



December 2012 Newsletter

2012 – A Year in Review

Happy Holidays! It's hard to believe that another year has come to a close. In 2012, Upakriti was fortunate enough to again support the amazing work at SOCARE (Society's Care for Indigent). This is especially important to us because, as many of you know, the honorable and beloved founder of SOCARE, Mr. Mani, recently passed. His legacy, devotion, and compassion will never be forgotten. We are grateful and privileged to have had the opportunity to meet and work alongside this wonderful man. We were especially humbled when he chose to honor us this summer by naming the new children's home as "Upakriti Block". One of our founders, Aravind Radhakrishnan, wrote a touching tribute upon learning of Mr. Mani's passing and we felt that it deserved to be shared among our loyal friends.

Mr. Mani – A Life to Be Cherished and Celebrated! (Edited by R. Narayanan)



YES, WE CARE!

During the summer of 2007, I made my usual, casual trip from the US to India to catch up with family and friends. Born and brought up in Chennai, the thought of visiting the city in summer was something of an adventure in itself.

Amidst the chaos and tedium of long dinners and never-ending family get-togethers, I decided to jump town. I persuaded my dad, brother and uncle to go along with me to Bengaluru. There was a reason for choosing the Garden City: it was there that our social initiative, Upakriti, was partnering with SOCARE.

Personally, I was curious to know about the couple who CARED SO MUCH in a country where most of the others DIDN'T SEEM TO CARE, despite knowing that millions of children did not have access to basic education and were also forced into child labor.

The persons I was dying to meet were Mr. and Mrs. SOCARE MANI. They couldn't have been named better because in this world we worry so much about making MONEY, but not how we use it for social improvement and community development. But, here were two individuals who cared to invest their money and *mani (means time in Tamil)* on unfortunate children. With their selfless service, the two had made Bengaluru sit up and take notice. The Manis had also proved that anything was possible if one cared to make a difference, however small. After an early morning train ride



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took us to Bengaluru, we were in high spirits as we were close to our ultimate destination (SOCARE). The representative who came to pick us up made our spirits soar higher with his zeal and enthusiasm. Though language was a barrier (Kannada can't be replied in Tamil!), he made us comfortable during the long journey that was made longer by the terrible traffic. It was only later that we came to know that this particular boy too had a sad story, but had put it all behind him and moved on.

Finally, we arrived at the 'temple.' Any place that serves the poor, needy and the helpless is sacred indeed. And then we met GOD himself. Full of energy despite his advancing years, Mr. Mani sprinted to the door to welcome us. We got the rare opportunity to embrace the man who embraced the poor, embraced children who had become under-privileged and unsupported due to the rash and senseless acts of their parents, embraced children orphaned by cruel ones...One look at the place and we were convinced that it was run professionally. Wanting to serve the society is one thing, but doing it with panache is another. The Manis had put a system in place where everything seems to be working clockwork.

The volunteers knew what they were doing, and what they were doing next too. The board members and staff had also planned their programmes properly and were involved in executing them. It was so perfect we thought we were inside a MNC, not a society-changing one!

Captain Mani took time off from his routine to brief us about the happenings in SOCARE. He narrated the sordid tales of a few children and how they eventually journeyed to SOCARE. All his conversations veered towards the children, HIS CHILDREN, and on how he was trying to make their lives better. Since he had kids of all ages under his gigantic umbrella, he told us how he had to take care of everything: from admissions to equipping the kids for school.

We were thinking about Mrs. Mani when the GODDESS landed. She was so full of warmth and affection that we became her devotees immediately. We were moved to see so many, nay almost all, children call her Amma (mother). Wasn't that proof that she was indeed a living Goddess? What about the children? Since it was a working day, we had to wait quite a while to catch a glimpse of the twinkling stars. When they did appear, we were amazed by their attitude (positive), by their ability to move ahead (after the turmoil in their lives), by their willingness to help others and be a team player...

The Manis may have left for their heavenly abode, but they continue to live in these children. They continue to be the leading light of these children who were lucky enough to be spotted by them. The Manis have also ensured that people who care have multiplied manifold...that's a rich legacy they can be proud of, for generations to come...



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Donation Update

In keeping with Mr. Mani's giving spirit, we were pleased to be able to provide SOCARE with funding of \$4000. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor we know, the lives of countless children will be changed for the better.

The San Francisco employees of Protiviti, a global consulting firm, generously donated \$2700 in funds for the children of CHES (Community Health Education Society). The funds have enabled 15 students to continue their education in the 2012-2013 school year!

We also received a personal donation of \$1000 that was matched dollar for dollar by Google through their Employee Match program. This \$2000 will be used to fund the educational needs for 8 additional CHES children in 2013!

SEVATHON 2012

On July 15, 2012 Upakriti partnered with fellow Bay Area community service organizations for Sevathon 2012. Sixty-one non-profits came together to "Unite, Serve, and Celebrate". The event started off with the annual charity race -1/2 marathon, 10K, and 5K. The Upakriti team had runners and walkers in all of the distance categories! Even some of our youngest volunteers took to the pavement that day!



We are immensely grateful and proud that our team came out early that Sunday morning and ran their hearts out. We offer a big Thank You to : *Advay Aravind, Anvita Aravind, Vandana Aravind, Kalpana Desigan, Mahesto Kallahalla, Amol Kher, Sreeram Krishnamoorthy, Vanitha Kuppusamy, Viral Mankad, Chara Mathur, Kiran Mayi Nandamuri, Aravind Radhakrishnan, Arjun Rangarajan, Shilpa Shah, Bhargav Subramanian, Janani Subramanian, Latha Subramanian, Sivarama Subramanian, and Hiten Verma,* for running, volunteering, and donating to Upakriti. We raised over \$800 for CHES!





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AIM FOR SEVA – Please Vote

We recently learned that AIM for Seva was nominated as a finalist for The Times of India – 2012 Social Impact Award. We have been working with AIM for SEVA since 2005 and are pleased that their valuable work is being honored and recognized. The award winner will, in part, be decided by the online voting response of the readers. Please cast your vote at www.timessocialawards.com and spread the word among your friends about this opportunity to acknowledge AIM for Seva's important work!

“AIM for Seva - Established in November 2000, and staffed by volunteers, AIM's programs are meant to bridge the gap between mainstream society and people

living in remote areas. AIM's primary goals are to establish economic, social, and cultural strength within all of India. The focus of AIM for Seva is service in the deepest sense of caring; care that promotes self-sufficiency and maintains the dignity of those who are served.”

Moving into 2013

We wish you the very best for this 2012 holiday season! Upakriti is looking forward to another amazing year of working with you to support the education of India's children in need. Please remember Upakriti when filling your company's matching donation program so that we may continue our efforts.

As always we thank you for all of your support! We wish you a safe and joyous holiday!

