braved the incessant rains to witness the show and took them on a virtual voyage into the world of gods, demons, blessings and curses, the touching tribute paid to Vempati Ravi Shankar the outstanding Kuchupudi

artist in whose honour the ballet was being held, poignant recollections of his father, the legendary Vempati Chinna Satyam, an excellent interpretation of the dance ballet, its symbolisms and their relevance to 'Dharmic Living' by Dr Seshu Sarma, Vice President SN



OM Trust touched the soul of the audience. SN OM Trustee Bala Reddy Indurthi, welcomed the large audience and enlightened them on the philosophy of Sankara Nethralaya and the

SN OM Trust's goals and objectives. Delivering the vote of thanks SN OM Trust member Moorthy Rekapalli expressed his profuse thanks to every artist, organizer, donor and the audience who made it a grand success. The event helped in raising a large sum towards meeting SN OM Trust's avowed goal of eradicating blindness in the Indian sub continent, a huge donation of USD 10,000 under 'Adopt a village' by Rajasekar Reddy Alia was a high point of the evening, the same would be utilized by Sankara Nethralaya to conduct comprehensive eye examination camps for the poor and needy at Ilavaripalli, Chittoor District, AP.

Charity and spirit of service immortalize a great friend and supporter from Georgia!



The Carnatic concert fundraiser by singing legend Unnikrishnan at the Hindu Temple of Atlanta, Riverdale, GA on 12th August, 2018 was a classic demonstration of the adage, noble deeds continue to live long after the mortal self is no more. The event was organized by the 'Carnatic Music Association of Georgia', (CAMAGA) India's arts and culture ambassador and the SN OM Trust, as a tribute to the spirit of giving and compassion. Dr Uma Kumar, an eminent Nephrologist and a great friend and generous supporter of Sankara Nethralaya's cost free community services who had played a major role in organizing the event had left on her last journey and a highly moved SN OM Trust and Sankara Nethralaya were holding the concert as a tribute and token of gratitude to her.

Maestro Unnikrishnan and his highly talented troupe consisting of Kamalakiran Vinjamuri- violin, Vignesh Venkataman- mridangam and Sowmiya Narayanan- ghatam surpassed the expectations of the large number of fans assembled, taking them on a journey of mellifluous melody with classical, semi classical and devotional kritis in praise of the Almighty and on the eye, drawn from many languages. The veteran musicians demonstrated their supreme felicity by fulfilling the numerous 'on the spot' song requests of the audience and not confining to the ones planned and rehearsed.

Dr. Krishna Mohan a prominent member of the local Indian community and the American Medical Association (AMA) paid glowing tributes to Dr Uma Kumar, the humanitarian doctor to whom the concert was held as a tribute, he recalled her compassion, generosity and spirit of giving back to society. Founder & President of CAMAGA, Kala Seva Mani Dr Ram Sriram proposed the Vote of Thanks. The event helped in spreading awareness on the services provided by Sankara Nethralaya and raising significant funds towards the same.

A unique 'Layasagaram' concert by a unique trio-quartet

An extraordinary musical feast titled 'Layasagaram' organized by SN OM Trustee from Maryland, Sowmiya Narayanan and Abhishek Balakrishnan violin virtuoso and a good friend and well wisher of Sankara Nethralaya drew a good audience at the Westchester Academy, Houston on the 6th of October 2018 and helped in reaching across the SN OM Trust's appeal to support cost free treatment to the indigent visually



impaired in India. The violin trio of Abhishek Balakrishnan, Kamalakiran Vinjamuri and Sanjith Narayanan blended their string octaves with the reverberating power of the Mridangam by Karun Salvady, Vignesh Venkataraman, Table-Aditya Srivatsan and Ghatam-Sowmiya Naryanan, the synergy of this wonderful music medley helped in winning new hearts to SN OM Trust's noble cause.

A gentle whisper spreads the good word at Maryland



Veteran vocalist Unnikrishnan joined hands with maestros Kamalakiran Vinjamuri - Violin, Vignesh Venkatraman - Mridangam and Sowmya Narayanan - Ghatam for an extraordinary Carnatic music fund raiser at Maryland on 11th August 2018, the concert titled 'Wind Whispers' was performed as a fusion music or 'Jugalbandhi', enthralled a large audience and captivated them to support the noble cause of blindness eradication in the Indian sub-continent.

It was a good example of music becoming a universal voice raised or a noble cause, the artists including senior musician Unnikrishnan consenting to perform cost free brought down the cost of conducting the program and helped in raising significant funds from a relatively new audience.

It is noteworthy that this makes the concert long time friend and supporter of Sankara Nethralaya Shri Unnikrishnan's 3rd cost free performance (2018) for the cause of dispensing cost free eye care to the poor visually impaired in India!

How to donate in the United States of America...



Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust Inc.

9710 Traville Gateway Drive, No. 392, Rockville, MD 20850, Phone : (301) 529 7377

www.supportsankaranethralaya.org

Tax Exempt ID No. 52-1611548

For additional details, feel free to contact S. V. Acharya at (301) 529-7377



Donating online at Omtrust.org - All your donations are securely routed through www.groundspring.org.

United Way - Mention the above information on your authorization form. Local chapters will remit your contributions to the SN OM Trust Inc.

Combined Federal Campaign - If you are a US federal employee, make your donations to Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust Inc. CFC No. 68803.

Employer Matching Program - A number of US employers match *dollar for dollar* to employees' contributions. You may be able to double your contributions to SN OM Trust.

Appreciated Stocks - You may donate appreciated stocks to SN OM Trust Inc. and avail of a tax deduction. For additional information, please contact the Trust at the aforementioned phone number.

Contributions by check - Simply make your check payable to SN OM Trust Inc. and mail to the above address.

Payroll Deductions - Please check with your HR office if they are programmed to withhold from payroll and remit to a non-profit organization. A number of organizations provide this as a public service.

Draft from Checking Account - Download from our website www.omtrust.org, the direct debit authorization form and forward your authorization with a 'void check' to the above address. We will draft the funds on the 15th of every month. You can stop your authorization any time by a simple notification to us.

Donate on Special Occasions, as a tribute Festivals, birthdays, wedding anniversaries, in memory of a loved one and provide support in the form of a bequest.

All donations to SN OM Trust are 100% IRS Tax Exempted in US, IRS Registered 501 (c) (3)

How can you help us?

Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust owes its existence and success to its committed volunteers. To realize our mission of 20/20 by 2020, we need many more volunteers. You can be one of our volunteers and can help us by:

- Spreading the word about Sankara Nethralaya.
- Supporting Teleophthalmology & Glass dispensing vans.
- Conducting events for fundraising.
- Helping with accounting, web management.
- Arranging for American students to undertake summer projects at Sankara Nethralaya.
- Personally making small donations

The following employers have supported us through GIFT MATCHING or PAYROLL DEDUCTION programs!

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