

# VISIONS

Education. Empowerment. Entrepreneurship



JULY 2009

Summer '09 Edition

Issue #5

## Construction on the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC) Continues

We are thrilled to share the progress on the Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC) with construction now well underway. As partners in this major endeavor, both Visions and Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam share a common belief in the power of education. The KVLC will help complement the existing education of students by offering them a more well-rounded school experience, as well as open up much needed classrooms at the school by relocating certain rooms. Students, teachers, and those from other schools and from the community at-large will benefit from a revamped computer lab and multimedia room, student offices and activity rooms, halls for special teacher and student training programs, and much more.

In April 2009, after nearly one year of planning and awaiting permission approvals, the ground-breaking ceremony was finally celebrated! Currently, the construction is fully in progress opposite Saiva Mangaiyar Vidyalayam, on the 30,000 square-foot land donated by the Kalagam. This envisioned addition to the existing school will benefit thousands of current and future students, but we still need your support to ensure the successful completion of this project!!



Costs:

• Cost per floor (2000 sq. ft): \$100,000

## Lantern Projects features Visions' effort in Sri Lanka:

Lantern Projects is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 2001 to raise funds for small projects around the world. The projects request small amounts of funding for specific items. This enables adults and children an opportunity to contribute small amounts and see that they can really make a difference in someone's life. Visions is proud to be listed as one of the 4 featured projects currently on the Lantern Projects website. Please check it out and contribute to our efforts in Sri Lanka by helping us to purchase much needed educational supplies for our ongoing Visions Leadership Education Program: <http://www.lanternprojects.org/projectd/>

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**Featured Volunteer of the Month: July 2009**

· **Costs:**

- Cost per floor (2000 sq. ft): \$100,000
- Number of floors to be constructed: 4
- **TOTAL REQUIRED:** \$400,000

· **Funds Raised:**

- VISIONS: \$170,000
- Kalagam: \$70,000\*
- **TOTAL RAISED:** \$240,000

· **TOTAL REMAINING FUNDS REQUIRED:** \$160,000

*\*The land, valued at USD \$420,000, was also donated by Kalagam to this project.*

## Visions is Officially a Registered 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Charity

After many months of legal paperwork and waiting for the IRS, Visions was finally approved as a federally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. We owe a big thank you to our pro bono attorney and accountant, Adam Miller and Nanda Senathi, for their patience and hard work in getting Visions this approval. All donations made while our application was pending are retroactively tax-exempt [tax ID#26-3386678], and all future charitable donations to Visions will be similarly tax-exempt.

## Visions Team Gears up for 4 Leadership Trainings in Southern India

This July & August Visions has 4 trainings planned in India, which will benefit 280 students across Tamil Nadu. Now with our 3 Visions leadership handbooks (Leadership & Life Skills, Human Rights & Citizenship, and Global & Local Issues) available in English and Tamil we are able to conduct these trainings in whichever language is more suitable to each location. The first 2 trainings will take place at Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan College of Arts & Science for Women in Perambalur where basic leadership trainings will be conducted for two groups of 75 women.



### Projects

This year Visions Education Program is a year-round. Having a program is culturally appropriate and an important step later this year. as well as to help youth and teach

ship in teams of 10-15 year-olds. The program is running this next year-round, in 850+

Another project is to help schools and orphanages across Sri Lanka. There is a lack of books, particularly primary English



### Karole Holland-Hagino:

In 2008, Karole volunteered abroad with Visions in Kenya, bringing incredible passion and energy with her. Her motivation for helping others has also translated over locally, volunteering her time and energy to help with Visions' efforts at home. For the last 2 years she has helped a great deal with our annual "Fashions at the Cove" charity fashion show, has collected and donated all sorts of supplies needed for our annual trainings, and more. She is constantly spreading the word about Visions and getting others to support us as well. We hope she will be able to join us abroad again sometime in the near future. As a small organization with lofty goals, Visions relies on volunteers like Karole to help achieve these goals and grow, so that we may better serve the youth and communities we help.

## Visions Commitment to Diversity

As an organization, Visions has always maintained a strong commitment to diversity. In Sri Lanka, our projects are not limited to one race, community, or location. We have worked with Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslim communities throughout the island, and we strive to reach all communities in Sri Lanka, where disadvantaged youth can benefit from educational, empowerment, leadership, and life skills programs. Given the recent events in Sri Lanka, Visions would like to state its support and solidarity with a multicultural and diverse Sri Lanka in which all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, residence, language, or race, can live in dignity and safety.

Shortly after, a team of 8 international Visions volunteers will be attending from California and New York to conduct our annual Visions summer leadership trainings for youth. This will be the 7th year in a row that we have run this program and the 2nd year we have worked in India. Our team will be putting on two trainings, each 6 days in length, for groups of 65 students per batch. We will be working at two government high schools in Theni and Dindigul Districts with low income, underprivileged youth. These trainings are being coordinated locally by Visions' outstanding partner in India, SAWED Trust. Thank you to all who donated supplies needed for these trainings. Please check our website in late August for an update and photos of these efforts.

