

EYE2EYE



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Murali's Corner

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Distributed By:
SEF, USA
3175, Arcola Ct.
San Jose, CA 95148
1-866-SANKARA
www.giftofvision.org

Board Members:
K. Muralidharan
K. Sridharan
Girish Muckai
Sundar RadhaKrishnan
Divyogi Patel

Edited by:
Sridhar Rajagopal
Manjula Jonnalagadda
Naushik Desai
Anuradha Sumanth
Anagha Vaidhyathanan
Bharatwaj Ramakrishnan
Revathi Iyengar
Dipali Shah
Sankar T



Namaste to all of you.

First of all, I would like to share this wonderful news with you - Sankara Eye Hospital (SEH), Bangalore will be inaugurated on Sunday December 9th, 2007. Yes, it is happening! This hospital will also serve as our training

center for the Vision 20/20 team (Doctors, Paramedical and other staff to run the upcoming Sankara Eye Hospitals in the country) in addition to performing FREE eye surgeries every day.

SEH-Guntur Phase II should be complete by the end of 2007. The construction of SEH-Gujarat and SEH-Shimoga has started and they are expected to be completed by mid-2008. We will have six Sankara Eye Hospitals in the country by mid-2008 and in the year 2009 we should be performing over one hundred thousand FREE Eye Surgeries!!!

All this would not have happened without your support. Please keep up this partnership until we collectively achieve Vision 20/20 by 2020.

What is happening in the USA? Sankara Eye Foundation, USA (SEF) is growing rapidly, and to keep up with this exciting growth, SEF is moving out of our house into its own office space in Milpitas, California. We will have a dedicated Office Manager to take care of all of us.

SEF events and booths are happening in many cities - SF Bay Area, Los Angeles, Seattle and other cities. At SEF, our volunteers think that even the sky is not the limit. When we challenged them to organize a four-city tour of Padmashri Hariharan, not only did they take up the challenge but also exceeded our expectations. This concert happened in Dallas, Phoenix, Southern California and Detroit. They were then challenged with a concert by Kumar Sanu and Alka Yagnik in Cupertino, California and they excelled again - it was a houseful show of 2300+ people, our biggest show ever!!!

With such a team, and your unflinching support, we will certainly achieve Vision 20/20 by 2020.

We also participated in several conventions all over the country - organized by AAHOA, AAPA, VPA, VSNA, TANA etc., to spread awareness. We are very happy to inform you that Kannada Koota of Northern California (KKNC) has raised more than \$55,000 for Sankara Eye Hospital, Bangalore so far this year. Kudos to Kavya Kurbur, President of KKNC, and the enthusiastic KKNC-2007 team.

SEF is looking for enthusiastic volunteers all over the country - New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and other parts of the East Coast, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Seattle, Southern California etc., Please contact us now at 1-866-SANKARA or email us at volunteer@giftofvision.org.

Now is the time to challenge you donors to help us complete SEH-Shimoga and SEH-Anand by mid-2008. Once we complete these hospitals, we can expand to other states like Bihar, UP, MP, Orissa, Punjab etc. I know most of us Indians care for all states of India, so my appeal to all of you is to come forward in a big way to support these two projects. We still need to raise around a million dollars for Shimoga and close to 1.1 million dollars for Gujarat. Become a founding donor of either SEH-Shimoga or SEH-Anand by donating \$1,000 and have the name of your beloved one on the Hospital 'Wall of Founders'. If your company matches employee donations then you need to donate only \$500.

This is also the time to point out that we need donors (individuals or as a group) to sponsor the free patient wards at these two hospitals. Please come forward and make my day.

Thank you.
Yours sincerely,
Murali Krishnamurthy

Calendar



August 25th - 3rd Annual Sankara iWalk
Shoreline Park, Mountain View, CA



September 15th
Articulate
A Classical
Dance Medley –
Foothill College,
Los Altos, CA



October 20th - SEF Dandia 2007
Santa Clara Convention Center,
Santa Clara, CA

October 27th - SEF Dandia 2007
San Jose Convention Center, San
Jose, CA

Induz hosts the “Induz LifeStyle Carnivale” on September 8th, 2007

Induz, a registered non-profit organization, is hosting the “Induz Lifestyle Carnivale”, an all day fun family event featuring performances, games, and activities on September 8th, 2007 at the Sunnyvale Temple Auditorium. The event will benefit SEF and Bring-Me-A-Book Foundation.

The event will encompass all aspects of the South Asian community’s lifestyle, with zones dedicated to health and wellness, fashion and jewelry, entertainment, business, education and learning, arts and crafts, story reading, and yoga demonstration. It will also launch Induz Idols, a talent contest, in the categories of singing, dancing and modeling.



Venue: Sunnyvale Temple Auditorium
420-450 Persian Drive,
Sunnyvale CA, 94089

Time: 10:30 AM – 11 PM

The goals of Induz, a non-profit charity and volunteer driven organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, are:

- Organize fundraising entertainment events to promote various causes and support deserving local and international charity organizations.
- Encourage volunteerism that enables individuals to volunteer in areas they are passionate about
- Provide a platform to showcase & promote new and aspiring local talents
- Bring diverse Bay Area communities together into a global community

For more information regarding Induz Idols or Induz please visit www.induzidols.com and www.induz.org

Alka Yagnik & Kumar Sanu enthrall Bay area – Hema Chamraj

Bollywood music lovers thronged the Flint center for performing arts on June 22nd, 2007, for the much-awaited bay area musical bonanza. The huge auditorium in Cupertino housed the memorable event with over 2000 people from Bay area and beyond.



India's versatile playback singers Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu started their 2007 US music tour with their first show in the Bay area. Alka Yagnik and Kumar Sanu mesmerized the audience with their soulful and enchanting rendition of Hindi film songs and light music. They rendered tunes that ranged from old melodies from Kishore Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar duets to Madhuri's racy "Ek Do Teen" as well as the latest songs from movies like Don. Young adults and the not-so-young audience lapped up the tunes and cheered the musicians, while the kids in the crowd danced to their music. The musicians were overwhelmed by the responsive audience. The enthusiasm of the crowd was palpable, as the crowd stayed past midnight enjoying the music. The show was interlaced with Bollywood dance numbers like "Chamma Chamma" from Mona Singh of Jassi



fame and her troupe from Sony entertainment. The highlight of the show had Alka/Sanu duo enacting life cycle of lovers, expressed through film songs. They started with the romantic journey of love at first sight, followed by marriage, and then moved through the reality of life involving bitterness in a marital relationship and finally coming full circle to finding ways to rekindle the love.

