

eyelights

Number : 10



AMERICA

October 2013



Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust Inc.,

**Sankara Nethralaya
OM Trust, USA**

9710, Traville Gateway Drive No.392,
Rockville, MD 20850 e-mail : acharya@omtrust.org



**USA Student's amazing passion
to Sankara Nethralaya's cause**



**SN OM Trust breaks new grounds
in awareness creation**

Student from the USA exhibits amazing passion and commitment to Sankara Nethralaya's cause

It is more than a year that Tanya Khasnavis a bubbly youngster from the Emory University, Atlanta, visited Sankara Nethralaya to do her observership, staff members and consultants recall her high level of enthusiasm, concern for the patients and passion for service. It was a fun and learning experience for the aspiring medico from the USA as she mingled freely with the poor patients at the Jaslok community ophthalmic center, helping a poor patient from AP to communicate to the doctors by translating his talk made in her native telugu to English or obliging school children gathered around the eye camp by clicking their photographs. The brief stay and observations left an indelible impression and the passing of almost a year did not dilute her resolve. She not only wanted to raise funds but also create awareness and this took the form of 'Andaaz' a multi-cultural entertainment extravaganza. The highlight of the programme was that it was a testimony of a young girl's will to serve the indigent in her homeland and was conceptualized in the midst of her tight academic schedules. The event drew spontaneous response from students who contributed their mite from their limited resources. Tanya was encouraged and supported by Dr Seshu Sarma, Vice-President Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust a friend of the family. Sankara Nethralaya salutes the spirit of this young "Vision" Ambassador, to do something for the less fortunate and handicapped.



Students from the Emory University working on 'Andaaz'

An act of whole hearted generosity and faith by hands that heal!



Shri Arjun Rajesh, Shri N. Balasubramanian and Ms Elizabeth George holding the ATMA foundation check

The term 'Atma' in Sanskrit refers to the 'Soul' while 'Atmartam' means from the heart and soul, it was a classic demonstration of support and faith from the heart and soul when ATMA (American Tamil Medical Association) a group of physicians from Tamil Nadu, settled in the USA made a handsome contribution to Sankara Nethralaya's cause of providing cost free eye care and eradicating blindness. The seeds to the donation were sown when Shri Arjun Rajesh a young, and energetic member of the Association For India's Development, USA (AID) engaged in raising funds for the education of underprivileged children in India met members of the Mid South ATMA, Dr. Bharathi Rangaswamy, Dr. N. Rangaswamy, Dr. K.B. Ramanathan and Dr. Jaya Ramanathan, Dr. Lekha George and Dr. Santhosh Koshy, Mrs. Pushpam Talaiver, Dr. Ala Swami, Dr. Jaya Venkataraman, Dr. Poorna Subramaniam, Dr. Subbulaxmi and Dr. Sridhar Rayudu, Dr. Boomi Nathan, Dr. Kanaka Vasudevan and Dr. P. Vasudevan and members of the Memphis Indian Youth including Raghav Ranga and Mathew George, as part of his fund

raising efforts. During the meeting the members conveyed their desire to donate for a healthcare initiative back in Tamil Nadu. When Shri Rajesh shared the offer with his grandfather Shri N. Balasubramanian, an old friend of Dr SS. Badrinath and Shri V. Vaidyanathan, Board Member, Medical Research Foundation (MRF), he was quick to realize that Sankara Nethralaya would be the most appropriate institution for the grant as it met every one of these stipulations in word and spirit. He sounded Shri V. Vaidyanathan on ATMA's plans on whose instructions ATMA was duly briefed on Sankara Nethralaya and its mission after which the donation check was sent across by them to Shri Arjun Rajesh who mailed the same to the Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust.

SN OM Trust breaks new grounds in awareness creation of its cherished institution

As a fund raising body ever exploring new avenues, the Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust realized that the 19th TANA (Telugu Association of North America) convention, slated to take place at Dallas would be an ideal platform to reach out to the Telugu community living across North America and Canada. SN OM Trust members from the Dallas region Shri Suresh Dalapathy who played a key role in facilitating SN OM Trust's participation in the event, trustee Shri Prabhu Sivaraman and volunteers Shri Venantius Anthony, Shri Mohannath, Shri Sridhar Vasudevan and Srimathi Sukanya Vasudevan presented themselves enthusiastically at the OM Trust booth at the Dallas Convention Center on the 24th of May 2013, the inaugural day of the 19th TANA Convention. The booth was designed with an emphasis on showcasing Sankara Nethralaya's activities at Andhra Pradesh, especially the newly inaugurated Sri City Sankara Nethralaya at Tada and the Mobile Surgical Bus. The booth witnessed a good footfall, the brand recall and familiarity of Sankara Nethralaya were evident in the interaction that the visitors had with the OM Trust members. There were spirited enquiries from the visitors on areas like student observership and other avenues through which they could associate and assist Sankara Nethralaya. The Twin Surgical Bus and the recently inaugurated Sri City Sankara Nethralaya at Tada evoked great interest among the visitors.