## Projects in the Works...

This year Visions' main attention is on fully launching our Visions Leadership Education Program in both India and Sri Lanka. As such, we hope to train teams of local volunteers in both countries so that they may implement our program year-round. Having local teams implement the camp curriculum will ensure that the program is conducted in the local language. It also ensures that the program is culturally appropriate and well understood. We are very happy to be taking this next important step and working with teams of local volunteers in Sri Lanka and India later this year. It will then be possible to run Visions leadership trainings year-round, as well as to do follow-up sessions with past participants. We hope to train 850+ youth and teachers this year.

Another project we are working on is shipping library books to various schools and orphanages across Sri Lanka. There is a lack of books, particularly primary English books, available to students in schools in Batticaloa, Colombo, Trincomalee, and elsewhere, to whom we are hoping to send shipments of books donated from the U.S. We are also hoping to collect funds to be used for purchasing local language books in-country to benefit these same schools and orphanages. Visions is also planning on conducting trainings in basic management and organization with local library staff and volunteers, so that these libraries may be maintained and developed properly.

We appeal to all supporters for contributions to assist with our Visions Leadership Education Program, Scholarship Program, Kalagam Visions Learning Centre (KVLC), and library book efforts. We ask for your support with all these efforts, so that we may be able to better serve these disadvantaged youth, teachers, and communities in India and Sri Lanka. As always, thank you for your compassion and generosity!

## Sri Lanka Unrest Causes Delays in Visions' Efforts

Renewed violence in Sri Lanka, which officially culminated in May 2007 and caused the displacement of nearly 300,000 persons currently living in IDP camps, has had notable implications on Visions' efforts in Sri Lanka. Under the current context we have been unable to proceed with our plans of conducting a youth training in Batticaloa and a local volunteer training in Colombo. This has stalled progress on the launching of our newly revamped Visions Leadership Education Program. We hope that by year's end we will be able to move forward with all planned efforts and officially launch this program, which will ultimately lead to the expansion of the Visions Scholarship Program, benefiting youth who attend our trainings and who are eligible for these scholarships. Ultimately, we hope to expand both programs in destitute areas across the island.

## We need YOUR support!

Please consider making a donation to Visions today or getting involved in our work. There are many ways you can help, including:

\*Organize a fundraiser or event on Visions' behalf (or turning an event or party into a fundraiser for Visions)

\*Organize a school supplies drive (using our Amazon Wishlist) with campus groups, friends, your church/temple, local businesses, etc.

\*Offer your professional services, such as legal, business/accounting, architectural, web design, and more

\*Ask your company to make a corporate contribution or matching grant

\*Volunteer with us locally or abroad

This year the new Visions Leadership Education Program will benefit an estimated 1,000 youth & teachers in Sri Lanka and India. Help give them crucial Leadership & Life Skills and Human Rights training by donating **just \$25** today!

## Order Your Visions T-Shirts Today



You can now order yourself a beautiful, trendy, custom-printed Visions t-shirt and benefit our Visions Leadership Education Program at the same time. Both men's and women's t-shirts designed exclusively for Visions and

In light of the peak in violence which plagued the island during the first half of 2009, educational infrastructure has been severely disrupted in the Northeast. Over 280,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) now reside in "welfare centers" across Northern Sri Lanka, mostly in Vavuniya. Of this population, an estimated 120,000 are children, and 55,000 of whom it is believed are under the age of 10. Issues of malnutrition, trauma & other mental stress, disease, physical maladies, and more are what these children are now facing in these camps. Establishing safe spaces for children to learn (as Save the Children and other NGOs are now doing) is just the beginning of rehabilitating these children and reestablishing a sense of normalcy in their lives. Beyond these camps, the general educational infrastructure in the Northeast, has endured various stresses which further add to a system that already leaves much to be desired. There remains a dearth of high quality, well-trained teachers, as well as a huge lack of resources and opportunities. Recognizing this reality, Visions hopes to continue to engage schools and orphanages across the Northeast in order to do our small part in improving the education and opportunities available to such disadvantaged young people.

printed on high quality Alternative Apparel shirts are now available. You can order your t-shirts online via ShopModerne.com for just \$20 by clicking the link here: [\[ORDER YOUR VISIONS T-SHIRT TODAY!\]](#). All orders will be shipped to you right away. Now you can look good *and* support a very worthy cause.



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

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

1621 Barry Ave. #PH1, Los Angeles, CA, 90025  
visionseducation@gmail.com 714.315.0518

[www.visionsforthefuture.org](http://www.visionsforthefuture.org)  
[www.visionseducation.blogspot.com](http://www.visionseducation.blogspot.com)

## PLEASE DONATE:

Donations are accepted online thru 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 Kalagam Visions Learning Centre, Leadership Education Program, Scholarship Program, IT Institutes, and more. We can only do this important work with your support. Education is simply too important...*

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