Murali addressed the audience, and thanked them immensely for the continued support and appealed for sustained donations. The musicians also appealed to the audience to support the cause by donating \$1000 to become a Founding Donor of the hospitals. Alka mentioned that she was honored to use her god-gifted voice for



encouraging such a noble cause. Kumar Sanu reiterated his support and said that he has been doing his part in India to help the downtrodden and it gives him much pleasure to help institutions like SEF achieve its goals. The musicians complimented the SEF volunteer team for their dedication and the hospitality and appreciated their meticulous planning and execution of the show. The musicians also thanked the sponsors of show, Pie People Consulting Inc, MPINGI, and Dosa Palace. They thanked the 2000+ bay area audience that not only enjoyed the show but also showed up to support the cause and play a role in eradicating curable blindness.

Sankara Eye Hospital – Anand, Gujarat (India) Update - Ritesh Tandon

- Construction of the Sankara Eye Hospital (SEH), Anand has been started on beautiful 5+ acres of land. SEH-Anand will provide complete eye care services at no cost to poor people.
- Project plans for 225-bed hospital is complete and bhoomi poojan for land is done. We are expecting your Gujarat Hospital to be up and running by middle of next year.
- 40+ staff has been hired from Anand, Gujarat and they are undergoing training at SEH-Coimbatore for one year.
- To date, we have raised approx. \$1.4 Million in donation and pledges for SEH-Anand Hospital. We need another \$1.1M to complete construction.
- We will need your help in raising additional funds. Please donate to SEH-Anand and help us in achieving the SEF vision of 20/20 by year 2020!!
- If you are planning to visit Anand, please visit our construction site. SEH-Anand is located on the highway, and is approx 2.5 miles from Chikodra Ni Chokdi in Anand, Gujarat. Please contact me if you need further information.

PLEASE HELP US BRING VISION TO THE BLIND IN GUJARAT

For new Sponsorship list and Bhoomi poojan photos, please visit <http://www.giftofvision.org/focusgujarat/FocusGujarat.htm>

Email: focusgujarat@giftofvision.org or
Contact Ritesh (408) 623 2623 for more information

Abhishek's Vishu Kaineetam (Gift)

Just like any NRI living in the United States, we have been bringing up Abhishek with the awareness of Indian culture, the diversity that it has to offer, the population and poverty back home, and how he is one of the few privileged children to have all that he has today. The first few times he saw the ad on TV, during Namaste America on Saturday, it took a while to realize that people could be blind in this world. We encouraged him to feel for himself what a blind person goes through, by closing his eyes and performing some basic actions like eating, and navigating around his own house. He realized how painful and difficult it was. Later when he understood that such people could be cured by a surgery by donating money, he was even more excited. He started collecting money few months ago, and then when he received \$15 as part of Vishu (Malayalee New Year) festivities on April 15th, he reached his target and immediately asked us to post it over. In his own words "I want to help the country that my Mommy and Papa are from!" At all other times he is this little rascal whose love includes animals and playing cricket at home. :-)

Thanks
Vidya



Readers Write

Do you have any comments, information, or stories that you would like to share? Email us at newsletter@giftofvision.org. Enjoy this wonderful poem by Priyanka Bhatt, who inaugurates our Readers Write section! Send us your photograph, else we will have to render something from memory, like we did in Priyanka's case!



The Needlessly Blind

All they want is vision, to see all that they can see,
To admire a beautiful rainbow or watch a calm sea.
They have already felt sunlight and sand under their feet,
But to actually see a melting sky would surely be a treat.
Though their eyes cannot see, their heart has a vision,
A dream that someday they won't be blind without a reason.
If they had what we take for granted, imagine how it would be,
A mother could see her children grow and save life in a memory.
Living a life needlessly blind with only hope in their heart,
Patiently waiting for a day when with darkness they will part.
In a world that's filled with beauty and so much to see,
Words can never describe how incredible a sight can be!
A chance to see red and a chance to see blue,
A little help from us can start their life anew,
We can fill their life with colors and make their dreams come true,
Let's unite to fight blindness and the world will follow too!

-Priyanka Bhatt

TANA 2007 – Venkat Maddipatti

Dear friends,

TANA (Telugu Association of North America) celebrated its 16th conference in Washington D.C. from July 5th to 7th.

Since 2003, we have hosted booths regularly at the TANA conventions to promote our cause in general and the Guntur hospital in particular. This year, a record 12,000 delegates attended. The highlights of the conference were keynote addresses given by former President Clinton, and former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu.

This year Visala, Siddhartha and I setup the SEF booth. On the 6th the turnout was average, as the convention center was huge and the exhibits area was in the farthest corner. Based on feedback, organizers marked directions to the exhibits area very clearly on the 7th and that helped - we got lots of visitors to the booth. We discussed the expansion of the Guntur hospital with many delegates. Some of them were previous donors or had heard about us. One donor pledged to sponsor a single room and we met a potential donor who might sponsor the 100-bed free ward for \$100K. We also met another donor, a friend of Dr Kancherla garu, in May 2007 who might sponsor the 100-bed ward. We will allocate this free ward to the donor who commits first.

Dr Kancherla garu and I worked with a potential donor for the RAINBOW program (eye care for school going children) and we met him privately and explained how the RAINBOW program works and how he can support us. On the 7th, a youth volunteer Sashikanth Kancherla (son of Dr Kancherla) also helped us in the booth for a few hours.

We also met a potential volunteer from the Boston area. She seems to be very motivated and I requested her to organize booths in that area which she plans to do.

I wish we could have gotten a few more volunteers to man the booths. It was very hectic. We couldn't even go for lunch/dinner and luckily friends brought some food to the booth.



We also met Rao Chalasani garu of TANA Foundation (with whom I work closely for TANA Foundation sponsored eye camps). Their booth was at the main entrance of the main hall. He suggested that during the next event, we could locate the booths together near the main entrance. We hope to do this in next TANA convention in 2009 in Orlando. Thanks to Rao garu for his kind and generous offer.

