

# VISIONS

Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship



JULY 2008

Summer '08 Edition

Issue #1

## Welcome to Visions Global Empowerment!



Visions is pleased to launch our **first newsletter** designed to keep you more informed of the work we are doing to uplift youth globally through education. As a small nonprofit organization seeking to build our programs and outreach, these newsletters will enable us to update you on our efforts and share with you opportunities to get involved in this exciting work. Newsletters will be sent out **every 2-3 months**. We hope you will follow our progress, share these newsletters with your friends, and support us as we strive to provide youth in Sri Lanka, Kenya, and India with the precious gift of education.

## Upcoming Visions Camps in India & Kenya

With 10 Visions Leadership & Empowerment Camps under our belts already, we will be hosting our 11th and 12th camps this summer. The first camp will be held in Karaikal, South India for 65 eager students from an underprivileged community. Hosted by the SAWED Trust, and with a team of 6 international Visions volunteers, we look forward to putting on our first ever camp in India!

A few weeks later we will be holding a Visions Camp near Nairobi, Kenya for another 65 students. These young leaders will benefit from an intensive training in leadership, human rights, and life skills, while also partaking in a cultural exchange and enjoying the rare opportunity to simply have fun. A team of 7 international volunteers will conduct the camp. We will be hosted by the Green Belt Movement, an influential Kenyan nonprofit organization.

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### PAST VISIONS EVENTS: SPRING 2008

*'Fashions at the Cove' Charity Fashion Show in San Diego:* Held at the La Jolla Cove Suites rooftop on April 17th, this was a truly great event. We raised nearly \$3,000 and were able to bring the message of our organization to over 130 guests during this fashion show. And we had a great deal of fun in the process.



*New York Social Event at*

## Visions Continues to Grow

This year we are putting our all into building Visions into a **full-fledged, sustainable nonprofit organization**. Not only are we expanding our programs and taking on new efforts in Sri Lanka (and elsewhere), building local and international partnerships, and raising the funds to support all of these important initiatives, we are also creating a strong base here in the US. Earlier this year we officially created the Visions **Board of Directors**. We have successfully held two Board meetings since that time. In April we welcomed Anjana Pathmarajah as our **Global Health Education Program Officer**, who is intending to implement several health & hygiene initiatives. We have also taken on a handful of part-time **volunteers/interns** who are serving here in California with us. Additionally, a number of other local volunteers have taken the personal initiative of organizing efforts or offering their professional services for the benefit of Visions. Each month we name a **'Volunteer of the Month'**, and three have been selected to-date. With Visions becoming incorporated in the state of California in May and now filing for its 501(c)3 nonprofit status, we are well on our way towards becoming a strong and sustainable organization.

## IT Conference at UCLA Launches Efforts Behind 3 IT Institutes in Sri Lanka

On June 28th Visions hosted a conference at the University of California, Los Angeles to discuss two proposed initiatives to build IT institutes in Sri Lanka. The project, being planned by St. John's Old Boys Association, calls for three IT institutes in **Colombo (2)** and **Jaffna (1)**. With 30 participants and several organizations represented, including **Visions, Operation USA, St. John's Old Boys Association, and Manitha Neyam Trust**, an invaluable discussion of these efforts took place. It was truly the first such collaborative effort of its kind. Ultimately, all parties agreed to join forces and pool resources. A working committee was established to oversee all efforts and to decide how best to support these important projects. Visions is happy to help facilitate this process and contribute to the development of all 3 institutes.

## Update: Kalagam Visions Learning Centre

In January of this year we were pleased to host Mrs. Sivanandini Duraiswamy from Sri Lanka at the **"Lighting the Way" event in Pasadena** to present an important project we are working very hard on--the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The KVLC will be a multistoried learning center built opposite Saiva Mangaiyar Vidyalayam (Hindu Ladies College), an all-girl school established in Colombo in 1932.

**New York Social Event at Katra:** A social mixer/fundraiser was held at Katra Lounge in New York City on May 22nd. With about 60 guests in attendance we raised over \$1,200 and were able to expand our reach to the East Coast for the first time.

**Conference at Columbia University, NYC:** Visions hosted a Sri Lanka Young Professionals Conference at Columbia University in New York on May 25th. With a few dozen participants, including representatives from four other organizations (including Operation USA, IMHO, & Sarvodaya USA), it was a great opportunity to network and mobilize behind the common goal of helping people in Sri Lanka.

**Photo Shoot Fundraiser in San Diego:** Professional photographer Anouk Vashe held a fundraiser for Visions on June 14th at her studio in San Diego. Several photo shoots were held, with the proceeds benefiting Visions Leadership & Empowerment Camps and helping to subsidize Anouk's volunteer trip with Visions this summer to Kenya.

**'Going Global in an IT World' Conference at UCLA:** see article included for more details.

Visions is always looking for those who share our passion for helping youth through education to join our team. **GET INVOLVED today!**

over 2400, several hundred of whom are **recent IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)** from Sri Lanka's Northeast.

The KVLC will help to compliment the existing education of students by offering them a more well-rounded school experience, as well as opening up much needed classrooms at the school by relocating certain rooms to the new building. Working in a **close partnership with Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam and Operation USA**, all parties are working diligently on ensuring the success of this project. Currently permits and preparations for the construction of the center are being handled, with construction due to begin this fall. We hope the center will be complete and running by early next year.



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## PLEASE DONATE:

Donations are accepted online thru our website OR can be mailed to the above address. Make checks out to 'Operation USA' with 'Visions' written on the subject line. All donations are tax-deductible under Operation USA, our fiscal sponsor [Tax ID#95-3504080]

*We need your help-there are several projects which need funding, including the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre, Leadership & Empowerment Camps, IT Institutes, and more. We can only do this important work with your support. Education is too important.*

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