



Give the Gift of Vision



Association of Kannada Kootas of America (AKKA) & Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF)

SEF-USA and AKKA Partner for Vision 20/20 in Karnataka

The AKKA (Association of Kannada Kootas of America) held its 4th Bi-Annual AKKA World Kannada Conference at the Baltimore Convention Center during September 1-3, 2006. Over 5000 Kannadigas from all over the world assembled under one roof to cherish culture, values and tradition of the Karnataka. The conference was not just about entertainment but about business, spirituality and charity as well. In a move to address one of the most pressing challenges to rural health in Karnataka, the AKKA Charity Committee (ACF) formed a partnership with Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF)-USA; raising awareness about SEF's pioneering contributions toward community eye care.

The AKKA-SEF partnership highlighted the need for funds to construct two new Sankara Eye Hospitals (SEHs), one in Bangalore and the other in Shimoga. The primary goal of these hospitals is free world-class eye care and surgeries for the needy and follows a tried and tested model of self-sufficiency wherein the cost of free care is met by revenues from paid operations.



Spearheading support for the AKKA-SEF partnership was B.V. Jagadeesh, GM and VP Citrix Systems, former CEO of Netscaler and Founder of Exodus, who pledged matching funds of \$100,000. Appeals for support were also made by dignitaries such as S.P. Balasubramaniam. Anil Kumble – a star of Indian cricket, provided souvenir items to auction at the event. Raffles were held for hand made paintings donated by Mrs. Meera Mohan. The Kannada community heard the appeals and opened their hearts and wallets to the cause, donating generously. Several donors became Founding Members of either the Bangalore or Shimoga Hospitals through the '1,000 families, \$1,000 each' program. Each Founding Member will be honored by inscribing their name or the name of a loved one on the Wall of Founders at the hospital of their choice.



The AKKA-SEF partnership successfully raised approximately \$60,000 for the two hospitals in just the few days of the Convention. This partnership is expected to grow in strength and to inspire the Kannada community to contribute further toward bringing Vision to Karnataka's needy.

Sankara Eye Hospital and Superspecialty Training Center - Bangalore



SEH-Bangalore is slated to be Sankara's launch pad facility for Vision 20/20. In addition to being a state-of-the-art hospital performing free eye surgeries and rural outreach, this facility will include a super specialty Training Center to focus on human resource development. The project was approved by the Bangalore Developmental Authority (BDA) on August 24, 2006, clearing the way for construction to begin on 4.5 acres of prime gifted land at Marathahalli. The facility is expected to be fully operational in 2007.

The Karnataka Government delegation at the convention was impressed by SEF's vision and work. Honorable Deputy Chief Minister, Shri B.S. Yediyurappa and Minister for Major and Medium Industries, Shri Katta Subramanya Naidu met with SEF and AKKA leaders and pledged government support to make the Bangalore and Shimoga hospitals a reality.

About SEF-USA:

SEF-USA is a registered non-profit organization that has dedicated itself to completely eradicating curable blindness in India through a goal of "Vision 20/20 by the year 2020." Funds raised by SEF have played a significant role in increasing the number of free eye surgeries at the Sankara Eye Hospitals to its current annual rate of 56,000 surgeries. For more information about SEF organization, please call 1-866-SANKARA or visit website at: www.giftofvision.org

About AKKA:

Association of Kannada Kootas of America (AKKA) is a cultural not-for-profit organization and it represents the Kannada speaking people from Karnataka State, India, who are settled in North America. The Purpose of this organization is to preserve & promote Kannada language, culture and to undertake charitable activities. AKKA has donated several thousand dollars to many charitable causes including Tsunami rebuilding project and educational institutions.

AKKA was established in 1998 and nearly 30 Kannada organizations from US and Canada are members of AKKA. There are nearly 70,000 Kannadigas in North America. For more information about AKKA organization, please visit website at: www.akkaonline.org

Contact Information:

AKKA: Mokshagundam Jayaram
630-640-2671
mjayaram@gmail.com

Ramesh Gowda
248-396-0776
gowda@smgi.net

SEF: Hema Chamraj
408-996-1022
hchamraj@yahoo.com