Thanks to Seetharam Balusu garu for sending part of the booth material through Dr Kancherla garu, and Satish Ambati for helping us setup the booth and getting us food. A big thanks to Dr Kancherla garu for promoting our cause amongst his huge network of friends and securing big commitments from them. Also thanks to Raj Panchapakesan and Venkat Dokiparthi for giving us a ride from SFO airport at 1.30am in the morning.

Finally a big thanks to Jayaram garu who had gotten us the booth at 50% discount.

Note: We stayed with one of my good friends Kishore Balabhadruni (with whom I worked at CMC Limited in Hyderabad) and his 13-year-old daughter Chinmaye. She is very motivated and wants to promote our cause in the Virginia area. We left some booth materials with her. There is a lot of potential in the Virginia/Maryland/D.C area and we haven't tapped much of it yet. Our tri-state team can leverage the big presence of Indians and we should conduct a big event in this area to promote our cause.

Regards,
Venkat Madipatti

VSNA Convention - Manjula Jonnalagadda



We met Mr. Doddamane, VSNA's convention chair when he visited the Bay Area. He was very impressed by our cause. With that encouragement, Rekha, Sundar, Murali and I went to spread the word about SEF and the Shimoga Hospital at their convention on July 7th and 8th.

We reached Detroit on Friday morning and set up the booth at the Banquet hall (they call it the Dome) for the convention on Saturday and Sunday. We stuffed a one-pager write-up, video, pledge card, and a business reply envelope into the convention registration bag. We also gave away some water bottles, which we had ordered for this convention.



We met VSNA members and talked about the cause and spread awareness about SEF. That evening a dance troupe of 13 with 5 blind performers performed. The performance was fantastic to say the least. They will be performing for SEF in Bay Area this September. Mr. Doddamane introduced SEF right before the dance.

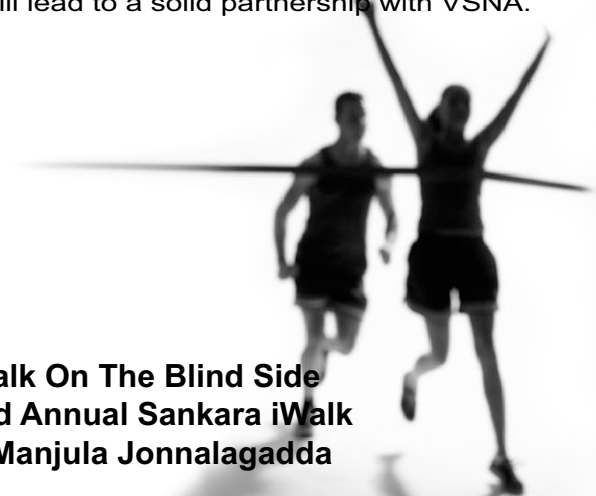
We distributed water bottles the next day. Three children Riya, Apoorva and (oh no, I can't remember her name!) became SEF volunteers to help out with the distribution.

2 Children donated \$5 each. First girl Maithri, a 9 year old, came and donated \$5 and said that she wants to be a doctor. Later she came and told me "Do you know how I got the idea? I was getting bored and started to think of what if I were blind. I thought I would do something.



If I ask for more money my parents would refuse. So I gave \$5." Inspired by that, her friend Shruti also donated \$5.

Overall it was a great trip. Now everyone who attended the VSNA convention knows about SEF and the Shimoga Hospital. Hopefully this will lead to a solid partnership with VSNA.



Walk On The Blind Side 3rd Annual Sankara iWalk – Manjula Jonnalagadda

Distance: 13.1K Half Marathon (Run only) and 10K/5K (Walk or Run).
Target: \$100K

Come run the first ever half marathon at Shoreline Park. If you are not a long distance runner, walk or run 5K/10K. Or just come have fun at the carnival. Your participation can help a few people regain their eyesight.

Select whether to walk or run. Select the distance. Select your fund raising goal and register for the iWalk. We will help you at every stage. Tell your friends and colleagues about Sankara and ask them donate. If you raise the most funds, you will win a prize.

You can also form a team. Mobilize a group of friends and register as a team. Team events are always fun.

To learn more, please give us a call at 1-866-SANKARA, or visit us at - <http://www.giftofvision.org/>

AAPI Convention update – Sonal Solanki



AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) celebrated its Silver Jubilee convention in Philadelphia in the month of May in a grand way. SEF has been organizing booths at the AAPI conventions every year for the last 5 years.

This year was special. AAPI, after seeing the dedication of SEF volunteers at their booths for a few years, requested SEF to help out with the tasks at this grand convention. Normally SEF volunteers from California travel every year for the booth at the AAPI convention, which is held in various parts of the country each year. This year, the convention being in Philadelphia, and the volunteer requirement for helping out AAPI being on average 8-10 volunteers per day for 5 days, the task was challenging to say the least. Challenging??? Not for Sankara volunteers!!! Several new and existing volunteers from tri-state and California came forward to help take the SEF-AAPI partnership to a next level.

Right from day one, the volunteers were there, right on time, with all their dedication, passion, and enthusiasm – with one goal in mind – to help give vision to the needlessly blind in India. For 5 consecutive days, they worked selflessly, tirelessly, with all the zeal and enthusiasm to far exceed the expectations of the AAPI management and convention planning committee. They helped right from preparing the giveaway packages for thousands of participants, pre-registration, seat assignments, guiding participants to various ongoing CME classes, as well as many other tasks throughout the convention. They did it with passion and did it with class – Sankara style. The convention chair Dr. Jayesh Kanuga and the newly elected President of AAPI Dr. Hemant Patel were in awe of the dedication of Sankara volunteers. According to them, the dedication, hard work and professionalism of Sankara volunteers was simply amazing and the event co-ordination and overall functioning wouldn't have been as smooth and seamless without their help.



SEF video was played during two of the main banquets and the guests patiently sat down and watched it. Over and above helping AAPI with its volunteer needs, SEF had its own booth with the same volunteers, rotating their duties between AAPI and SEF activities. The booth drew a lot of crowd and the visitors were amazed when they saw the same volunteers, whom they met at registration, now manning the Sankara booth with a smile.

This further step in the SEF-AAPI partnership would help SEF get closer to its goal. SEF looks forward to the future support from the AAPI organization to achieve their mission of vision 20/20 by Year 2020.

