

# ViSiONS

G L O B A L

*Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship.*

AUGUST 2012

## Four Trainings in India & Sri Lanka Mark a Decade of Visions Leadership Trips!

This summer officially marked a decade of Visions leadership & life skills trainings in South Asia! Thanks to the commitment of our local partner organizations along with a number of repeat & new volunteers, we were able to conduct four (4) trainings this year -- two in India and two in Sri Lanka. Visions has now successfully held 28 leadership & life skills trainings since our inception.



Margaret Whittenberger, a Columbia University Masters student, directed two Visions leadership trainings in Sri Lanka this summer

The first two trainings this year were held at the ALC School Project training facility in Thirukoilur, India hosted by the Arcot Lutheran Church. A team of 8 international volunteers from West Virginia, New York, and California, led by Greg Buie, were joined by several local volunteers in conducting a 5-day intensive training for 50 ALC students in June. A second training in July, led by Meera Pathmarajah, was held for 40 Sri Lankan refugee youth, who were interviewed and individually selected for the program by staff at the Organization for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR)

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## Visions Thanks our 2012 USA Leadership Training Volunteers:

Gregory Buie  
Rose Cole  
Andrew Denny  
Cristina Fiorentino  
Donna Gardner  
Kyle Kimerer  
Chelvi Paramanathan  
Anjana Pathmarajah  
Meera Pathmarajah  
Angela Paul  
Navin Paul  
Tanisha Paul  
Milan Saha  
Katelyn Sheehan  
Rupi Sureshkumar  
Krishan Sutharshana\*  
Shalini Sutharshana\*  
Valerie White  
Margaret Whittenberger\*\*

refugee youth, who were interviewed and individually selected for the program by staff at the Organization for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR).

Following a 5-year hiatus since our last group volunteer training program in Sri Lanka, Visions returned to Sri Lanka this summer and conducted two leadership trainings. Meg Whittenberger (pictured above), led a team of 7 international volunteers in a 6-day training at the Church of the American Ceylon Mission's (CACM) training facility in Batticaloa for 50 war-affected youth. The training was followed by a two-week accelerated learning program to help students bridge the gap of their formal education on account of displacement and war. Many of these same students had already attended a two-week accelerated learning program in the spring, further maximizing the impact on their lives and overall education. Finally, a training for 40 girls at the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC) in Colombo was conducted later in August. All students expressed gratitude for the opportunity and had an enjoyable time learning, being creative, interacting with volunteers (both local and foreign), and developing a range of leadership skills.

We at Visions wish to thank all the international volunteers (see list of 20 total volunteers this year!) and local volunteers/translators for their time and commitment. Also, a big thank you is in order for our outstanding local partners who continue to support and facilitate these vital efforts, including the Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC), SAWED Trust, and OfERR in India; and the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) & Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam in Sri Lanka. We are looking forward to next year already!!

## First Recipient of NSST-Visions Scholarship Receives Her Award



\* Volunteered in 2 camps  
\*\* Volunteered in 3 camps

## Visions Chapters

We invite you to get involved with one of our many Visions Chapters today or start your own. Please feel free to contact any of the following individuals if you are interested in joining.

### **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:**

Venita Sivamani  
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### **LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY:**

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### **WEST VIRGINIA:**

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was the first ranked student in her high school, which caters to underprivileged students. It was an exciting and emotional moment when her scholarship award was handed over. Her father expressed his deep gratitude saying, "I will never forget this day for the rest of my life". This marks the first of many scholarships to come under the endowment fund created last year, which will serve underprivileged students for many years to come. In 2012, Visions Global Empowerment and NSST will also award medical school scholarships to at least 4 more low-income students.

## Kilinochchi Kids Get Opportunity to Participate in Annual Games Competition

In June, Visions sponsored war-displaced children in Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka to attend and participate in an annual sports & games competition. Visions provided a grant of \$700 to support the service work of the Kilinochchi Kalvi Valarchchi Arakaddali (Kilinochchi Education Development Trust) to enable around 20 selected youth at Kanagapuram Maha Vidyalayam in Kilinochchi to participate in this competition. With few opportunities to engage in fun activities like this in recent years, the competition was a rare, uplifting experience for the students.



## Upcoming Visions Events

### **"Morgantown, WV: Naticakes Froyo & Cupcakes"**

**WHEN:** Friday, August 31st from 11:00am-11:00pm

**WHERE:** Naticakes-Morgantown, 1030 Suncrest Towne Centre, Morgantown, WV 26505

**WHAT:** We are holding an all-day fundraiser at Naticakes Frozen Yogurt and Cupcakes at the Suncrest Town Center in Morgantown. Proceeds from this event go to SAWED Trust by way of Visions Global Empowerment. At the register, just mention the event or use our special code word, "India", for a percentage of your purchase to count towards the fundraiser.

### **"Montreal, Quebec: Info Session on Becoming a Visions Student Ambassador"**

**WHEN:** Friday, September 7th at 7:00pm

**WHERE:** Ganesh Palace Indian Buffet & Bar, 300 Boulevard Marcel-Laurin, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

**WHAT:** If you are a passionate individual who is looking for a way to make a difference in the world, to connect people who share your values and to travel and work with Visions in

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<http://www.razoo.com/story/Visions-Global-Empowerment>

India/Sri Lanka with children, then come out for this info session. If you have any additional questions or are interested in getting involved, please feel free to contact Ganya at [ganeya@live.ca](mailto:ganeya@live.ca). Session is open to ALL students, there is no age limit. FREE SAMOSAS AND SOFT DRINKS!!

### ***"Morgantown, WV: Rocktop Nite for a Cause"***

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 20, 2012 at 7:30pm

**WHERE:** Rocktop Bar & Grill (<http://www.rocktopnights.com/>)

341 Chestnut Street (Upper Level), Morgantown, WV 26505

**WHAT:** Nite out for a cause--philanthropy, drinks, and a good time!

All event details and ticket info will be posted soon...

### ***"Davis, CA: Colors of India Cultural Extravaganza"***

**WHEN:** November 17, 2012 from 5-7:30pm. Doors open at 4:30pm

**WHERE:** Richard Brunelle Performance Hall, Davis Senior High School

**TICKETS:** \$ 25 for VIP (\$35 at the door), \$ 15 for general (\$20 at the door) and \$10 for students (\$15 at the door). Free for children and seniors. You can purchase your tickets online by clicking here: [PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

For tickets and more information, please contact Visions at [ucdvisions@gmail.com](mailto:ucdvisions@gmail.com). All proceeds go towards youth education and empowerment in South Asia. You can download the event flyer here: [EVENT FLYER](#). After purchasing your tix, make sure to bring your confirmation email in print or on your smart device for event seating.

## **Edmonton Chapter Picnic Supports Youth in Sri Lanka**

Our Visions Edmonton Chapter held their first fundraising event in June 2012 and successfully raised \$1,100 to support Visions' programs in Sri Lanka. It was a great day for a picnic in the park...and all for a cause. Thanks to our Visions Edmonton Chapter Coordinators (Branawan Gowrishankar & Leka Sivakumar) and Board member (Shyamala Nagendran) for organizing this great event!



[www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org](http://www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org)

## PLEASE DONATE:

Donations are accepted online through our website OR can be mailed to the above address. Make checks out to 'VISIONS'. All donations are tax-deductible [Tax ID#26-3386678].

*We need your help--there are several projects which need funding, including the Visions Leadership Program, Scholarship Program, and various other educational initiatives. We can only do this important work with your support. Education is key to development & success.*

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