Shri Venantius Anthony, Shri Prabhu Sivaraman, Shri Mohannath and Shri Sridhar Vasudevan at the TANA stall

Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust takes Atlanta city by storm

The 4th of May 2013 would be remembered as a red letter day in the history of the OM Trust, it was a day when the voice for compassion raised at the 'Hindu Temple of Atlanta', Riverdale, Georgia moved hearts and souls for the noble cause of the 'Temple of the Eye' situated across the seven seas. It was a day when the sea of concern and empathy exhibited for Sankara Nethralaya's cause by the event organizers, the Atlanta Chapter of OM Trust, USA led by Dr. Seshu Sarma, Vice President, Shri Moorthy Rekapalli, Trustee, their volunteer friends and the local Indian community, eclipsed the torrential downpour, thunder and lightning, flooding and the resultant power outage, as a beyond capacity audience sat glued to their seats, enthralled by the sheer melody and divinity in the voice of the Priya sisters. The duo of Haripriya and Shanmukhapriya are not new to Sankara Nethralaya and have on several occasions in the past dedicated their voice in support of its community eye care initiatives. Accompanied by Sri M.A Krishnaswamy on violin and Sri Skandasubramanian on the mridangam they moved the audience to another plane with the perfect rendering of the kirtanas and songs.



Sri Skandasubramanian, Srimathi Haripriya, Shanmugapriya and Shri M.A Krishnaswamy performing at the 'Hindu Temple of Atlanta'

The event helped in raising a huge financial aid in support of Sankara Nethralaya's indigent eye care and would remain a proud feather in the cap, for the Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust, USA for years to come.

Sankara Nethralaya reaches out to the Bengali community in Canada.



Shri Santimoy Sanyal, event organizer and Dr. Sagar Bhargava at the NABC booth



Enthusiastic participants at the NABC Business Forum

As an eye care provider serving the visually impaired for more than 3 decades, Sankara Nethralaya has traditionally enjoyed the strong support and goodwill of the Bengali community, this has manifested in the form of the large number of patients from West Bengal, visiting its main campus since its inception, opening of the first Sankara Nethralaya branch outside its home State at Kolkata, serving from 4 locations in the "City of Joy" and its ambitious expansion plans in the city. Sankara Nethralaya decided to reach out its noble message and create awareness on its philosophy, goals and service rendered to the indigent and garner support for its expansion plans and cost free community services in India from the Bengali community settled in Canada and North America by participating in the North America Bengali Conference 2013 (NABC), the largest congregation of the community, held at Toronto on 5th, 6th and 7th of July 2013. It was represented at the event by Shri R.Rajagopal, President, Vision Research Foundation and Dr.Sagar Bhargava, Deputy Director, Aditya Birla Sankara Nethralaya, Kolkata.

The Sankara Nethralaya stall registered a good foot fall, keeping the representatives on their toes as they explained its activities and goals and appealed for support for its indigent services and expansion plans from the visitors, comprising entrepreneurs, working professionals including a good number of IIT alumnus from the Bengali community, settled in Canada and North America. Dr.Sagar Bhargava's in-depth presentation of Sankara Nethralaya at the business forum, underlining its need for monetary support, backed by absorbing audio-visual support from videos of Shri Saurav Ganguly and Shri Amitabh Bachchan's appeal were very well received by the audience.

The event helped in creating a high level of goodwill and awareness for Sankara Nethralaya among the local community, with two doctors, one an anesthetist and the other a cardiologist, who spend four months every year at Kolkata expressing their willingness to serve the institution during their stay in India, it also helped in informing the local Bengali community on its ongoing and forthcoming operations in Kolkata. A noteworthy point is the timely help extended by Shri Shan Chandrasekhar, an old friend and well wisher of Sankara Nethralaya and brother of celebrated danseuse Ms. Padma Subramaniam by telecasting the address and appeal by Dr.Sagar Bhargava in "ATN" the niche TV channel for immigrant Indians in Canada, owned and operated by him.

Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust member conferred with prestigious award for promoting religious amity and service to the needy.

It was a befitting honour and a moment of crowning glory to a man to whom service to humanity had become a part of life, a noble trait which manifested itself when he was still a student, in the form of reading books to the blind, a man whose service to the visually impaired assumed a larger magnitude when he became a Trustee and driving force of the Sankara Nethralaya OM Trust Inc, mobilizing huge funds for Sankara Nethralaya in the USA, towards providing cost free care to the visually impaired in India . Shri Venkatraman founded and heads the Hindu American Community Services Inc (HACSI) a totally volunteer based community organization based in the Capital area. HACSI was started to capture the "Spirit of giving" of Hindu Americans and is engaged in interfaith educational initiatives and large scale relief to the poor, it provides free meals to the hungry and the destitute, battered women, needy seniors and children and victims of natural calamities, displaced from their homes. He is also a founder member of the Sri Siva Vishnu Temple (SSVT) Maryland which played a key role in mobilizing

large scale relief to the victims of the Gujarat earthquake by way of providing clothes. The Interfaith Conference (IFC) of Metropolitan Washington presented its prestigious "Interfaith Bridge Builders award" to the HACSI for its contribution to interfaith educational initiatives and dissemination of divine knowledge. The award was presented by Dr DC.Rao, Director, IFC and received on behalf of HACSI by its founder director Shri KG.Venkatraman. Friends, supporters and members of the Sankara Nethralaya family congratulate and salute Shri KG Venkatraman for his selfless service to humanity and the high distinction conferred on him.



Shri KG.Venkatraman receives the 'Interfaith bridge builders award' from Dr.DC.Rao, Director, IFC

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!

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ● Microsoft | ● Qualcomm |
| ● Deutsche Bank | ● Educational Testing Services |
| ● American Express | ● Cadence |
| ● Merrill Lynch | ● Charles Schwab Foundation |
| ● J P Morgan Chase | ● First Data |
| ● GE Foundation | ● McGraw Hill Cos. |
| ● The Bank of New York Mellon | ● Merck |
| ● Google | ● Verizon |
| ● eBay Foundation | ● Northern Trust |