The volunteers who helped at the AAPI convention are K. Sridharan, Venkat Maddipati, Raj Panchapakesan and Sonal Solanki from California, SeethaRam Balusu from New York, Vidya & Kiran Choudary, Vimmi Panchal, Janaki, Ajay Khandelwal, Shilpa Patil, Priyanka Gawande, and Avanti Bidkar from Pennsylvania, Dipak Jani, Manish Parekh, Pankaj Rajankar, Shruti Agarwal, Vishnu, Gajendra Sahu and Shalini from New Jersey. Smita Patel, Rekha Shivapa and Shruti Sheth from California helped in co-ordinating various tasks related to the SEF volunteers' visit at the convention.



4th Annual SEF Golf Tournament – Bakul Patel

The 4th Annual SEF Golf Tournament was held on June 3rd, 2007 at Coyote Creek Golf Club (Tournament Course) in San Jose, CA. 90 players participated in the fund raising event. The participants were very impressed with the overall event and felt it was well coordinated.

This event was sponsored by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Bank located in Milpitas, California at a Platinum Sponsor Level of \$5K. This event would not have been a success without their support.

The SEF volunteers worked tirelessly over the previous 3 months and on the Event Day. The registration ran smoothly, and volunteers were running in and out of the clubhouse to deliver banners, beverages and goodie bags. They were also sitting at the tee boxes for 5 hours in the sun to sell Mulligans and Vegas Hole and made sure that everyone had a good time.

The event generated \$9K.

Driving to Save Lives - Kalpana Mohan

The time is now for all eligible South Asians to join the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) registry

Vinay Chakravarthy, 29, had just begun his residency in Orthopedics at Boston Medical Center in fall 2006 when he was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). Vinay's valiant fight against leukemia has touched South Asian-Americans across the country in the last few months.

Every time a member of the South Asian community is diagnosed with a form of Leukemia, we are made painfully conscious for a period of time. A frenzied rush of activity ensues; bone marrow drives happen around the country at local temples and other community organizations. The numbers trickle in—some fifty here, and a hundred there.

Now, for what seems like the first time, we are asking the question we never asked before: What if it were me? From hearing Kal Penn's pleas on Vinay's website to reading informational stickers on containers of dosa batter, we have been confronted with the reality of leukemia and the need for bone marrow donors.

As Vinay undergoes his sixth round of chemotherapy, he is living life one day at a time, searching for the one miracle bone marrow donor who might give him a lease on life. "[Vinay's] motto is 'mind over matter.' He thinks that even though he can't control what happens to him, he can control how he feels about it," says Vinay's wife, Rashmi Rao, currently in her third year of medical school.

Vinay is joined by another man, 31-year-old Sameer Bhatia, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur who was also recently diagnosed with AML. Both young men got married in the last two years and dreamed of forging their paths in the world in the upcoming decades. Their battle with leukemia is being documented at www.helpvinay.org and at www.helpsameer.org.

What is needed now is not just a knee-jerk reaction to two particular patients and their specific stories. We need a colossal South Asian revolution in the United States, certainly in India, and throughout the Indian diaspora in order to tackle the urgent problem of bone marrow under-representation in our community.

A swab of the cheek puts you on a life-saving path

Currently, the South Asian component of the National Bone Marrow registry is incredibly small, and South Asians are dying for lack of a bone marrow match (currently placed at a 1 in 20,000 chance of a match). When Caucasians need a bone marrow transplant, their chance of finding a match is 80 percent, according to the Asian American Donor Program (AADP).

South Asians, even when pressed to register, simply do not sign up. This is in part due to indifference and, in some measure, due to ignorance. But most of all, it stems from an intrinsic fear of the actual donation process should they be determined a match.

Since her husband fell ill, Rao has learned that Indians are the last among all ethnicities to donate bone marrow, blood, and organs: "We are part of a community that will use all the resources without questioning any of it. But when asked to donate to the

same pool, we seem to be the most hesitant. It doesn't seem right does it?" So for now, even as they face an uncertain future, Vinay and Rashmi insist that this attitude is the one thing they would like to change most within the Indian community.

This seeming lack of generosity and commitment among South Asians has not gone unnoticed by experts who track bone marrow donation statistics. According to Dr. Galen Switzer of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, there is a significant difference in the 'dropout' rates of people in the bone marrow registry depending on the ethnic group to which people belong. "Caucasians are much more likely to be available when the call comes," Switzer says. "It's about 70 percent—much higher than for an ethnic minority group in which only 50 percent of those on a registry are available to donate."

Switzer has been working with the NMDP on a five-year study on donor unavailability, honing in on why someone who commits fast enough to register doesn't commit deeply enough to donate when the telephone rings. His study looks at the many variables that cause members of a population to be committed donors. Often, these have to do with cultural values, religious beliefs, and close family ties where individuals are expected to also consult with the family before making such a decision.

But the recent efforts around the United States for Vinay and Sameer may radically change people's attitudes. For one, members of the Indian-American population are now better informed. We're beginning to realize that the registration and the marrow donation process have become simpler over the years.

Adding oneself to the registry is a quick two-step process (see details on the AADP website, www.aadp.org). According to AADP, potential registrants can attend a drive, request a home kit, or visit a local branch of the NMDP near their residence. Registrants first fill out a form giving their contact information and listing any medical conditions; this is followed by the use of a special sponge-tipped or soft brush swab used to collect tissue from inside the cheek. In ten minutes, a registrant is on the path to save a life—one day from now or twenty years from now.

A look at the Bone Marrow donation process

There are currently two ways in which the donation may happen. In both types of procedures, doctors are looking to harvest blood forming stem cells. These stem cells are already differentiated to produce blood cells in the body. The stem cells are primarily produced in the bone marrow. Traditionally, this is the site from which the stem cells have been extracted, but about eight years ago, scientists discovered that stem cells also exist in very small amounts in the



blood stream. Both methods have become ways to extract the same thing: blood stem cells.



It is usually the recipient's doctor who decides which of the two procedures is ideal for the patient. Doctors have found differences in a recipient's outcome depending on where the stem cells come from. Some studies have shown that stem cells from Peripheral Blood Stem Cells (PBSC) have a higher incidence of Chronic Graft Versus Host disease for transplant recipients. A patient's age, health status and disease status are carefully considered when choosing which procedure a donor will be asked to undergo. Finally, a donor's health is also considered, and the coordinator dealing with the donor usually reports to the NMDP about any special health considerations.

PBSC donation (happens in about 70 percent of procedures) takes place at an apheresis center. Apheresis is the process to separate the different components in blood to obtain the type of cell needed. In order to increase the number of blood-forming cells, donors receive daily injections of a drug called Filgrastim for five days before the collection. The donor's blood is then removed through a sterile needle in one arm, passed through a machine that separates out the cells used in transplantation, and the remaining blood is returned through the other arm.

The actual procedure takes about five hours in one day (a donor is given DVDs to watch during this time), or the donor may choose to donate in two collections over two days.

Risks in a PBSC donation procedure

There is minor risk of infection as with any puncture of the skin. Filgrastim has been known to cause side effects such as headaches, muscle aches, and bone aches while the donor is taking the medication. This may set in about two days into the five-day process.

During the actual procedure, some other discomforts may include the donor feeling chills from the citrate, an anti-coagulant that enables blood to flow smoothly throughout the procedure. After a donation, donors may feel fatigued and have residual side effects from the filgrastim. The day after donation, however, almost all of this medication is gone from the body and donors no longer feel the side effects.

Meet Meenu Bedi: Meenu Bedi, 33, a pharmacologist in San Ramon, got a call from the NMDP to save a life in January 2007. The call was to inform her that her tissue had matched that of a 54-year-old East Indian woman in desperate need of a bone marrow transplant.

"I didn't even let her finish. I didn't even think twice about donating," Bedi says. In February, Bedi underwent a series of blood tests, a physical, and an EKG. Early in March, she was prepped at Stanford to donate through the PBSC process. Bedi has since found out that her recipient is alive and well and responding to the transplant performed in March.

Bone Marrow Donation (happens in about 30 percent of procedures) is a surgical procedure performed in a

hospital. It is referred to as 'surgical' because of the use of anesthesia. While the donor receives anesthesia, doctors use special, hollow needles to withdraw liquid marrow from the donor's pelvic bones. It is either general or local anesthesia, and the donor usually discusses this with the doctor coordinating the donation. A bandage is placed over the collection site, and no stitches are required. A donor may be asked to stay overnight to be monitored when he or she wakes up. The intent, however, is for donors to be sent home the same day.

Many donors receive a transfusion of their own previously donated blood after they give marrow. A donor's marrow is completely replaced within four to six weeks. The actual collection procedure takes about an hour.

Risks in a Bone Marrow donation procedure

The risks here mostly come from the use of anesthesia. There are typically side effects to anesthesia after waking up. Some people may experience a sore throat, hypotension, nausea or other possible short-term side effects. Another risk may involve infection in the harvest site (as with any puncture of the skin).

Typical discomforts include possible hip, leg or back pain for several days. This decreases each day as the donor recovers. It takes four to six weeks for marrow to completely regenerate itself, but the soreness lessens around five days after the donation. Pain medication is offered to help relieve the donor from the soreness. Other discomforts may include fatigue or bleeding as with any general hospital or surgery.

For more information on bone marrow registration and donation, please go to www.marow.org and www.aadp.org.

Meet Balaji Venkataraman: When Balaji Venkataraman, 28, an engineer at Intel Corporation, received the call from NMDP his first reaction was: "Wow, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a wonderful difference in somebody's life!"

Venkataraman knew how rare bone marrow matches were and how crucial his contribution would be to the family of the recipient, a 35-year-old South Asian dying from Aplastic Anemia. He says he never had any doubts: "Once I knew more about the details of the procedure, I wanted to talk to my family about it. But I knew they would be supportive of my decision."

Venkataraman went in for a surgical procedure (bone marrow procedure where needles withdraw liquid marrow from pelvic bones) at Stanford Blood Center a few weeks after the first call. Six months into the procedure, the recipient succumbed to complications from an infection.

Would he undergo the stress of a few hospital trips all over again to try to save another patient?

"Definitely. If there is a match, it would be safe to do it again," Venkataraman says.

Volunteers on a mission for life

Thanks to the unflagging efforts of an extended family of activists around the United States, the number of South Asians who have registered in the NMDP has shot up by over 15,000 people in just six weeks. People from every walk of life, every religious place of worship, various non-profit organizations, countless businesses such as theatres, restaurants, grocery

My visit to the SEH hospitals – Venkat Maddipati

During my recent vacation trip to India, I spent the whole day of March 16th at the SEH-Guntur hospital. I had been waiting for this since my last visit and that was during the inauguration. My actual plan was to spend two days that included a Sunday, so that I could go to a village camp. But due to a scheduling problem, I could spend only a day. The hospital is doing extremely well, exceeding our expectations in attracting paid patients and earned a good name in the community in and around the Guntur district. Thanks to the dedicated Sankara staff who made this possible under the able guidance of Dr. Maj. Gen. Mohan Chander garu and of course Dr. Ramani garu. I also met our hospital's honorary advisor Sri Kambhampati Nageswara Rao, who helps the hospital in raising funds from the locals and getting the work done from government offices.



The hospital is kept very clean and once you are inside, you feel as if you are visiting any well-maintained hospital in the US. Dr. Maj. Gen. Mohan Chander garu took me around the hospital and showed me every nook and corner of the campus. While I was in the free ward I asked a patient, who had undergone cataract surgery the previous day, about the service he was getting there, and he said the following words: "We raise our daughters for 20 years and after they get married they don't even care about us but here the nurses will take care of us very well." He also said that he prayed to god everyday for good health to all nurses and doctors so that they could continue the wonderful service. This is a testimonial to the good work all our Sankara staff is doing back home. This makes us feel proud to be part of this noble cause and makes our job little bit easier in raising funds for the cause.

Construction work for the Phase II expansion began in February and is progressing at full speed. They have started the slab work, a major milestone in the construction work. If all goes as planned the Phase II would be operational before this year-end.

On March 18th and 19th I visited our Coimbatore hospital and met Dr. Ramani garu and his team and discussed the Phase II plans. Dr. Ramani garu gave me a tour of the hospital. In the pediatrics ward I met a patient less than a year old who had cataract in both her eyes. The doctors were confident that she would be cured - Thanks to all

of you who are working tirelessly towards Vision 20/20 and enabling many such wonderful kids to get their vision back free of cost.

Then on March 23rd morning I visited our Bangalore hospital. We went around the campus and checked the construction of Block A and B. They are coming up very well and this hospital should be operational before the end of this year. I can't wait for the inauguration of this hospital.

Keep up the good work and march towards "Vision 20/20 by year 2020" and eradicate curable blindness in India by year 2020, if not sooner.

Continued from Page 9

Indian-American headcount (from Google to Cisco to E-bay) did their bit to drum up the awareness of South Asians in the country. "I think it was because they could personally make a difference. As parents, we are all able to empathize. And youngsters are able to associate with Vinay's and Sameer's age group," says Mala Umapathy of Sunnyvale, whose focus has been on organizing drives in different regions of the country.

In the San Francisco Bay Area alone, 2,285 individuals registered during the weekend of July 14-15 alone, following large-scale publicity efforts by a core crew of passionate volunteers who put their family life on hold for several weeks to manage drives in restaurants, offices and community centers. "We live in this country and think our loved ones are far away," says Anuradha Sridhar of Saratoga who spearheaded the mega-drive weekend. "But you come to know that in a situation like this, it's much more than what your relatives could do for you. There was unconditional giving from hundreds of volunteers who stood on their feet from 10AM to 9PM to encourage the crowd to register." The Bay Area's core team also included Usha Sundar, Girija Radhakrishnan, Radhika Padmanabhan, Geetha Swamy, Mala Umapathy, Ranjani Narasimhan, Raghavan Devanathan and Sridhar Sundaram.

The biggest reward for the crew was the education that happened overnight. For ten days, Usha Sundar of Saratoga alternated between answering 300 emails a day from her laptop and fielding calls 24/7 on her cell phone: "When I got up on the Monday after the mega drive weekend, it was so satisfying. We'd stirred up the community. People had been educated. They were aware now."

After all is said and done, and we go back to our jobs, our homes, our children and our hobbies, one man still waits in Boston, anxious to go back to a hospital—this time as a practicing doctor. "He's hanging in there," says Rao.

She is brave. From her husband, she draws the strength to take the long view. "Even if we don't find a match for Vinay, we are both very happy to know that with over 18,000 people that we've had register, so many more people will benefit."

Kalpna Mohan is a freelance writer in Saratoga, Calif. Reprinted with permission from India Currents, Inc.



SEF DANDIYA 2007



Mark your calendar & Don't miss out on Sankara Eye Foundation's 4th Annual Dandia

The Biggest & Most Popular Dandia Of Bay Area With over 46000 sq ft of dancing space!!

Oct 20th Saturday
Santa Clara Convention Center

&
Oct 27th Saturday
San Jose Convention Center

Call For Sponsorship & other information
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www.giftofvision.org



Why and how I raised funds for Sankara Eye Foundation - Samhita Kadiyala

My mother told me that there are many people who are unlucky. Some are sick and disabled and cannot afford treatment. When she said that, I felt that I should help those people. So I started donating and fund raising. I donated my eighth birthday's gifts and piggy bank money to Sankara Eye Foundation. For my birthday I asked friends to choose a toy for me and look at the price. I asked them to write a check for that money and give it to me so that I could send it to Sankara Eye Foundation.

Samhita is a seven-year-old volunteer. She raised \$400 for Sankara.



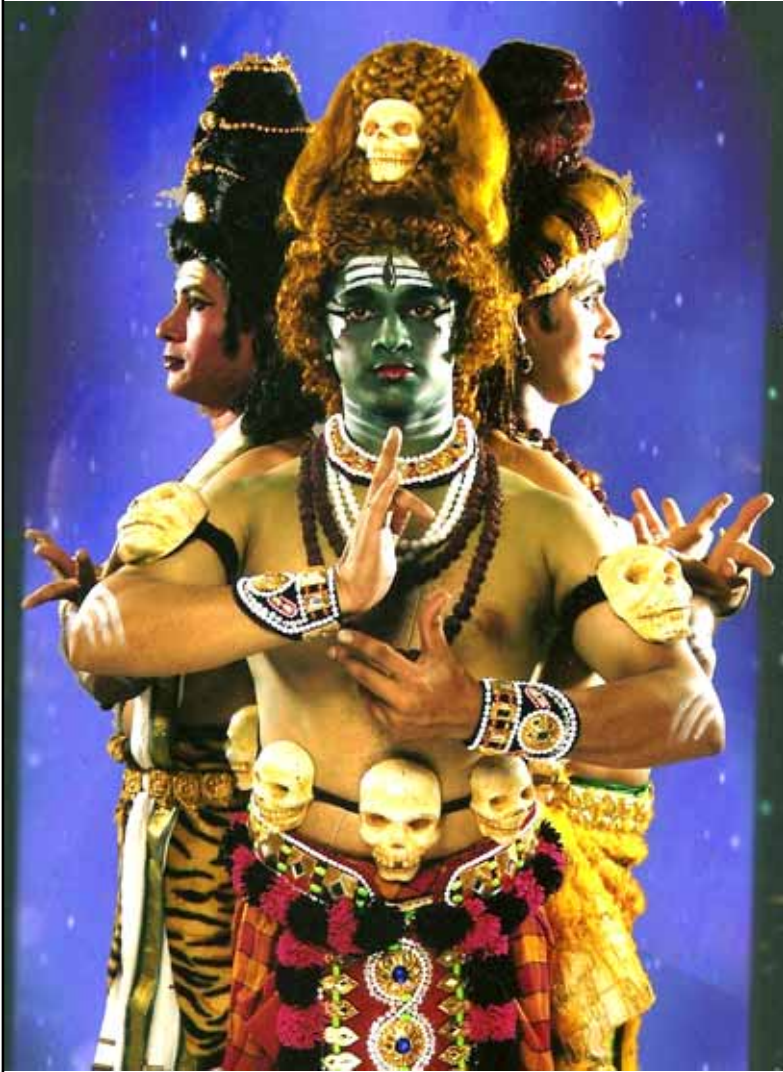
Who is he?

His week-end schedules are always jam-packed, starting with Friday evenings - he does not come home before 1 am on Friday nights. He can be seen at numerous cultural events, always with a warm and friendly smile. Nothing is impossible for him and he can achieve big things and is always marching towards the big vision. He is a perfectionist and is very passionate and meticulous in anything he does. He is available anytime via phone or e-mail and is willing to come at any hour of the day when called. He has a fantastic taste bud for gourmet food. He has a great sense of humor and enjoys listening to and telling jokes all the time. He likes to take complex problems, solve them and make them look simple. He is a team-player, and at the same time very self-motivated. He can be seen photographed with leading artists from the US and abroad. He is an outstanding role model.

Who is he? Have you recognized him yet?

He is an SEF volunteer

Articulate- A classical dance medley



Articulate is a group of like-minded dancers who have taken up social responsibility towards the visually challenged and the children living off and by the streets in Karnataka, India. The feature Panchavaktram is performed by an ensemble that includes visually challenged dancers.

The production showcases different dance styles of India strung by the concept of creation of the elements by Shiva in his five manifestations. An extraordinary ballet performed exceptionally by the blind, performing the 2500 year old ritual and the depiction of the elements.

Where: Foothill College, Los Altos Hills, CA
When: September 15th, 2007.
Contact: Rekha Shivapa at 408-393-4294

Please come and support the cause and watch a great show at the same time. Please visit www.articulateindia.com to learn more about the troupe.

ARTICULATE
promoting performing arts



The Colonial Cousin visits USA - Bharatwaj Ramakrishnan

The four concert series started in Dallas with a bang. The record for the maximum number of attendees in any SEF concert was broken; 1,800 attended the Dallas show. Live radio coverage from the auditorium before the event in Fun Asia, a local Dallas radio channel, was one of novelties of the show. The collaboration with the Indian Association of North Texas and the local Kannada Association chapter increased the outreach for the program. The event started with ghazals and other film songs in Hindi. Soon the multilingual nature of the audience started to reflect in the crowds' restlessness. Hariharan, with his presence of mind, cleverly interacted with the audience and made a comedy out of the situation.

After that it was a potpourri of fast dance numbers in Tamil, Telugu and Punjabi. One Telugu song was repeated thrice due to popular demand by the dancing crowd. During the intermission, Hariharan personally viewed the eight minute video, learnt about the SEF vision and said that he considered it prestigious to sing for SEF. Later Hariharan sang the smooth and lovely Purandara Dasa's Kannada composition 'Krishna Nee Begane Baro' and finished it with the Colonial Cousins version. The show was a total entertainer. An attendee Rachana was so inspired that she came on the stage and composed an impromptu 3 verse poem on SEF. Multiple donations for the wall of founder were other highlights of the event. I am sure it is tough to beat Dallas' record!

SEF in Phoenix partnered with the Arizona Tamil Sangam and Indo American Foundation of Arizona and organized Srishti in March 2007. The event took place at the Mesa Arts Center and was attended by nearly 1,400. The ghazals, a trademark of Hariharan's concerts, together with the crowd pulling film songs captivated everyone. Hariharan sang popular songs from Mani Ratnam's movies such as Bombay and Roja and in a few songs seamlessly shifted back and forth among various languages in order to cater to the diverse audience's song requests. The event was a huge success and one donor donated \$10K immediately after the concert. Many others signed up for the \$10K endowment (\$1K a year). Great going Arizona team!

The Hariharan concert in Los Angeles, Dhrishti, was held in the grand ballroom in the University of California, Los Angeles. About 1100 people attended the event. Hariharan sang both ghazals and film songs. Sameer Nigam brought in a lot of new volunteers who helped organize the event; the volunteers were Meghna Krishna, Ravi Reddy, Nachiket and Monica Shirakur. Murali and Harshad Uka spoke during the event. Annapoorna Cuisine (Woodland Hills) catered for the event. The event, third in the four concert series confirmed the popularity of the Hariharan concerts.

The last in the 4 concert series in Detroit started on time. The Detroit residents still talk about the Hariharan show and its perfect execution. Dreamz International, an event management company, marketed, publicized, and managed the show. They were assisted by an enthusiastic group of young SEF volunteers



from the area. This event helped increase awareness about SEF in the Detroit area. The audience was very impressed with the crisp eight-minute SEF video and motivated by Murali's talk about SEF and its mission and goal. 750+ attended the multi lingual show.

The 4 concert series was a huge success and SEF volunteers are already planning on a similar concert tour theme for the next year. For those of you who missed out on volunteering, this is an excellent chance and the perfect time to get involved for other shows right from the beginning. It is never too late to volunteer! Call 1-866-SANKARA for more details.



KKNC poised to become “Partner in Service” for Bangalore hospital – Hema Chamraj



Kannada Koota of Northern California (KKNC) has expressed its desire to make a difference to the state of Karnataka by helping the needy blind in partnership with SEF. KKNC 2007 committee, under the leadership of Kayva Kurbur, is committed

to raise more than \$100K towards SEH-Bangalore and become the official “Partner in Service”.

Its first fundraising activity was held on April 21st in the Sunnyvale Hindu Temple on the auspicious day of Ugadi. The KKNC team with Mr. Soma Shekhar and Mr. Ashok Setty did a great job in marketing the event and the entire team of KKNC rallied the Kannadigas in the bay area to join forces with SEF. The Kannada community responded to this call of action and raised more than \$51K just on the day of the event. They continue to work on raising the rest of the \$100K and also intend to continue a long-term relationship with SEF in eradicating curable blindness in Karnataka.

SEF extends relationship with Kannadigas at VPA convention – Hema Chamraj



SEF believes that the Kannada community is vital in achieving the Vision 20/20 for Karnataka. It has forged relationships with many Kannada communities including Vokkaligara Parishat of America (VPA).

SEF held a booth for 2 days on June 30 and July 1st, at the Crowne Plaza hotel, Palo Alto, where the VPA members across America gathered for the 10th VPA convention. Many of the VPA board members are also leaders in the Association of Kannada Kootas in America (AKKA). The highlight of the booth activity was when Mr. Ramesh Gowda, President of AKKA, Mr. Amarnath Gowda, AKKA board member, and Mrs. Vasanthi Gowda, Vice President of AKKA, emphasized their goal on becoming a “Partner in Service” for the Bangalore hospital. The AKKA organization has already raised \$70K towards this goal. They are committed to raising the remaining funds before the hospital inauguration in December 2007.

Open Your Heart, Close Your Loan

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Makes it Easy to Support Community Efforts



Homebuyers in Santa Clara have a financing option allowing them to realize their dream of homeownership and support their local community in the process. The initiative is called the Sharing Advantage® program, and it is an easy way to finance the purchase of a home and support local community efforts. The program is uniquely designed to help organizations that serve the needs of minorities and/or low- to moderate-income individuals.

"The charitable contributions made by the homebuyers help strengthen the community with designated programs such as tutoring, after-school activities, day care and food services," said Jaspal Sohal, home mortgage consultant with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage based in Santa Clara.

The program allows homebuyers to direct Wells Fargo Home Mortgage to make a \$300 contribution on their behalf to a faith-based or nonprofit organization of choice following the loan closing. The organization must be tax exempt under federal law. The contribution is paid for by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and distributed to the designated church or charity.

Through the program, homebuyers have access to Wells Fargo Home Mortgage's vast array of financial resources, including first-time homebuyer seminars, credit counseling, and unlimited mortgage product and service information. The services are available free of charge from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage.

Open Your Heart, Close Your Loan 2-2-2

For more information about the Sharing Advantage program, customers can contact their local home mortgage consultant to confirm that their area branch participates in the Sharing Advantage program or go to www.wellsfargo.com for a listing of the nearest Wells Fargo location.

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is the nation's No. 1 retail lender, 1 the No. 1 lender to both low- to moderate-income and ethnic minority customers, and one of the country's leading servicers of home mortgages. It operates the country's largest mortgage network from nearly 2,400 mortgage and Wells Fargo banking stores and on the Internet. Based in Des Moines, Iowa, it services loans for over 5 million customers nationwide.

For more information regarding home financing or the Sharing Advantage® program feel free to contact Jaspal Sohal, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage consultant at (408) 355-4216 or via email at jaspal.sohal@wellsfargo.com.

Based on year-end 2006 statistics compiled by Inside Mortgage Finance - Feb. 23, 2006

Editors Note: This is a Message from Wells Fargo.



SANKARA
EYE FOUNDATION

Sankara Eye Foundation, USA: Donation Form

501 (C)(3) Non Profit Organization, Tax id: 77-6141976

3175 Arcola Court, San Jose, CA 95148.

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Contact Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Spouse Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email address: _____

I would like to volunteer, please contact me

Donate in several ways:

Cash: Check: Credit Card: Amount Enclosed: _____

If check, make it payable to: Sankara Eye Foundation, USA

If Credit Card, enter Credit Card #: (Only Visa and Master Card)

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Expiry Date: _____

A One time donation: Monthly Donation (Open an Eye a month):

Company Name: _____

(Helps us find if they match your contribution.)

For used car donations, contact SEF at cargiving@giftofvision.org

Sell an item on ebay and donate proceeds. Go to <http://givingworks.ebay.com/>

and select Sankara Eye Foundation as charity

Visit www.giftofvision.org for stocks, payroll, bank transactions or online donations.

Capital Projects	Central Services	
	Surgeries	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus AP - Phase II	<input type="checkbox"/> Cataract Surgery (\$30 each)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food for patients (\$200 a day)
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Karnataka	<input type="checkbox"/> Corneal Transplant (\$100 each)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Staff Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Gujarat	<input type="checkbox"/> Cataract Endowment (\$300 each)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Entire Service activities of the hospital (\$400 a day)
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Bangalore	<input type="checkbox"/> Corneal Endowment (\$1000 each)*	

*Endowment: 1 surgery every year for 10 years

Special requests: _____

(E.g. Donate "In the name(s) of" / "In memory of" a dear one and/or preferred date of surgery/food for patients.)

If first time donor, how did you hear about us? _____

Mail it to:

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3175 Arcola Ct

San Jose, CA 95148

For more information, or to volunteer your time for this noble cause, please call us at 1-866-SANKARA (1-866-726-5272) or (408) 528-9570 or write to us at info@giftofvision.org.

If you have any other comments, please write to us. We really appreciate and value them.

Sankara Eye Foundation
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San Jose, CA 95148

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Thank you for your support

The Young and the Restless – Naushik Desai

Little Godhandan has been able to restore his faith in life. Until recently, the future of this 10-year-old seemed bleak. He had been diagnosed with cataract in both his eyes. In school, he was unable to distinguish small letters. His teacher brought it to the notice of his parents who then consulted the local doctor. The doctor said that the surgery would cost them Rs. 10,000. Munusamy, Godhandan's father, couldn't afford it since he works as a coolie and has to support his family of seven. On recommendation by the doctor, they approached Sankara. The required surgery was successfully carried out on both the eyes. Now, Godhandan regularly attends school and is able to see the small letters too. He is able to comprehend his lessons and is performing better. His life has been altered for the better.



75-year old Paskaran is not married and lives with his sister. Paskaran underwent a cataract surgery on his left eye about 15 years ago at Friends Matriculation School at Panamkalai during the camp conducted by the Govt. Medical College of Aasarippallam. As a part of the surgery, Paskaran got two stitches in his eye that had to be removed after healing. After a few months his vision blurred again. He returned to the hospital only to discover that the stitches had to be removed immediately. After much effort the doctors could remove only one stitch and informed Paskaran that nothing else could be done. In a few months time he completely lost vision in his left eye.

Gradually Paskaran's vision in the right eye also began to fade and soon he lost vision in both eyes. Life became very difficult. With no one to take care and living in a state of helpless dependency, Paskaran lost hope and was resigned to just passing his days one at a time. He was now known as the blind Paskaran. It was after 15 years of a life in darkness that one day the rays of hope started falling on him. Paskaran got to know about an eye screening camp being organized by Sankara Eye Hospital. The field level workers instilled faith in Paskaran about possible treatment and encouraged him to visit the camp. Disillusioned by the failure of the last surgery, Paskaran had little faith though he decided to go ahead. The attitude of the staff and the care provided to him at the camp renewed his hopes and his desire to be able to see again.

After the surgery Paskaran regained his vision in the right eye and the ability to see again. It was like a new birth to him. At the age of 75 when life becomes an ordeal due to the advancing age, the loss of sight accentuates the difficulties. To be able to see again and lead a normal life is a miracle for Paskaran today.